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Male Educators Implementing Instructional Practices That Academically Engage Students

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Male Educators Implementing Instructional Practices That Academically Engage
Students

by
Kenneth Bernard Beneby

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2019

Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Kenneth Bernard Beneby under the direction of the persons listed below. It will be submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Statement of Original Work

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May 5, 2019

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Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I continue to thank my Maker and give Him praise for creating me, protecting me, loving me, and using me to complete His purpose. Secondly, I thank my father for challenging me to be bigger than he was with regards to accomplishing the “American Dream.” I thank my ancestors and elders for cutting a pathway to make my life better than the lives they live. Thank you for planting that seed of survival in me. I know you all are looking down on me and cheering me on. I draw strength from all of you that came before me. Whose lives were more challenging than my life is today. Ancestors and elders who thought enough about me before I was even born. You all are my heroes. I now truly realize that I stand on the shoulders of many giants. The sky is the limit.

Abstract

Male Educators Implementing Instructional Practices That Academically Engage Students. Kenneth Bernard Beneby, 2019. Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: teacher, African American male teachers, academic engagement, secondary teaching profession, pedagogies, African American male students

This phenomenological research explored how a selected group of African American male educators understood their own experiences while implementing strategies to academically engage African American male students. The research explored the public secondary education experiences of African American male educators to better understand their occupational understandings; how having more African American educators were helpful in improving the academic engagement of African American male students; what strategies and teaching pedagogies did African American educators use to academically engage African American male students; and what role did race and/or gender play in the academically engaging African American male students.

Data was obtained from at least 10 African American male secondary educators by using an in-depth interview structure with 12 open-ended questions that lasted 50-90 minutes. The results, findings, and conclusion of this study revealed that the recommendations and experiences of African American male educators contributed to developing literature and improve the diversity of the education profession and enhance the academic performance of African American male students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

As a former social studies teacher in several predominantly African American urban middle schools, this researcher's primary focus was to inspire at least one student each academic year to beat all odds and succeed in academics. At the start of each school year, the researcher would write on the chalk board "Excuses are tools of incompetence used to build monuments of nothingness. Those that dwell on them seldom do well in anything." The researcher would then proceed to tell the class of the economic challenges he endured and overcame as a child growing up in a low-income neighborhood. The researcher would further explain how that "little Black boy that grew up in the projects" beat all odds and succeeded in college with only \$20.00 in his pocket. Each year, at least five of the parents would express how their child's attitude and views toward being successful in school were positively changed. In addition, students' parents would have expressed how their child never had an engaging teacher like the researcher. After the researcher's second year of teaching, the researcher realized that many African American students were not motivated to learn and were academically unprepared.

By the end of the school year, most of the researcher's students were completely engaged in learning and enjoyed mastering learning objectives. The researcher realized that his teaching style was different than other teachers. More so, the researcher discovered that many of his students never had an African American male teacher prior to him. Kafele (2012) believes that to make the most of learning conditions, parents, educators, and administrators must guarantee that young African American male students have opportunities to acquire knowledge and guidance from mentors and educators whom they can associate with. Less than 2% of the educators in the United States are

African American males. The scarcity of African American male educators is a pressing dilemma in the United States. McGrath and Sinclair (2013) agreed and discussed the advantages for boys of having male educators to performance as role models, father figures, and, most importantly, someone to confess in at school when boys develop into their teenage years. Rhimes (2018) surmised:

I know that you want to change the world. That it sickens you that there are people in this country who are literally punished because of disadvantages they were born into. That is why you started this institution to give them hope that their American nightmare can become an American dream.

In the United States, Caucasian American female educators comprise 83% of the United States' elementary work force. Whereas, African American educators constituted less than 6% of educators and less than 2% of that 6% are African American males (Harper & Wood, 2016). Consequently, numerous K- 12 students graduated from high school without ever having an African American male teacher. Another dilemma was the critical underrepresentation of African American male college and university students participating in postsecondary Education programs. The Title II website reported 455,115 students were enrolled in teacher-education programs at traditional postsecondary institutions, as of 2014. Of the enrollees, 109,261 were males (23%) and 49,346 were African American students (9%). The number of conferred college degrees in education for African American males in 2014 was 1,767. This number represented only a small percentage of total undergraduate degrees in education (2%) (Henry, 2017). It was imperative to study and comprehend why this problem exists. Furthermore, it was vital to study what enticed African American men to the teaching occupation, what were the obstacles African American endured when seeking an undergraduate degree in education,

and what were the motivating influences for pursuing an undergraduate degree in Education.

African American history in the United States deserve to be researched due to the history of discrimination that was related to the education of students of color or racial minority students. Examples of discrimination and failures, as it relates to African American, were found in the United States' educational system. Nonetheless, there were numerous narratives of successful African American educators (Weathersby, 2012). Important instructional strategies were missing from literature that may be useful in narrowing the achievement gap for African American males. More importantly, there were several challenges that African American males face in the United States' educational system.

Phenomenon on interest. African Americans students remained a minor percentage of the enrollment total for postsecondary higher education institutions. African American comprised 15% of all postsecondary students in the United States (USDE, 2015). The U.S. Department of Education data showed that Black male completion rates in community colleges were 41.1%. This completion rate was the lowest in association with all male groups from other ethnicities. Completion rates for other men were as follows: Asian American, 69.6%, Latinos, 50.3%, and Whites, 54.8% (Harper & Wood, 2016). There was much public disapproval of the small number of African Americans students in postsecondary institutions. However, many professionals debate that the low number was due to obstacles in the United States' educational pipeline (Henry, 2017).

Race conformation and cultural harmony might make a change in inspiring African American students to achieve academically and decrease the educational gap

between African American and Caucasian American students. Cooper and Smalls (2012) indicated that cultural harmony is having an alignment and consideration of a culture between two or more individuals. African American male educators and African American male students will be able to establish connections and construct relationships based on collective upbringings, life encounters, and understanding of the African American male culture (Bumpass, 2017). The researcher's goal was to analyze the participants' experiences to get a better understanding of their relationships with the secondary school educational system and African American male students. Howard (2013) highlighted a gap in the literature. He concluded that scholars need to examine the associations that African American males have with school personnel to determine how those relationships are formed, sustained, and how they contribute to African American males' academic success.

Background and justification. Although the percentage of racial minority educators in public secondary institutions have improved from 12% to 17%, possible minority educators were lost at every important point in the education pipeline (USDE, 2016). This occurred at the time when more educators were desired, especially in urban areas throughout the United States. Overall, the teacher deficiency became a national calamity severely impacting several major. A study sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute and authored by Bond focused on nine cities and revealed that these cities were facing grave teacher deficiencies and declining numbers of minority interviewees. Income and work settings were found to be the key explanations for the cause of many minority educators to leave the teaching field (Bond 2014).

Most teacher deficiencies in public secondary institutions occurred in high school mathematics, the sciences, special education, bilingual instruction, English as a second

language, and educational technology. Deficiency were exaggerated by the gap between educators' cultures and socioeconomic positions, as well as the cultures and socioeconomic positions of the students they were teaching (Cooper & Smalls, 2012). Rosen (2013) added that it was beneficial when educators replicate the cultural diversity of the global society that African American students were likely to live and work. Current university-based teacher education programs needed diversity in their preservice teaching cohorts. It was crucial for teacher education programs to emphasis how to maximize the percentage of educators from underrepresented groups. This help maximized the number of African American male educators teaching in public secondary schools.

Deficiencies in the evidence. During the research for this study, the researcher discovered that there was an abundance of literature exploring why African American males became educators. However, when literature was compared exploring why African American males became educators, there was less literature presenting effective strategies and instructional practices that were currently being utilized to academically engage African American male students. Milner contended that African American students performed poorly academically because of their inability to master the structure of the school setting, not because of their hypothetical academic insufficiencies of those students. Milner also added that some African American students performed poorly academically because educators were not able to relate to those students. In addition, educators did not possess the teaching strategies to teach pupils from varied upbringings. Ethnically related educators had the ability to comprehend students' cultural traditions. As a result, those educators acclimated their pedagogy based upon what they knew about their students' ethnic upbringings and lived experiences rather than demanding that those students adjust to the ethnic upbringings of their educators (Maiorano, 2017).

Audience. The audience for this research included educators, teacher education programs, school leaders, students, parents, secondary and postsecondary school administrators. The potential benefits of this study will assist secondary and postsecondary administrators in understanding the possible reason for the low number of African American male educators. The results from this study were beneficial to higher education administrators in recruitment of African American male educators. Furthermore, the result from this study were beneficial in the retention of African American male undergraduate students.

Setting of the Study

The setting of the study took place within a public-school district. The school district was in a large metropolitan area in the Southeastern region of the United States. The school district was the 11th largest district in the continental United States. The school district is the 5th largest in the state. The school district served over 193,000 students, 31% of the student population were Hispanic, 34% of the student population were White, 29% of the student population were Black, and 3% of the student population were Asian American in this school district. Teachers were less racially diverse in this school district, 11% of the teaching population were Hispanic, 71% of the teaching population were White, 17% of the teaching population were Black, and 1% of the teaching population were Asian American. The school district served over 197 different countries and territories of birth. There were over 20,000 employees including 12, 480 teachers in the district. Over 63% of the student population met the requirements for free and reduced lunch. In this district over 61% of the schools were rated A & B. The school district graduation rate was continually improving at 80%. Sixty-six percent of the district's graduates attended a postsecondary institution (District website, 2018).

Researcher's Role

The researcher was an African American male with at least 10 years of teaching experience as a secondary public-school educator. Currently, the researcher is an academic advisor at a university in the state of Florida. The researcher was interested in identifying how educators academically engaged students. Consequently, increasing the number of African American male students entering a postsecondary institution.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of selected African American secondary male educators in a large metropolitan school district in southeastern Florida who were implementing engaging teaching strategies and pedagogies. A phenomenological approach was used for this study. The phenomenon that the researcher explored highlighted educators' knowledge, actions, and experiences when implementing strategies and pedagogies used to academically engage African American male students. The researcher's goal was to add to the literature a better understanding about the pedagogical relationship between African American male educators and African American male students.

The researcher explored the lived experience of the selected educators and discovered the strategies and pedagogies used to academically engage African American male students through comprehensive analysis of data gathered from interviewing African American male educators. The results of this study provided valuable information to college and school district recruiters, policymakers, and K-12 administrators that developed programs aimed at increasing the number of African American male teachers and contributing strategies and pedagogies within the education field to positively impact the academic achievement of African American male students.

Participants included African American males that currently teach in a secondary school setting. The site was within a secondary public-school system in southeast Florida. The study utilized open-ended interview questions. This phenomenological qualitative study added a critical component to the literature on the lived experiences of African American male educators with regards to academically engaging African American male students.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined as they applied to this study.

Academic Achievement. The level of attainment of the courses requirements as a result of learning capabilities that the students experience in any course (Kanadli, 2016).

Academic Engagement. A rewarding and encouraging state of mind as it relates to learning and is characterized by captivation and enthusiasm (Alrashidi, Phan, & Ngu, 2016).

African American/Black. This term relates to an individual having origins in any of the Black racial categories of Africa (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016).

Educator. This term relates to those who work as instructors, guidance counselors, secondary and postsecondary administrators, or higher education professors (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2017).

Pedagogy. The strategies, methods, or instructions used to teach students (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2017).

Racial Minority. A smaller numeric ethnic group that was dominated or overpowered in the process of voyaging to the United States (Gonzalez, 2011).

Role model. This term refers to individuals whose examples or ways of acting can be imitated by others who wish to achieve that individual's success or importance (Nadworny, 2015).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review focused on the lived experiences of African American male educator and in public secondary schools and provided a framework of the theories related to the study. In chapter 2, the first section included a review of Critical Race Theory and how race and racism were widespread and prevalent in a society. The second section discussed the historical context of African Americans in the United States. The following section provided examples and experiences that notable African American educators endured in the United States. The remaining sections provided articles reviewing African American males in the United States, why African American males became educators, and the teacher shortage topic. Chapter 2 was concluded with a list of the research questions. The phenomenon that the researcher explored was educators' knowledge, actions, and experiences when implementing instructional strategies to academically engage African American male students.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the Critical Race Theory as it related to the lived experiences of African American educators and African American students. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of African American male educators by studying their knowledge, actions, and experiences in secondary public education settings to gain insight on how to implement strategies and pedagogies to academically engage African American male students. The decision for choosing a theoretical framework was based on the researcher's identity as an African American male who taught in a secondary public educational setting. This study focused on the strategies and pedagogies to academically engage African American male students. The primary goal was to escalate the

understanding of the experiences of African American male educators in secondary public education.

Critical Race Theory was based on the foundation that discrimination and ethnicity are fundamental, widespread, and everlasting in determining and clarifying how the United States' society operated (Maiorano, 2017). As it related to the education field in the United States, Critical Race Theory originated its early stages from critical legal issues from the Civil Rights era and its characteristic faults (Wamsted, 2013). The Critical Race Theory in education offered a framework to help educational researchers comprehend and battle universal educational structures that are currently active. These systemic educational structures deterred advancement towards amalgamation, equivalent educational access, prospects and resources, and educational attainment for all students that were assured by *Brown v. Board of Education*. Moreover, Critical Race Theory provided a framework to considering the educational topics through the eyes of communities of color (Wimbush, 2012).

This study used the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory in examining the pedagogical practices of African American male educators. Critical Race Theory positioned itself as a supporter in the preparation and development of enabling African American male educators to share honestly their truths and redirecting the discussion on K-12 education from Caucasian American female domination to a more inclusionary discussion involving both genders and all races (Lynn & Hassan, 1999). Moon and Singh (2015) added that Critical Race Theory can be a supportive theory to K- 12 educators, administrators, and counselors when pursuing a method to develop encouragement with African American male students as it relates to them being academically engaged. Critical Race Theory researchers contested viewpoints that do not undertake racism as a

reality for minorities in the United States. Critical Race Theory researchers also unambiguously pursued to explore the experiences that minorities have of shared racism. Critical Race Theory was a supportive theoretical framework to use to counter prevailing social experiences concerning African American male educators, youths, and academic engagement. The researcher used Critical Race Theory to frame the phenomenological study to explore the complexity of race as a conceptual structure within a public-school secondary system. The research questions that guided the current study were: How do African American male educators describe their lived experiences as educators within a K-12 public educational system.

Historical Context

Individuals of African descent worked diligently after they arrived on the shorelines of North America. Most African Americans, during the earlier years of the newly formed English North American colonies, viewed education as a passageway to independence. Unfortunately, many Africans in America were not permitted to teach nor learn before the American Civil War especially in the southern region of the United States (Symbol-Tosco, 2013). In the African dispersal across the world, Africans that were shipped to the United States in the 18th century frequently had better individual and lawful liberties than those that arrived after the 18th century (Assensoh, 2018).

Before the 18th century, a greater number of African slaves of the English North American colonies (later became the United States of America) were considered as human beings proficient of spiritual, ethical, and psychological growth. Some slave holders created improvement for these slaves. The masters provided improvements because they loved their slaves. Education, training, and improvements were provided so slaves could be more beneficial to the community. For example, a policy for educating

African slaves in the English North American colonies was created in 1741 by Bishop Thomas Secker. He recommended the service of young African slaves wisely selected to train other African slaves. Notwithstanding the meager conditions, many African slaves still endured hostile environments. In addition, a very insignificant number attained the very basic skills of education. The few who were allowed the opportunity to obtain an education were only allowed to receive an informal education. Secondary and postsecondary education for African slaves before the 18th century in the English North American colonies was almost entirely absent (Woodson, 1921).

Throughout the period of slavery in the United States, literate African Americans were thought as very exceptional among the African American community. Eventually, trade schools and higher education institutions, such as the Institute for Colored Youth, were created by the Quakers in Pennsylvania in 1830. Berea College in Kentucky and Oberlin College in Ohio were a few higher education institutions that allowed a postsecondary education for freed Africans living in the United States. However, regardless of these well-intentioned attempts, freed Africans living in the United States were still obligated to be very subservient due to social laws (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009).

The years after the U.S. Civil War and the adoption of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, African American (formerly slaves and freed Africans) began to attain education with less barriers. The 13th amendment ended slavery in the United States. Nonetheless, African Americans and Caucasian Americans had separate schools until the 1900's (Symbol-Tosco, 2013). The U.S. Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* relentlessly impacted both Caucasian Americans and African American schools. For example, after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, more than 38,000

African American educators and administrators were either ousted from their jobs or downgraded. Thereby, reducing the capable employment pool in African American communities (Loder-Jackson, 2011).

Hall (2015) contended that *Brown v. Board of Education* was a huge setback to the African American teaching methods and damagingly impacted African Americans' opinions and views concerning education for generations. For example, African American male educators were not always a small percentage of the teaching population in the United States. In 1890, data from the U.S. Census showed there were 49% African American male educators that were teaching at that time. That number considerably dropped from 49% to the current national percentage of 2%. Symbol-Tosco (2013) argued that a drastic drop in African American educators occurred between 1890 and 1940.

Notable African American Male Educators

Numerous African American male educators have positively impacted the academic achievement gap for minority students. Given the cultural unfairness in testing, education, and the general educational system, it is essential that minority students are given equal opportunity for educational success. Thomas (2004) suggested that race and gender, as it relates to educators and students, present a vital role in students' educational achievement. Furthermore, it can be argued that increasing the number of African American male educators could hypothetically improve minority students' academic achievement depending on the connection between teacher awareness and student achievement (Gallagher & Lippard, 2014). Brown (2012) argued that much of the literature has paid attention to African American women as educators. However, there have been numerous African American male educators who have made opportunities for

other African Americans to follow in the secondary and postsecondary education. (Hudson, 2017). This section discussed significant African American male educators that have contributed to the field of education in very impactful and notable ways.

Dr. Kenneth Clark. Clark was an African American psychologist whose breakthrough research on African American children's self-concept played a significant role in school desegregation court cases and was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling. Clark's "doll test" asked African American children to choose between African American and Caucasian American dolls with regards to questions about their beliefs. Clarks' research concluded that African American children had a self-hatred that was caused by school segregation. Clark was a professor of psychology at the City College of New York when he was requested to testify in the *Briggs v. Elliot* (1952) case by NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall. Clark founded the Metropolitan Applied Research Center (MARC) in 1967. MARC was a nonprofit corporation in Washington, D.C. that aided school districts with programs for improving students' academic achievement. Performance (Raffel, 2018).

Mr. Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet was born a slave in Maryland in 1815. Garnet and his family escaped slavery and secured their freedom in 1824. They relocated to New York City in 1825. Educated in New York at the African Free School in Mott Street in 1826, Garnet eventually established the Noyes Academy in Canaan, New Hampshire. Established by abolitionists, Noyes Academy was open to both African American and Caucasian American and to both women and men. In 1842, Garnet was licensed to preach and in the following year ordained a minister. He thus became the first pastor of the Liberty Street Presbyterian Church in Troy. In addition, Garnet was the first

African American to deliver a speech in the House of Representatives in 1865 (Garnet, 2005).

Mr. Geoffrey Canada. Canada was raised in a disadvantaged area of South Bronx. After his bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College, he continued and earned a graduate degree in from Harvard University. Canada devoted himself to working with kids in deprived areas. Canada obtained an education director position at the Rheedlen Institute in Harlem in 1983. Several years later, Canada became president of the Rheedlen Institute and changed the name to Harlem Children's Zone. Harlem Children's Zone assisted students from birth through college. His goal was to break the cycle of poverty. In 2005, Canada was listed as one of "America's Best Leaders" by *U.S. News and World Report*. He was named as one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in 2011. In addition, President Barack Obama's Promise Neighborhoods program was modeled after Harlem Children's Zone. President's Obama's program offered grants to programs in 21 cities across the United States. In a Ted Talk podcast, Canada stated, "We can't stifle innovation in our business. We have to innovate." (Canada, 2013).

Mr. Calvin McKissack. In 1890, McKissack was born in Pulaski, Tennessee. He emulated his father and older brothers after he expressed an interest in the architectural field. Therefore, McKissack attended the Barrows School in Springfield, Massachusetts. Afterwards, he enrolled at Fisk University. McKissack earned his architectural degree at the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He designed several churches and schools for African American communities. McKissack was superintendent of industries and teacher of architectural drawing at Tennessee State University from 1915 to 1918 (Wynn, 2018).

Rev. Alexander Crummell. Crummell was born in New York City in 1819. He graduated from Cambridge University in England. Afterwards, he spent time in Liberia, Africa then in the United States. Crummell eventually founded the American Negro Academy in 1897 (Roger, 1940).

Mr. Abram Hill. Hill was an author, theatrical company director, director, and educator during the mid-20th century. One of the remarkable sponsors to the expansion of African American drama and theater. Hill was cofounder and artistic director of the American Negro Theater. The American Negro Theater was a flourishing theater group in Harlem, New York during the 1940's. Networking African American actors appeared in the American Negro Theater such as Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee, Harry Belafonte, and many more talented stars. Hill taught English and created stage plays at a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Long Island, New York during the summers of 1934 – 1936. He was upgraded to assistant New York state supervisor of Civilian Conservation Corps Dramatic Activities in 1936. While in that position, Hill was given work as a playwright by the Federal Theatre Project during the New Deal Era (Peterson, 2018).

Mr. Alexander Twilight. In the early 19th century, Twilight became the first African American to receive an undergraduate degree from an institution of higher education in the United States. In addition to that honor, Twilight also became the first African American voted to serve in the Vermont House of Representatives. In 1829, Twilight constructed his own educational institute in Brownington, Vermont. Twilight educated almost 3,000 students in his career (Twilight, 2015).

Mr. Aaron Douglas. Douglas was considered father of African American art. He emerged on the art scene during the height of the Harlem Renaissance. Douglass started his career as an educator at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri. He earned an

undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from the University of Nebraska. In 1944, Douglas earned a graduate degree at the Teachers College of Columbia University. In 1937, he was a part-time art instructor at Fisk University. Douglas was promoted to full-time professor of the Art Department until he retired in 1966 (Jegade, 2018).

Mr. Harry and Andrew. The missionary, Rev. Alexander Garden, was commissioned to educate two African American males to become educators in the state of South Carolina in 1742. These two young males, Harry and Andrew, raised money to construct one of the first schools for African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. The school was named Charles-Town Negro School. The school opened its doors in 1744 with Harry and Andrew as educators. The enrollment was approximately 60 young pupils for a several years. Due to the educational success of Harry and Andrew, South Carolina passed a law banning any individual from educating or hiring a slave as a transcriber (Watson, 2009).

Mr. James Weldon Johnson. Johnson earned a college degree from Atlanta University in 1894. Johnson's initial career was as principal of an elementary school. His mother was an educator at the same elementary school. Johnson went on to create the first secondary school for African Americans in Florida. In addition, Johnson became one of the earliest African American to earn a law degree and practice law in Florida. Johnson was well known as the author of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." The song later became the unendorsed anthem of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and for most African Americans (Skerrett, 2018).

Dr. Alain Locke. Locke is known as the first African American Rhodes Scholar. In addition, Locke became popularly known the "Dean" of the Harlem Renaissance. In 1898, Locke attended Central High School in Philadelphia. In 1904, Locke enrolled in the

Philadelphia School of Pedagogy where he finished number 2 in his class. Eventually, Locke enrolled in Harvard with honors. He was one of few African American students seeking an undergraduate degree there at the time. In 1907, Harvard University equipped Locke for merit as the first African American Rhodes Scholar. In addition, in 1918, Locke earned a PhD in Philosophy. In 1927, Locke was awarded the job of department chair of the College of Philosophy at Howard University. Locke taught at Howard University until he retired in 1953 (Buck, 2018).

Dr. James McCune Smith. Smith became famous in United States' history for becoming the first African American to earn a medical degree in the United States. Smith attended the African Free Schools as a youth. Later he enrolled into the University of Glasgow in Scotland. He later attended the University of Glasgow (Scotland) where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1835, a master's degree in 1836, and a medical degree in 1837. Smith return to the United States in 1837. He owned and operated two profitable pharmacies and a medical practice. Smith became a professor of anthropology at Wilberforce College in 1863 (Alexander, 2018).

Mr. Sterling A. Brown. Brown was a prolific creative writer during the post-Harlem Renaissance Era. Brown was born in in Washington, D.C. in 1901. At the age of 17, Brown won a scholarship to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He joined Omega Phi Psi fraternity and traveled to Boston for the initiation. In 1923, Brown attended Harvard University. There he graduated with the master's degree. Brown taught for three years at Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg. After that, he became an English professor at Howard University in 1929. Brown also taught at Fisk University and Lincoln University in Missouri. Brown's wide-ranging obligation of African American poetry and culture is likewise significant to his distinction. He

untiringly and unobtrusively endorsed the worth of folk culture at Howard University. In 1981, Brown's importance in poetry was recognized when *The Collected Poems* (1980) was awarded the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize (Pettis, 2018).

African American Males in the United States

African Americans in the United States have not attained equality by many principles (Goyette, 2014). African Americans are twice as likely to be jobless compared to Caucasian Americans. In addition, when African Americans were hired, they made less money than their Caucasian American colleagues (United States Department of Labor, 2007). When ethnicity and sex are scrutinized, the research showed that African American males make up 62% of the entire incarcerated male prison population (Veale, 2015). African American men in the United States in all age groups are six to eight times more probable than their Caucasian American counterparts to spend time in a penal system. Furthermore, between 1980 and 2000, the rate of imprisonment for African American males increased by 370%, whereas for Caucasian American it increased by 334% (Justice, 2014).

For centuries, African American men have been falsely labeled as unable to be taught, treacherous, and social impaired. These viewpoints have diabolized African American men.

African American males are overrepresented in crime data and imprisonment statistics and see lesser graduation numbers and college attendees. According to some studies, the inadequate or absence of education of African American boys and men almost guarantees their extraordinary representation in crime statistics (Kearney, Harris, Jácome, & Parker, 2014).

The absence of academic possibilities for African American boys and men negatively influence not only their lives, but also humanity. Imprisonment leaves many African American families with a single-family household. Consequently, lessening the possibility of financial stability and a required matriarchal household arrangement. There is extensive ranging acknowledgement of the necessity to accelerate the educational attainment of African American boys (Howard, 2013). Considerably more should be done to address the dilemma of African American boys and men. Adverse results for African American men are not reflective of their possibilities. However, the statistics are an alarming consequence of universal and organizational denial of equal support and resources needed to be completely successful and involved in the society in the United States (Schott Foundation, 2015).

Adults with a postsecondary degree have much reduced unemployment rates and greater lifetime earnings than do their associates who did not graduate from a postsecondary institution (Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013). The contrary to that fact is told for most city locations: destitution, poor performing primary and secondary schools, inadequate admittance to postsecondary schools, and, ultimately, reduced probability of getting a lucrative career (Howell & Timberlake, 2014). The academic, social, and family hardships that the African American male pupil encounters are identified with their underachievement and the unbalanced number of African American male educators. As of now, there is an absence of qualified African American male candidates as educators. This could be resolved settled if African American boys had a more positive K-12 academic experience. All together for African American males to have a better involvement in the classroom, existing educators need to expand their social ability and affectability to the African American male experience. Moreover, there should be an

increment of African American male mentors in the classroom to help pupils effectively explore the unwritten principles of the scholastic framework (Hudson, 2017).

Why Do Some African American Men Become Educators

Tafari (2013) studied why Hip-Hop Generation African American men, those born between 1965 and 1984, chose elementary school teaching for their careers. From the study results, he identified five purposes underlying African American men decisions to become educators: as an act of opposition; as an act of fathering; as a spiritual assignment; as a fervor; and as an expression of hip hop. Tafari also noted that those African American men who do become elementary teachers often are branded with preconceived notions of negative stereotypes. Li (2012) studied two clusters of “pre-service” educators registered in the educator program at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. There were two clusters of participants. One group of participants passed the Praxis I Exam. The other cluster of participants did not pass the Praxis I exam. During the interviewing process, qualitative assessment and interview information was gathered and evaluated. The findings that were most profound for the important influences for the participants’ scholarly success were reassuring academic settings and the participants’ preemptive individual characteristics. Consequently, effective and qualified educators motivated pupils, replicated appropriate behavior through reassuring settings to establish sustainability in participants to accomplish demanding scholarly achievement.

Research relating to the shortage of African American male educators was more inclined to emphasize the causes for the shortage rather than placing emphasis on the causes that inspired African American male to become educators. Qualitative studies, that involved interviewing African American male educators, have been conducted to

discover inspirations for teaching, to inspect African American men's experiences as educators, and to determine what African American males believed should be conducted to recruit more African American males into the education career. All things considered, African American males expressed a desire to help students succeed in several studies (Williams, 2012; Harris, 2012; & Peatross, 2011).

Williams (2012) conducted a study that explored the opinions and lived experiences of African American male educators. Using purposeful sampling, Williams interviewed 15 African American male educators from elementary educators through secondary educators in a southeast Georgia school system having 19,000 pupils. The racial composition of the school district encompassed approximately 50% African American, 40% Caucasian American, 5% Hispanic, 4% multiracial, and 1% Asian American students. Fifty-six percent of these pupils were categorized as economically deprived and received free or reduced lunches. In addition, approximately 35% of the school educators in this district were African American. This number was five times above the national average (The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2009). The open-ended interview questions explored the experiences of the African American male educators regarding inspiration for becoming an educator, and the researchers established that the principal motive for African American males pursuing teaching occupations was a yearning to assist others, especially young African American male pupils. Twelve of the 15 participants specified that a yearning to help others were the essential reason for becoming an educator. In addition, six of the participants expressed a yearning to serve as positive examples for younger peers. Nine of the participants said

that an income was the principal reason and conveyed that a higher income is desired to offer a steady life for their family (Williams, 2012).

Teacher Shortage

According to Bond (2014), the percentage of African America educators in United States' public schools have increased from 12% to 17%. However, African America educators are absent at every important point in the education pipeline (USDE, 2016). This is happening at the time when more African American educators are desired, especially in metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Overall, the teacher shortage is becoming a national crisis severely impacting several major cities. A study, supported by the Albert Shanker Institute and researched by Bond (2014), concentrated on nine urban areas and discovered that these urban areas were dealing with dire educator scarcities and declining numbers of African American candidates. Wages and working environments were found to be the chief causes for African American educators to leave the teaching field. In addition, African American left the teaching field as they were frequently positioned in schools with deprived building conditions, insignificant instructional materials, and significant administrative misunderstanding.

Recommendations were made in the study that national and state efforts to intensify retaining and hiring more African American educators (Bond, 2014).

Given the dilemma of African American male pupils in K-12 public schools, researchers have attempted to increase the number of African American males who enter the teaching field to by funding their educational and social development (Bryan & Williams, 2017). Despite an increase in the number academic scholarships, African American educators are still created as 'pedagogical kinds.' In other words, they are educators that are directed to secure, manage, and oversee the disruptive African

American students (Brockenbrough, 2015). These expectations placed on African American male educators are often decided in advance before they arrive the classrooms. Bristol (2014) suggested that our society needs more than just African American male adult bodies in K-12 classrooms to better maintenance the educational and social needs of African America male students.

Several state-run and national agencies have established programs to focus on the concern of recruiting men, and especially African American men, into teacher-education programs. Examples of state-run and national agencies have established programs include Call-Me-Mister Recruiting Program, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, TEACH Grant, Black Men Teach, Robert Noyce Scholarship program, Teach for America, and Troops to Teach. Despite the obtainability of these programs, African American men continue to be inadequately represented in the Education field (Henry, 2017). Jackson, Boutte, and Wilson (2013) highlighted the mission of the Call-Me-Mister program plan was to expand the number of obtainable African American male educators, especially in the academically challenged district secondary schools. The Call-Me-Mister program offers (a) tuition assistance through Loan Forgiveness programs for candidates that are fully admitted into teacher education colleges, (b) academic support services to facilitate students' learning and achievement, (c) cohort groupings for cultural and social development, and (d) support with employment. Jackson et al. (2013) also addressed that the academic difficulty in the Call-Me-Mister program is calculated and demanding. Approximately 20% of the candidates drop out of the Call-Me-Mister program. Most candidates withdraw from the program due to the entrance tests. All participants must pass a set of standardized entrance exams. Just because a candidate withdraws from the program does not evidently mean that the student will also withdraw from school.

However, despite the accessibility of these programs, African American male educators remain to be underrepresented in the K-12 public school system. Therefore, more needs to be prepared to recognize and to execute effective strategies for enrolling African American males into teacher-education programs (Hudson, 2017).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy is an operative reform-oriented instructional technique that teachers can use to increase the academic achievements of students from varied backgrounds (Gay, 2013; Paris, 2012). Culturally relevant teachers acclimate their instructional techniques based on what they know about ethnically varied pupils' cultural backgrounds or lived experiences to help these pupils master learning. Paris (2012) highlighted that the theoretical value of the terms and approaches related with culturally relevant or reactive instruction allows it to become "ubiquitous in educational research circles and in teacher education programs" (p. 94). In other words, teacher education helps preservice educators learn about culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culturally responsive pedagogy has become an intercession that might assistance to reverse the dogged under achieving of African American male students. Johnson (2011) conducted a case study approach that explored pedagogy styles in a literacy class. The researcher interviewed educators regarding their views of African American male students and literacy teaching. In addition, the researcher also explored the topic by observing and recording classroom exercises. The outcomes of the study emphasized high school English teaching exercises that were advantageous in supporting the goal to close the achievement gap for African American male students in literacy. Furthermore, Martin (2013) clarified the significance for educator to find ways to take a favored

position with each student's capacity to acquire knowledge as a method to enable their educational attainment. One of the major concerns in training educators for culturally responsive pedagogy is some educators are inclined not to be aware of the exercise demonstrated in actual classrooms. In Martin's study, the researcher used lifelike stimuluses to explore distinguished teaching exercises in the classroom.

Literary materials that are frequently culturally relevant tend to benefit African American male students to flourish in the classroom. Stevenson and Ross (2015) conducted a case study to discover masculine practices of literacy within a cluster of African American male students. The study recommended exploration with the goal of accepting and developing African American male reading materials is significant to help guarantee constructive outcomes in life for this ethnic group and age group. The outcome of the study supplemented preceding research on culturally relevant pedagogy for African American male youth. The study delivered a strength-centered insightful that honored the multiple literacies that African American male youth read inside and outside of the schools. African American male youth must have a sense of acceptance in an academic environment and have confidence that their educators care about their educational journey. When debating students' educational attainment, Kenyatta (2012) associated educators' opinions to persuading the educational attainment of African American male students. Therefore, with the United States' cultural composition continually altering, and African American male students being omitted from interesting selections in the curriculum, there is an urgent demand for educators to become more culturally receptive (Ford, 2014).

Encounters That African American Male Students Endure

The current literature about African American male students' academic encounters is predominantly positioned within the juncture of two categories. The structural encounters pertain to an overall perspective. Structural pertains to systemic policies and conditions. On the other hand, the individual category pertains to personal experiences. Individual discusses educators' curriculum and deficit thinking (Allen; 2012; Landsman & Lewis, 2011). Regrettably, social scientists' obsession with labeling the crisis confronted by African American males and the media's portrayal of them as comedians, athletes, and/or lawbreakers condenses unseen the everyday achievements of African American men as they go about being accountable people, donating in their neighborhoods, and providing for their families (Howard & Flenbaugh, 2011).

The joining of government funded United States' schools was intended to bring uniformity among Causations and African American and Caucasian Americans pupils. Nonetheless, African American boys have struggled to flourish in the American instructive framework that, by and large, is not equivalent. Poor graduation numbers, occasionally under 50%, alongside issues identified with discipline issues inside the school classroom are two unmistakable issues that are affecting African American male boys (Brockenbrough, 2015). For example, Assensoh (2018) reasoned that African American male pupils are three and a half times more inclined to be suspended or ousted from school when contrasted with Caucasian American male pupils. Furthermore, Mendez and Knoff (2003) directed an investigation at a west Central Florida School District that analyzed rates of suspension by gender and race. The researchers found that African American boys and girls had higher rates of suspension than both Caucasian American and Hispanic boys and girls. The bulk of these suspensions were for trivial

behavior violations such as noncompliance or resistance. As indicated by the researchers, this pattern is illustrative of numerous school areas all through the United States.

Notwithstanding the increased expulsions suspensions, research recommends that educators are one-sided against African American male pupils. For example, Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) conducted a study that explored educators' perceptions towards African American and Caucasian American pupils who were involved in a troublesome conduct. The participants were asked to orally make disciplinary suggestions after overlooking a referral slip that portrayed the pupil's troublesome conduct. Each referral slip incorporated the name on a pupil who conveyed a stereotypical African American name, such as Deshawn or Darnel, or a Caucasian American name, such as Greg or Jake. The study moreover inspected the mental procedures that added to the inconsistencies in penalizing African American and Caucasian American pupils.

The outcomes of the study demonstrated that educators feel more agitated by minor school violations, such as classroom interruptions or rebellion, that were performed by African American pupils when contracted to their Caucasian American peers. Educators were also more inclined to view African American students' violations as a consistent way of behaving and were more probable to expel African American students for the same violations performed by Caucasian American pupils. The outcomes exhibited that pupils with stereotypical African American names were more likely to be considered as menaces and were suggested for expelling more regularly than pupils with typical Caucasian American names. Consequently, this study showed the negative generalizations of African American pupils added to extreme punitive action towards them in school.

Another encounter for African American male pupils is their overrepresentation in special education courses. Studies propose that African American pupils are much more probable to be positioned in special education course or be categorized with emotional or behavioral infirmities. In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education concluded that African American pupils were 2.28 times more probable than pupils from other races to be positioned in special education because of behavioral worries. African American pupils are excessively diagnosed with infirmities connected to expressing behaviors, such as hostility, hyper activeness, and adversarial disobedience. African American pupils who are placed in special education courses are more likely branded and experience poorer academic learning results. Consequently, African American pupils in special education courses are more probable to be imprisoned later in life (Bean, 2013).

African American males are also inadequately represented in gifted programs and advanced placement classes. In 2011, African American pupils made up 19% of the student body in the United States but only 10% of gifted education registration. This statistic reveals a 47% under-representation. Ford and King proposed that this disproportion happens because of the established history of cruelty and racism in the United States (Ford & King Jr., 2014). Bryan and Ford (2014) also suggested that African American male pupils are often misjudged by educators. This error in judgment can cause African American male pupils to feel less capable in their skills and underachieve.

Achievement Gap

The underachievement of African American pupils remains to be one of the most debated subjects and studied phenomenon in education. Data continuously show the widening attainment gap for African American boys. A modification is noticed only when the topic is criticized. (Miller Dyce, 2013). Henfield (2012) added that the

pressures of African American male educational attainment and stated unsuccessful educational attainment is more bothersome for males than females. White and Kline (2012) noted that African American students in a rural environment also encounter educational issues. In rural areas, educators are not better equipped to comprehend multiculturalism in the classroom than those educators in an urban environment.

African American male students must deal with more obstacles to succeed academically than any other gender or ethnic groups. African American males might have to encounter more obstacles due to the media constant portraying of negative images of African America men in the media may face (Henfield, 2012). Investigating the literature could reveal a pattern of challenging areas for African American male students in their educational environment and a pattern of potentials to recover the educational attainment among this ethnic group.

Even though African American male students are aware of the significance of education, many continue to demonstrate low educational achievement. Bell (2014) piloted a qualitative study arguing the problematic education encounters that African American students confronted. Bell's study established that across the United States, African American male students' low graduation rates are urgent. The purpose of the research was to establish why African American male students withdraw from school. In addition, the study aimed to explore the existing occupational standing of the study's participants. The number of African American male students who graduated from secondary school dropped behind their peers of other ethnicities. The tools and materials obtainable to educators for improving educators' efficiency and advancing instructional methods did not promise many African American male students would matriculate through secondary school and graduate. Most educators working with African

American male students are deprived of the capability and temperament to work with this group of students.

Research has shown that African American male students are not attaining at the same rate as associated to their Caucasian American peers. According to statistics from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2017), fourth grade African American pupils continue to underachieve when compared to other ethnic groups on both the NAEP mathematics and reading tests. This development continues into eighth and 12th grades where African American pupils' NAEP mathematics and reading results are gravely lower when compared to their Caucasian American peers. Each subsequent year, African American pupils continue to grapple educationally. In 2015, African American pupils' aptitude levels in the eighth grade were at a disturbing 15%. This was the lowest of all aptitude rankings by ethnic groups. According to the data, these numbers are predicted to remain going in the same direction. In 2015, African American pupils' aptitude rankings in the 12th grade were 7%, and their reading aptitude rankings were at 14% (NAEP, 2017). Unfortunately, still recording at the lowest of all 12th grade NAEP mathematics and reading aptitude rankings. These inconsistent differences within African American pupils' educational attainment and their peers seem to conclude that there is lack of academic readiness by African American students in the K-12 school setting.

Discipline Gap

There is an excess of data on the African American – Caucasian American achievement gap (Aratani, Wright, & Cooper, 2011; Kunjufu, 2005; Morgan, 1980). On the other hand, another phenomenon persuading the future of African American male students is the discipline gap. The discipline gap is the disproportionately large percentage of African American male students suspended as a form of disciplinary actions that can

cause interruptions in secondary graduation and an increase in the dropout rates (Landson-Billings, 2011). Zero-tolerance procedures have proliferated the dropout rates of African American male students, who are more probable to be imprisoned because of poor employment skills, participation in unlawful street activities, and punishing sentencing procedures for non-violent criminals (Cramer, Gonzalez, & Pellegrini-Lafont, 2014).

The procedures of disciplinary notices and suspensions to adolescent department of corrections and consequential creating a school-to-prison pipeline. The beginning of the pipeline starts when teachers classifying some African American male students as less probable to flourish in school and in need of more punishment (Gass & Laughter, 2015). The use of metal detectors at schools, locker examines, pressures standardized tests, and tracking African American male pupils with developmental problems, all play a factor in the school-to-prison pipeline journey experience. Furthermore, Welch added (2013) that school suspensions, is decidedly associated to household poverty. With the education labor force primarily Caucasian American women, African American male students are much too frequently on the receiving end of zero tolerance procedures that consequently include law enforcement and the judicial system involvements. Nationwide, African American pupils are administered long-term and short-term suspensions at 3.5 times the rate of Caucasian American pupil (Elias & Buzelli, 2013).

Ethnic Identity

The evolution of a well-developed ethnic identity is essential to the educational and financial attainments for African American male students. In addition, a well-developed ethnic identity is eventually the outlet for addressing the various inequalities that disadvantaged ethnic groups may face (Stokes, 2014). According to

Bowman Heads, Glover, Castillo, Blozis, and Kim (2018), ethnic identity is the level one feels a sense of acceptance to one's ethnic group; participation in the ethnic group's events and cultural activities, and optimistic assessment of the ethnic group. Theorists hypothesize ethnic identity development as a developmental progression that modifies over time and differs across personalities. In addition, researchers have theorized that ethnic identity can act as a defensive feature against possibly damaging behavioral and social encounters.

Regardless of the approaches that are utilized, it is important for African American male students to develop a flourishing ethnic identity. A flourishing ethnic identity not only provides African American male students with confidence in their own capabilities (Wright, 2011). Additionally, a flourishing ethnic identity provides African American male students with the self-reliance they need to be self-assured in their identity at school. A well-developed ethnic and self-identity can permit African American male students to be more attached with educators. Consequently, leading to an improved educational attainment (Reid, 2013). An optimistic self-concept is important for appropriate social, educational, and financial consequences. A well-developed self-concept plays an important part in initial educational gratification and interest altitudes. Consequently, a well-developed self-concept will filter down during years leading to positive college experiences (Stokes, 2014). African American male students who are confident enough in their ethnic identity to have relationships of trust among those of other ethnicities have been linked with higher educational gratification than those who only accompany those of their same ethnicity (Reid, 2013).

In a study piloted by Reid (2013), 190 prosperous, undergraduate African American males enrolled in five research universities were studied to conclude whether

they described self-efficacy, levels of institutional integration, and ethnic identity beliefs as influences that positively impacted their educational attainment. The outcome of the study revealed that those African American males, who described more amounts of ethnic identity beliefs, self-efficacy, and institutional incorporation, had much higher commutative grade point averages. Most outstandingly, this study recognized that educational self-efficacy was the distinct most substantial predictor of educational success in school.

As a result of the optimistic relationship between ethnic identity and educational success, it becomes progressively vital for academic leaders to become acquainted with ethnic identity and its educational gains (Wright, 2011). At the end of the day, educational achievement and a well-developed ethnic identity rest in the hands of the African American male students. This responsibly does not rely solely on the society, educators, and their relatives. Many African American male students who gave an account of educational gains think that their colleagues should make choices based on what is most beneficial for them. Furthermore, many African American male students that achieved educational achievements believed that other African American male students should not look to either their race or any others for judgement (Reid, 2013).

Parental and Family Support

African American male students are frequently exposed to danger influences related with financial hardship and socioeconomic status (Threlfall, Seay, & Kohl, 2013). The danger influences include hostile behavior, sex, illegal drug misuse, gang association, and mental disease. Inside the households of African American male students, the consequence of financial hardships and its associated stress often lead to undesirable parenting techniques. These undesirable parenting techniques are categorized

by less endearment and more violence (Threlfall et al., 2013). Research has compellingly shown that household support is greatly needed to overpower hardships related with SES (Caldwell, Rafferty, Reischl, De Loney, & Brooks, 2010; Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012; Perry, 2009; Threlfall et al., 2013). Researchers have also regularly established that African American male students that encounter sturdy household support structures have better academic success than those who do not (Brown, 2011; Hilgendorf, 2012; McMahon, Felix, & Nagarajan, 2011; Nichols, Kotchick, Barry, & Haskins, 2010; Young, Johnson, Hawthorne, & Pugh, 2011).

Kinship, in African American households, presents an important part in the impending consequences of its members. These kinship relationships spread outside parents and other family members to include adopted relatives. Adopted relatives are made of close associates and community associates who are unrelated. However, these unrelated relatives are sometimes called “cousin”, “auntie”, and “uncle” (McMahon et al., 2011; Perry, 2009; Rowley & Bowman, 2009; Taylor, Chatters, Woodward, & Brown, 2013). close associate, adopted relative, and family member has been shown to present an important part in the academic achievement of African-American male students. However, the father and mother roles have been revealed to be the most noteworthy aspect for African American male students and their academic achievement (McMahon et al., 2011; Rowley & Bowman, 2009).

McMahon et al. (2011) researched middle school pupils in two Chicago public schools. The researchers discovered that both dad and mom were recorded as vital benefactors of support. In this study, McMahon et al. (2011) researched the associations between long-lasting neighborhood nuisances, collective supports, and self-identity, as well as several other support groups, both concurrently and longitudinally. A longitudinal

sample of 85 pupils and a cross-sectional sample of 133 African-American pupils in grades six through eight partook in questionnaires. Results showed that deprived environmental areas and parental support were linked with self-esteem. The researchers regularly found mothers to be the main benefactors of support for their male children, whereas dads were recorded most often among male support providers for informational, physical, and mental provisions.

Even though being recorded as primary support benefactors for their sons, single-mother families continue to be overriding within the African American society (Brown, 2011; McMahon et al., 2011; Rowley & Bowman, 2009). The suggestion has been speculated that 66 % of African American offspring do not live with their genetic dads, and that 80 % spend substantial amount of time residing without their fathers (Perry, 2009; Threlfall et al., 2013). Having the occurrence of a resilient, male role model improves the chance for future academic achievement for African American young boys (Abel, 2012). Literature is inundated with information presenting that both residing and nonresidential fathers can have optimistic effects on their sons (Caldwell et al., 2010; Perry, 2009; Threlfall et al., 2013). Paternal occurrence has shown numerous constructive consequences in the lives of African American male boys, including reduced hostility, premarital sex, and improving mental and academic achievements (Caldwell et al., 2010; Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012; Greif et al., 2011; Threlfall et al., 2013).

Notwithstanding the reasoning behind the nonattendance, as a consequence of this apparent separation, the position of the father within the African American society is often diminished (McMahon et al., 2011). Regardless of this disconnection, the position of the dad has been shown to be extremely significant in the life of his son (Abel, 2012).

When the father is in attendance, the child is less troubled. However, when the dad is not present, an increased household burden is attached to the child. This extract burden can divert African American boys from their academic engagement, learning and accomplishments. It is vital for both dads and moms to find mutual interests and put their efforts together to improve their children's educational achievements.

Family relatives are crucial to the education achievement of African-American male students. Family members are normally the first with the chance to shape the principles and morals toward education for young African American boys (Griffin, del Pilar, McIntosh, & Griffin, 2012). If the household has an adverse outlook toward education, it has been revealed that the student will thrive less as it related to educational achievements (Gonzalez, Jones, Kincaid, & Cuellar, 2012). Similarly, households with educated family members will exemplify educational achievement (Kincaid & Yin, 2011).

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do African American male educators describe their experiences as educators?
2. What strategies and teaching pedagogies do African American educators use to academically engage African American male students?
3. What role do race and gender play in the academically engaging African American male students?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Qualitative Research Approach

There is a significant lack of African American male teachers in the United States. This means that many K-12 students will never be exposed to an African American male teacher. In addition, it is not uncommon for the media to broadcast damaging stereotypes pertaining to African American males (Trotman and Moss-Bouldin, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences, knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, and perceptions, and experiences of African American male educators in the K-12 educational system. The researcher discovered how African American male educators have academically engaged African American male students. The study also discovered the themes that reoccurred in the data. In addition, the study examined successful pedagogical practices that can serve African American male students. A qualitative research strategy was used for this study. Qualitative research was the best strategy to use for this study because it allowed for data collection in natural settings and it was more considerate than quantitative research towards the subject matter being studied (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research was used because it was designed to provide nonstatistical data and a thorough understanding of human behavior while using standards to validate meaning of certain behaviors or actions. Additionally, phenomenology research was a valued qualitative research method that achieved a better understanding of the meaning of the African American participants lived experiences.

The qualitative approach for this study involved phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) defined phenomenology as the study of lived experiences from the viewpoints of those being researched. Accordingly, Creswell (2013) stated, "A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a

concept or a phenomenon” (p. 76). In the approach to phenomenology, the researcher, through fact-finding activities, emphasized the commonalities of participants who have encountered the identical phenomenon and framed those participants’ encounters into a depiction of collective essence (Ary, Jacobs, Razavich, & Sorenson, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Whereas the plight of African American males in education can be highlighted in collected nonstatistical data, this qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of African American male educators as they made meaning of the significance African American male educators play in motivating African American male students to achieve academically in the K-12 school setting. In addition, the study highlighted the meaning of the participants’ desire to become educators, role models for African American male students, and African American male educators’ beliefs, attitudes, pedagogies, and thoughts about the academic success for African American male students. The participants’ lived experiences were explained through their individual voices.

Husserl explained (2001) how the researcher’s apparent state and previous experiences of a phenomenon must be screened until the study is conducted, the data is examined, and the data is analyzed and validated. There have been expectations and overviews made about African American males in education that must be thrown aside to create the most accurate study. The principal point of this qualitative phenomenological study will be to collect data, analyze the data, and allow the educational world to explore the lives of African American male educators.

Creswell (2013) emphasized an explanatory approach to phenomenology, known as hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is credited to Van Manen. Van Manen’s approach to hermeneutic phenomenology encompassed the research of

lived experiences based on the recognition of a phenomenon of high concern and a reflection on vital themes that make up the description of the lived experiences, subsequent in a written interpretive description of the phenomenon. In advocating research, Lester (1999) stated the following:

As a research method, phenomenology is known for being particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individual from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions. Adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy and action. (p. 1)

For this researcher's study, phenomenology served as the method that was used to explore the lived experiences of African American male educators implementing instructional practices could be examined. The intent of the study expanded understanding of the experiences that the educators encountered as it related to being African American male educators in a public secondary school setting. The researcher utilized an interpretive phenomenological analysis to explore their experiences as it relates to instructional practices they used to academically engage African American male students. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2013) stated, "Interpretive phenomenological analysis is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (p. 1). This phenomenological approach allowed the essence of the educators' voices to be heard as it related to their experiences and understandings in connection to the phenomenon.

Participants

The researcher for this study arranged the number of participants at a level where the researcher was able to achieve optimal understanding of the topic of the study. Participants for this study included 10 African American male educators that were currently teaching within a secondary public-school district in southeastern Florida. Smith et al. (2013) suggested that there is no correct response to the inquiry of the sample size. The concern is quality not quantity. African American male educators were selected from one diverse school district. The selection of the participants was based on the following: (a) at least three years of teaching experience, (b) currently teaching in a secondary classroom setting, and (c) are a decedent of an ethnic group of Americans with total or partial ancestry from Africa. The urban school district was located within in a medium size city. Because of the size of the school district, it was anticipated that the participants would have varying backgrounds in terms of where they were born, raised, educated, teaching experiences, and so forth.

Purposeful sampling and snowballing were used in this study. According to Creswell (2012), purposeful convenient sampling occurs when the researcher picks the participants and sites for a study because they can purposefully enlighten an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in a study. The study specifically utilized homogenous purposeful sampling. Homogenous purposeful sampling involved deliberately choosing participants that are the same or similar in nature and identical throughout (Patton, 1990). Therefore, homogenous purposeful sampling was used when conducting this qualitative. In addition to purposeful sampling, snowball sampling allowed a participant that met certain criteria to suggest others to participate in the study that also met the predetermined criteria (Fletcher, 2013). At least three

participants were not initially selected, therefore snowball sampling was used in this study. Snowball sampling consist of the researcher inviting participants to help recruit other participants for the study (Creswell, 2012).

Initially, the researcher sent a letter or email to the President of the graduate chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity in South Florida. In 1911, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was founded at Howard University in 1911. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was the first predominately African American fraternity created at a Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The fraternity's motto is "Friendship is Essential to the Soul" and its cardinal principles are "Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift." In 1914, the fraternity was incorporated in Washington, D.C., and by 1920 the fraternity had established 10 chapters. Famous members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity include Steve Harvey, Jesse Jackson Sr., Shaquille O'Neal, Carter G. Woodson, Tom Joyner, Benjamin Hooks, Roy Wilkins, L. Douglas Wilder, Vernon Jordan, William H. Hastie, Michael Jordan, Earl Graves, and Rickey Smiley (Brooks, 2018).

The researcher received permission from the President of the graduate chapter to recruit educators within South Florida's graduate chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. After request was granted, the President provided the researcher with the Keeper of Record's contact information. A Letter of Invitation and Consent was sent to all fraternity members by the Keeper of Records. The letter included information about the study and who to contact. Those fraternity members that were educators who demonstrated interested in participating in the study were contacted by the researcher. The researcher then sent a Demographics of Participants Form (see Appendix A) to interested fraternity members to determine if the interested members met the criteria to become participants. The Demographics of Participants asked for demographic details such as number of years

in the teaching field, gender, race, and contact information. Once the researcher received the Demographics of Participants back from the interested fraternity members, the researcher selected the participants using information from the Demographics of Participants, sent and collected the Audio Consent Form, and collected the signed Letter of Invitation and Consent Letter from the selected participants. The researcher selected 10 participants for the study.

Ten male educators who self-identified as Black or African American were selected as participants in this study. All participants were interviewed via GoToMeeting, in person, and/or via telephone. The participants were questioned using an in-depth interview structure with 12 open-ended questions. The goal of the interviews was to produce responses from the participants that would explain the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. The goal of the phenomenological inquiry revealed the participants' their knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences as African American males who are challenged to academically engage African American male students.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with three African American male secondary educators who are students in a graduated Education Program. These pilot students were recruited from the researcher's personal contacts. The purpose of the pilot study was to acquire responses on interview questions clearness and approach. The pilot test was a significant component in interview preparation for research and contribution in the determination of errors and modifications that might be needed to be made with the interview questions and protocol (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Individual interviews were

held with each student in the pilot study. The data collected from the pilot study was not utilized in the final research study.

Data Collection Tools

The qualitative phenomenological study regarding the lived experiences of African American males in the educational profession involved the implementation of participants interviews. The interviews were used to collect data from participants that had detailed knowledge or experiences not otherwise obtainable to the researcher (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The qualitative research interview explored and discovered meanings of central themes in the life and world of the subjects (Kvale, 1996). An interview is particularly useful in obtaining in-depth data about an issue from a participant's personal experience (McNamara, 1999). Interviews also allowed for a rapport, adaptability, enabling trust to obtain data the participant would not normally reveal by any other data collection method (Gall et al., 2007). Data collection was conducted by one-on-one in person interviews. Data was analyzed and coded. The researcher then identified themes and subthemes.

Procedures

The interview questions used in the research study were standardized open-ended interview questions. There were a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions asked to each participant (Gall et al., 2007). The interview questions were concise and designed to measure a specific topic. The wording of the questions reflected the purpose of the study with the intention of supporting the exploration of the lived experiences of African American male educators and their perspectives on motivating African American male students to achieve academically in the K-12 school setting. The methods of data collection in this study were audio recorded semi-structured interviews

and researcher reflective journal entries. Interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the participants and lasted approximately 50 - 90 minutes depending on the responses the participants provided. Follow up questions were created based on participants' responses. The researcher recorded brief notes during the interview. The notes were incomplete due to the complexity of asking questions and writing responses simultaneously. Therefore, abbreviations were used for writing notes during the interview. The data from the interviews were transcribed from the audio recordings. After the data was transcribed, Interview Transcripts (see Appendix B) and Member Check Letters were sent to the participants to verify the accuracy of the data. According to Creswell (2012), member checking is when researchers check their findings with participants in a study to conclude if their data are correct. Therefore, validity was proven by member checking, whereby data and interpretations are tested with the participants.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by an on-going process throughout the analysis and report writing stages of the study. All audio recorded interviews were transcribed manually. Each interview was analyzed for repeated words, phrases, and patterns. These single words and phrases were then collapsed into larger themes. Interview transcriptions were also coded using an electronic software program. Both the manual and software coded data were used in addition to the researcher's journal reflections when comparing the data against one another. The codes that appeared the most were kept.

The analysis of data was framed using the Creswell (2012) six-step process for interpreting and analyzing phenomenological interviews. The first step was to begin with the researcher bracketing personal experiences to setting aside all biases, prejudices, and preconceived thoughts about the phenomenon. The second step was searching the data

from the interviews for meaningful statements related to participants' experiences with phenomena. This was accomplished by investigating the interviews and field notes for noteworthy statements correlated to experiences with the phenomena. The third step consisted of grouping participants' statements into thematic units. Interview data was analyzed to identify themes by reviewing the transcripts and highlighting various themes within the transcripts. Step 4 described the participants' experiences in relation to the phenomena described in the research study. This included the researcher describing the procedures as well as describing the participants' experiences. Step 5 included providing a description of how the participants experienced the phenomena. Step 6 will be the composition of a description. The descriptions provided an essence of each participant's experiences (Wimbush, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

According to Moustakas (1994), ethical values should be the driving inspiration for the work of human science researchers with human participants. The nature of qualitative research can be particularly private as it investigates many facets of participants' lives. With this being said, it was of extreme importance that the researchers considered the participants' confidentiality while conducting the research. Furthermore, being an African American male educator, the researcher acknowledged the rights of the participants and their liabilities in participating in this study. Consequently, the researcher took extreme measures to protect the participants' rights.

Initially, approval was requested from Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board. No risks or ethical dilemmas were present when conducting the qualitative phenomenological study of African American males in education. The participants were not required to engage in any unethical or dangerous actions. The

identity of the participants was protected by using assigned abbreviations for their names. For example, interviewed participants received pseudonyms such as African American Male Educator 1 (AME1) through African American Male Educator 10 (AME10). This form of identification occurred with all 10 participants. The participants' schools and school districts remained confidential and referred to as the target school and the target school district. The confidentiality of all participants remained secure for the entirety of the study. The data collected was secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access until it was analyzed. Electronic data on the researcher's personal computer was secured with a password. Only the researcher had access to the study data. Upon completion of the data analysis, the data, all related files, audio tapes, and documents was placed under security in a locked storage file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years and then destroyed. The destruction of the paper files and documents will occur through the process of shredding and then placed into a trash receptacle. The audio tapes will be deleted.

Trustworthiness

According to Creswell (2012), validation is more of a process whereby writers should apply at least several methods for their research to be authentic and trustworthy. Multiple forms of data included interviews, field notes, researcher reflections, expert review, piloting, and member checking was used in the study. The researcher aimed to create rigor in data collection and analysis allowing the forms of data to corroborate one another. All participants were given a written transcript of their interviews to perform member checking of their accounts. If any discrepancies occur, participants were allowed the opportunity to provide clarity of their words.

Potential Research Bias

The most evidence bias the research encountered was based on the researcher's past teaching experience in the K-12 school setting. As an African American that once taught in a K-12 school system, the researcher had a natural bias. However, this bias was not considered a limitation, but more as an advantage in being able to deeply understand the experiences and feelings of the participants. Another concept of phenomenology is epoché. It is when the researcher deliberately abstains from personal decisions and sets aside expectations. Moustakas (1994) further describes epoché as the means to ensure that the phenomena are revisited, freshly, and naively in a wide-open sense.

It is the bracketing of the researcher's beliefs about the phenomenon that described and gained meaning without bias and judgement. For this inquiry, the epoché process was engaged throughout the entire research study. The study began with a subjectivity statement. The statement reflected upon the researcher's knowledge and experiences with the phenomenon and continued in ongoing review and addition to the subjectivity statement as necessary. This was particularly important in the data collection and analysis phase of the research study because the interpretations of meaning were derived solely upon the statements supplied by the participants and not from any assumptions held by the researcher (Green, 2017).

Limitations

The limitations of the study were the potential challenges of not having enough participants from different school districts. Selecting participants from the same school district revealed data that was narrowed. In addition, data revealed either a more positive or negative experiences. Having participants from only one school district concluded that their experiences can be largely informed or based on the demographic arrangement and

social-cultural worksite structure of that one school district. The study could have offered different experiences if females and non-African American participants took part in the study. However, the study placed African American males as the experts of their own experiences by speaking solely with African American males.

An added limitation of the study was the limited number of African American male educators within one municipality and state. The findings from this study provided only a small representation of the participants' experiences within a specific geographical environment. Snowball sampling was a limitation to consider because the participants came through personal connections. The second limitation was the research findings were specifically relevant to a unique demographic with the career of teaching. The research findings were only relevant to African American male educators. The third limitation was the sole method of collecting data via interviews. Using the interview method of collecting data limited the type of data collected from the participants as oral descriptions only. In my opinion, using only an interview method to collect data from a uniform participant group did not allow participants to be witnessed while working in the classroom or interacting face-to face with African American male students.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 4 examines the data analysis and findings of this phenomenological study. The intent of the study is to explore how a group of African American male educators understood their experiences of implementing strategies to academically engage African American male students. I used semi-structured one-on-one interviews to gather and analyze data for codes and themes. I used MAXQDA to organize, code, and highlight patterns in the data collected from the transcripts. My research addresses three questions to thoroughly explore the experiences of the subjects:

1. How do African American male educators describe their experiences as educators?
2. What strategies and teaching pedagogies do African American educators use to academically engage African American male students?
3. What roles do race and gender play in academically engaging African American male students?

Emergence of Themes

This researcher documented and analyzed the educators' narratives. Comparisons and distinctions among the participants' responses were noted. Sixteen major themes were identified in the data analysis: policy issues, negative perceptions, mentoring, called to teach, relations, valuing education, classroom management, social influences, college experiences, critical race, successes, students' self-concept, successful students, pedagogy, educators' K-12 experiences, and teaching experiences. I reduced the final 16 major themes into three sub-themes to address my research questions. Analysis of the data revealed three sub-themes that were significant for the research study and research questions. The three sub-themes were (a) teacher-student relationships, (b) importance of

African American men, and (c) teacher support. The major and sub-themes did not stand on their own but were relevant to African American male educators expressing their experiences in a K-12 educational setting. Some of the quotes from the participants were relevant for multiple themes and were thus reproduced more than once.

Participant Background Information

Before the study began, all participants were sent consent forms via e-mail. The email contained the consent form and instructions to initial, sign, and date the form before scanning, e-mailing, or faxing it back to the researcher. All participants signed and returned the consent forms. Data collection was directed by utilizing a demographic tool and an interview guide that was developed by the researcher (see Appendix B). The demographic tool contained questions regarding age, total years of teaching, and subjects taught. The study was conducted with the GoToMeeting platform. Participants were screened for technological abilities, and thorough directions on how to enter the video conference were provided via e-mail and telephone. Individuals were provided with the researcher's contact information and were encouraged to ask questions. Each participant's entries were coded to preserve their anonymity: Participant 1 (AME1); Participant 2 (AME2); Participant 3 (AME3); Participant 4 (AME4); Participant 5 (AME5); Participant 6 (AME6); Participant 7 (AME7); Participant 8 (AME8); Participant 9 (AME9); and Participant 10 (AME10).

AME1 was a 37-year old African American male school administrator. He taught science at the middle school level for 15 years. He finished his first term as an administrator at the time of his interview. AME2 was a 35-year old African American male educator. He has taught sixth grade science for eight years. AME3 was a 42-year old African American male educator. He taught science at the middle school level for 18

years. AME4 was a 54-year-old African American male educator. He taught business education at the middle school level for 27 years. This school year was his last year as an educator before retirement. AME5 was a 29-year old African American male educator. He taught language arts at the high school level for four years. AME6 was a 30-year old African American male educator. He taught exceptional student education at the middle school level for five years. AME7 was a 41-year old African American male educator. He taught several history courses at the high school level. AME8 was a 50-year old African American male educator. He taught biology at the high school level for eight years. He was no longer in the classroom at the time of the interview. He was employed as an administrator at the time of the interview. AME9 was a 39-year-old African American male educator. He has taught language arts and history at the middle school level for nine years. He was employed as a curriculum coach at an elementary school. AME10 was a 42-year-old African American male educator. He has taught science at the middle school level for six years.

Presentation of the Findings

The virtual and asynchronous focus group was conducted via GoToMeeting. The transcripts were organized and evaluated. Next, I sent each participant's transcript via e-mail for them to member check the data. After the respondents reviewed and edited the transcripts for accuracy, additions, or oversights, they returned the transcript and gave their final consent for the data to be used in the study. The transcripts were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis and MAXQDA. They were carefully and repeatedly read for familiarization and were color-coded using Microsoft Word. Initially, words, terms, and phrases were highlighted, and notes were added. As categories and patterns became evident, notes were taken and reviewed for the creation of themes in

MAXQDA. The transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, where they were categorized and coded.

The data were coded in MAXQDA to themes that were developed from the patterns noted in the scholarly journals. The respondents' pseudonyms were coded to cases that allowed for the development of comparisons and inquiries among the participants. The combined thematic results (see Appendix C) feature allowed for an in-depth examination of each theme and enhanced the researcher's ability to observe and note patterns, major themes, and sub-themes. In this study, the most significant themes are those with the highest frequency of experiences in the data, and the sub-themes are the outliers. This chapter refers to the three research questions as RQ1 (research question 1), RQ2 (research question 2), and RQ3 (research question 3). The following 15 major themes were intended to uncover the essence of African American male educators: called to teach, valuing education, classroom management, college experiences, relationships with parents, mentoring, educators' K-12 experience, racism, pedagogy, positive experiences with administration, social influences, negative perceptions, role model, academic achievements, and students' self-concepts. Three other sub-themes that emerged were teacher-student relationships, importance of African American men, and teacher support.

Results for Central Research Question 1

How do African American male educators describe their experiences as educators? This question sought to uncover descriptors of the unique experiences of the participants in their current or former teaching roles.

Overall, all participants spoke candidly about their experiences as African American educators in a public education system. One participant (AME3) expressed the

lack of and need for parental support and involvement. However, five participants (AME1, AME2, AME5, AME6, and AME7) conveyed the importance of institutional support from administrators at the district and local levels. Financial support was addressed by two participants (AME4 and AME8). Support to eliminate racial discrimination was cited by one participant (AME10). The major themes that emerged from RQ1 were negative perceptions, called to teach, and teacher support.

Narrative Summary of Findings for Research Question 1

Negative perceptions. When analyzing the responses to RQ1, four out of 10 participants noted that African American male educators are perceived and treated negatively by colleagues of other races. AME9 expressed deep annoyance regarding administrative treatment towards him due to his race.

Getting the same treatment as other races. Being able to not be picked on about the smallest things. Being able to, when an African American child or a Caucasian child, no matter the race in the classroom, when they're acting out, don't bring me in a meeting if I write a referral because you're not going to bring that other teacher in there, giving me the fair chance of saying, "Okay she wrote this referral and it's a meaning behind it," not "Let me find out why was this referral really written." But you're not doing it to another race. We are always having to justify.

AME1 expressed similar concerns to AME9:

Oftentimes we, as a male, are placed in environments where the majority of the students look like us, and they expect us to walk in and be that disciplinarian in most cases, not necessarily strong in instruction. But they want us to be that disciplinarian. I mean, I've seen it from administration, as well as from parents

where parents be like well, you need a male teacher. A Black male like that. And the unfortunate part is, there aren't that many Black [sic].

However, AME8 considered the differential treatment to be a positive experience: I feel that there are, but those pressures aren't necessarily negative pressures, one of them being probably because of race and more so probably because I'm a male. It is expected that we handle discipline I think a little bit differently, especially with male students, and especially with African American male students. It's not a negative thing, but it may be that some African American male instructors may see that as negative. I think they have to take it as a positive.

AME8 was the only participant of the 10 participants that considered his race and gender to be an advantage in terms of engaging with African American male students.

Called to teach. Nine of the 10 participants felt they were called to teach by intrinsic motivations or social influences. AME6 remarked about his desire to teach as a pre-teen:

I've always had a real love for education from a very young age. I was literally teaching my little brother who had to go through some of my classes back when I was about nine or 10-years old, and he was about six, I would take a dry eraser marker or any kind of marker I would find, I've got plenty worked it over, I would lift up the blinds and start teaching him stuff. We would write on the window, literally on the window of the room, and I would have my markers and I'm doing ABCs and everything with him. I had my mom's Windex and some paper towels wiping it off. I can remember early on, just wanting to be able to teach and pass on knowledge and it started with my little brother, he's my first student.

AME1 was initially motivated to teach by an effective high school teacher.

However, he no longer desired to teach once he entered college.

I had a teacher in high school that I, you know, she was great. Wanted to emulate him, wanted to teach law, study social studies, you know, that was my favorite subject. And then when I got to college I was like nah. I dabbled with it, I did not start out as an education major. I started out as a criminal justice major. And then I took some education classes just in case, and then I started subbing. I was substitute teaching, and then I started getting interim positions that literally would go from let's say September to June, October to June. And it became to the point where the school actually just created a position for me, so I would work during the day, go to school at night. And as soon as I was through with my degree, they were like hey, do you want a job? I was like, I guess. So that's how I got there.

In contrast, AME5 did not have any intrinsic motivations to teach. He decided to become an educator due to the employment opportunities in his local school district.

It wasn't by choice. It was just by chance. My mom and sister are educators. Then I started, when I was in college. I initially was to go into the Music Education Program. But once I started college, I felt that education wasn't my thing. I just didn't have that strong desire to do education. So, I took a different direction. Once I finished college, the opportunities that I wanted were not coming fast enough. So, I just started subbing. Once I started substitute teaching, several schools liked me, and they requested me to come and work and the school offered me a job there. One school offered me a job even though I wasn't certified in education. They still offered me the job because they liked me.

Teacher support. The research data revealed that a lack of parental and administrative support to educators was an essential issue in the lived experiences of African American male educators who academically engage African American male students. Eight participants described their perceptions of how school district administrators or local administrators did not provide classroom teachers with the support to help educators.

AME10 described his experience with an unsupportive administrator during a department meeting:

It mostly occurred in meetings, when we would do team meetings with, say the social studies group would meet with the principal. It seemed as if someone of the Caucasian race would say something, then it would be solidified, or the principal would take what they say to be more important versus what I would say or another African American would suggest because that person was White. Almost to the sense of saying that their intellect was perceived more or perceived in a way where it was taken into deeper consideration or thought versus someone not of that color.

However, AME2 described the lack of support from parents of African American male students:

I feel like also that it should really start at home. I feel like parents sometimes pacify them too much and buy into a lot of the foolishness instead of curbing it at home. So, that way the teacher can have something to build off of, to where the teacher is not parenting or over-parenting, I should say.

AME3 remarked on student classroom placement by administration and how ineffective scheduling can negatively impact classroom instruction. Most of the

participants felt powerless over their state and local demands to teach a predetermined curriculum and different learning levels during each class period.

Varied academic levels of the students in one classroom, that's challenging. Meeting all of the individual levels of the kids can be difficult because in our urban school setting, their levels are all over the place. There's not a central area. Another challenge would be frequent interruptions in the classroom. Either it's outside of the classroom or the students' interruptions, their behaviors, and their focus and motivation. Those are, as well, hindrances. The lack of resources and able adult bodies, I do fully believe that educators should have paraprofessionals. Every educator should have a paraprofessional. So, preparing class lessons and equipment and supplies and resources is needed. Taking attendance and administrative duties are needed, or help is needed in the classroom, and having to wear all of those hats can be an interruption in delivering a message or teaching a subject area.

Results for Central Research Question 2

The second research question investigated strategies and teaching pedagogies that African American educators use to academically engage African American male students. The major emergent themes for RQ2 were kinesthetic learners, teacher-student relationships, and role models. All participants addressed their experience with African American male students as it related to kinesthetic learners, teacher-student relationships, and African American male educators as role models. Most participants (AME1, AME2, AME3, AME5, AME6, AME7, AME9, and AME10) identified kinesthetic learning strategies that were used to academically engage African American male students.

Narrative Summary of Findings for Research Question 2

Kinesthetic learners. All the participants specified instructional strategies that they used to engage African American male students. AME2 explained how he has used hands-on activities, music, art, and memorization to academically engage African American male students.

We're going to get out there and do some kinesthetic learning. We're going to get hands on with our learning, and we're going to do some auditory visuals. I also incorporate and have art integration in my lessons. Almost everything I do, I use some form of art form. Whether it's actual art, whether it's the way that I deliver it, or whether it's music. My students know I'm a musician. I play seven instruments and we're going to have something. Even the way we transition, the way I get their attention. I use things like that. I use a lot of rote memorization things. We do little songs and little sayings.

AME1 reinforced AME2's experience by indicating that research supports the idea that many African American male students are kinesthetic learners.

So, one of the things I've learned through research is that many of our African American males are kinesthetic learners. They got to do stuff with their hands. They have to observe, explore. Just talking to them, you know, the audio and the visual, they're not going to get it. So being a science teacher, my goal was to make certain that every time I had a discussion, a whole group, class discussion about a specific benchmark, a specific strand, or even some type of topic, I could relate it back to an actual, hands-on project. Because I wanted to make sure that when I tell them, you have to connect these two to get a light bulb to work, I want them to see which two you're connecting to the power source to get a light bulb to

work. Like, I want you to take what you heard, what you saw, that you didn't understand, and actually put it into motion. So, I think the biggest thing for teachers to understand is many and I won't even say all, but many African American boys and girls are kinesthetic. They have to feel. They have to touch. They have to explore. So, we need to change our methodology sometimes, from just being audio and visual to more kinesthetics.

AME3 outlined how he used music and art to engage African American male students:

Using music and their creativity to music seems to be a message that will stick with the children. They can first of all, they can easily acquire the knowledge from. They can easily recite the knowledge from, and they can easily recall the knowledge. So, adding that element of art, and not just music, but also drawing and painting and coloring can help to instill information for retaining, receiving, recalling, reciting, all of those, the Rs, can definitely be identified in implementing art, adding art into the curriculum.

AME7 shared his experience as an African American male student in a K-12 public school district. He explained how his past teacher used music to motivate him as a learner. Furthermore, AME7 discussed how he emulated and used his former music teacher's pedagogy and implemented it in his current teaching style:

I had an elementary male music teacher who was very creative. And music was something when I struggled with my math or struggled with English or reading. Music was another outlet for me. It taught me a lot about discipline, and I felt as if I could be creative in that class. His style of teaching really allowed us to, I guess, evolve as young learners and participate. Usually in a routine English or Math

class, we sat in desks, we knew, you know, exactly what we were going to do, it was all scripted and routine. So, very redundant. But, in this music class, particularly, there was an element of creativity and an element of surprise. There was always something new and fun. And I learned that taking some of his interaction, nowadays we call it cooperative learning or team learning, and he was doing it way back in the 80s without even a label. And so, I remember feeling so comfortable, even if I got the answer wrong, I wouldn't be embarrassed, feeling that my input was valued and accepted and appreciated, and I loved the fact that the interaction that he had us do was very creative. So, I think back on those times, and that has helped me make my subject areas innovative and creative for students and unpredictable, yet still touching the necessary concept that needs to be achieved, but in a fun, more creative way. That is been very, very helpful for me.

Teacher-Student Relationship. All participants discussed experiences that demonstrated positive teacher-student relationships. The study revealed that many African American male students benefit from encouraging teacher-student relationships. ME2 used an example of his relationship with a former African American educator that motivated his educational desires:

If I ever saw Mr. Andrews again, I would thank him because not only did he help me get my first job, but he helped me get my first career. It's a lot that I owe to people that they don't even understand how much they helped me. Mr. Anderson was the first person to encourage me. When I was in middle school, he said, "Listen. You can't run around here and be a knucklehead just like everybody else. I know your whole family. You are going to be the trailblazer." This is in middle

school. Low and behold, I was the first to graduate from college, I was the first to get a career. My sister followed me in this career. Second to graduate from college. Second to get a career in education. We both just received our masters and we're both going to go for our doctorate. In middle school I remember him telling me that. I didn't know what a trailblazer was, but now I know. I swear. So impactful.

AME2 distinguished his high school teacher's teaching style from other educators at his school. AME 2 identified a method used to relate and connect with African American male students.

He had this swag to teaching to where he didn't play with you. He didn't play discipline wise, but he was vested in the current culture. He knew what was going on. He knew how to pull you aside and have a conversation with you about real-life stuff that you may be experiencing at that age. His overall demeanor and his style too. He had this swag to teaching that just made you want to listen and made you want to work. Like, when you got up and got out of line, like, "Alright, Mr. Barnes. Alright. I understand. I understand." You automatically start apologizing and get yourself together. You feel like you were disrespecting him.

AME3 concluded that his ability to relate and engage African American male students was an advantage over educators of different races and gender:

I have an advantage because I teach myself. I teach kids, pupils, or students that look like me. Or the students look like me. Or I look like the students, so we can relate. So, in that relation, it is my advantage.

Role models. Most of the participants felt that it was their responsibility to provide a positive example for the African American male students in their classroom.

Furthermore, the participants explained how African American male role models positively impacted their lives. Some of the participants in the study commented on how they see themselves in their African American male students. They explained that they felt it was their responsibility to their community to assist African American male students to exceed academically. AME2 provided an explanation for why African American male students need African American men as role models:

I feel as though, honestly, we have a certain style of getting the message across. I feel like children are more receptive, and we know how as a man, we know the struggles of being a male, and how sometimes being a male and being a Black male, you're already born with two strikes. So, we have a different approach to even our discipline. The students tend to be more receptive. Some of those behaviors that they're noted for and that they're diagnosed with, they normally only would try certain female teachers. Or if it's a male of weak constitution. AME7 gave an example of an African American student that he believed was positively involved with role models due to his academic success in middle school:

I can think of one particular student, African American male in my 8th grade social science class. He stood out to me initially from the very beginning because he was an extremely self-motivated individual. I believe that he had a lot of great role models, or had at least seen great examples of male role models outside of the classroom. So, he walked in with a special energy of wanting to learn. He came prepared to class all the time. He asked questions. He asked very thorough questions. He participated, and he was just not one I had to constantly probe. I would find him in the hallway studying before or after school. He just had that desire to succeed, and now he is a 12th grade student getting ready to graduate

and has done extremely well on assessments and setting himself up really nice to attend college. And I am so happy to see that. I don't know that I have had much to do with his success other than to encourage and continue and support him to reach and to strive. I felt like he walked in the classroom already made up in his mind, at 8th grade, he wanted to achieve. And on the flip side of that, I can think of another student after having met me, had a turn around and made a conscious decision to try to do better. Was very inspired by my teaching, was very inspired by my connection, and willing to learn who he is as a student or as a human being, I should say, and what his interests are. And I told him that, "Success isn't necessarily always about performing well in all of your classes. As long as you have done your best, you know that you have been successful, or shown improvement."

On the other hand, AME5 used his race to justify why African American male students need African American male educators:

Because students need to be able to see people who look like them. The perception that they have is that they don't see a lot of people in authoritative positions, or professional positions who are African-American, or who are ... or who is a minority. So, seeing people who look like themselves, and having people who can relate to them, teaching them, I think the experience can be a lot more. It can be a lot more beneficial for them.

Results for Central Research Question 3

What roles do race and gender play in academically engaging African American male students? This question sought to reveal the benefits for having mentorship programs as a method to academically engage African American male students. The

major emergent themes for RQ3 were mentoring, classroom management, and importance of African American men.

Narrative Summary of Findings for Research Question 3

Mentoring. One of the significant external support systems that participants in this study described was the beneficial outcome that mentoring had on African American male students. Three participants described mentoring programs that were active in their schools and community. AME1 remarked on how African American fraternities have socially and academically engaged African American male students:

A lot of the teachers in the county are Greeks. A lot of the Greeks will then pull those students into their mentoring programs and give scholarships. And then what you'll see is a lot of those students will go away to college and come back and will have joined an organization or would have come back and spoke and said, let's say a banquet or a breakfast or something where the Greeks will throw it and they will participate. So, we've seen that positive aspect, as well as some of the gentlemen who may have gone through that mentoring program did not have the opportunity to go to college, but they're still successful in whatever career path they chose, and they too will come back and speak. Would I like to see it grow to a much larger scale? Most definitely. But like with anything, you have to take baby steps.

AME4 mentioned how an African American male educator at his current work location started a mentoring program for minority students at his school:

I know one of my former co-workers, he's started a program called Young Men Excellence or Men of Excellence. I forget what the program was called, but it was something like that. He started the program at his current location. I don't know if

it's run by the administration or what, but I know that one of my former co-workers returned to at his previous school and he's over something like 500 role models or something like that. I see that, sometimes I see on Facebook or whatever, and the students are all dressed up in ties and everything like that. They were all minority males...Blacks and Hispanics.

One participant used his own childhood experiences to go a step further to justify why it is important for African American male students to be involved in a mentorship program:

I think mentorship plays a big part because most of the males that are in school, or a lot of the males in our school, may not have a positive role model where they're raised by the mom. I'm not saying the mom can't do the job, because most of the moms do, but I'm just saying with the absence of a father being actually involved in the education process that follows through. I think that is something that sometimes impacts. That's what I think needs to happen with our African American males: is just having a positive role model there for them to see. I recall one time when I was subbing, just before I actually started teaching, I remember one guy came to me, and I knew his mom because his mom was a friend of my sisters. He told me he was glad to see me sub at the school because they'd never seen many Black males at their school. Again, this was a school that was predominantly White. So that let me know then that was something that Black males needed to see other Black males in the profession.

Classroom management. Research from the study revealed that African American male educators are not expected to exceed in academics. They are expected to manage African American male students' behavior in school. Five participants expressed

how they were often called upon to deal with the discipline issues of many African American male students in their school building. According to Brockenbrough (2015), “given the preoccupation with establishing strict disciplinary cultures in many urban schools, high stakes may accompany Black male teachers’ roles as disciplinarians” (page 501).

AME1 affirmed the demands that are placed on African American male educators as disciplinarians:

Oftentimes we, as a male, are placed in environments where the majority of the students look like us, and they expect us to walk in and be that disciplinarian in most cases, not necessarily strong in instruction. But they want us to be that disciplinarian. I mean, I’ve seen it from administration, as well as from parents where, parents be like well, you need a male teacher. A Black male like that. And the unfortunate part is, there aren’t that many Black males in education as part as the K-12 system, as well as when it comes to K-5.

Further, AME9 confirmed AME1’s experience:

Well the expectations for me being a Black teacher would be being a more strong teacher, they look for more strength within Black teachers when it comes down to discipline; we should not be writing as many referrals because we feel like we could handle the kids more with our everyday background, especially when you are speaking on where you grew up at, also when it comes down to giving a little bit of the knowledge of history within the classroom; so on the educational level as well as on the discipline level.

AME2 outlined the difference between disciplining and punishing African American male students:

It starts out with the discipline. There's a difference between discipline and punishing students for poor behavior. Discipline, it shouldn't be from a forced place to where the child doesn't feel that there's any love or any care behind the correction. If that's the case, if you're just negatively downing the child, "You're nothing. You can't do this. Why can't you do this?" Or making them feel less than a human, then it won't be effective. I don't see that from my colleagues, my fellow educators. I feel like that's one of our strong suits right there. That stops a lot of the problems. That's why a lot of the time, a child is able to focus in our particular content areas or classrooms because of the level of discipline, and then feeling now like, "Oh, I would be letting Mr. So-and-so down if I don't perform in his class."

In contrast, AME2 expressed a behavior modification strategy that he used to academically engage an African American male student:

I had to make a deal with him. He loved to draw. So, once I realized that, once I realized that he would do that when he was distracted, we had a deal. Every Friday, if his behavior was good throughout the entire day, he had to have a good report for four out of five days. I cut it down to four out of five because I knew I was shooting my shot with trying to keep him good for five days. So, I said "I'm going to cut it down to four." He got to choose three of whatever he wanted from my art supplies, whether it was three paint brushes, three colors of paint, three crayons, three colored pencils, three markers. That was our agreement. I told him whatever picture he drew over the weekend, I would put it up in the class.

Need for more African American Male Educators. All participants in the study shared their lived experiences, knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, and perceptions

regarding the importance of having African American males as educators. AME1 discussed how African American male educators can expose African American male students to career opportunities that they would not be exposed to in their households:

When you look at it, most of these kids, their parents were workers who work menial jobs or even work jobs that were hands on. So, they only saw that side, they didn't really get to see the academic side of an African American male. So, I think the more that we will have in schools, and I'm not even just talking about K-5, K-6, the more that we will have in a K-12 system, I think the more hope we'll have for African American males as a species to understand it is possible to go to college and be successful. So, I think we need it big time.

Two of the participants indicated that inspiration from former African American educators was a major reason for them excelling academically. AME4 attested, "I remember African American teachers I had in college and high school. They all seemed to have high standards, that I thought was good." AME10 reinforced the importance of African American male educators:

If I ever saw Mr. Andrews again, I would thank him because not only did he help me get my first job, but he helped me get my first career. It's a lot that I owe to people that they don't even understand how much they helped me. Officer Anderson was the first person to encourage me. When I was in middle school, he said, "Listen. You can't run around here and be a knucklehead just like everybody else. I know your whole family. You are going to be the trailblazer". This is in middle school. Low and behold, I was the first to graduate from college, I was the first to get a career. My sister followed me in this career. Second to graduate from college. Second to get a career in education. We both just received our masters

and we're both going to go for our doctorate. In middle school I remember him telling me that. I didn't know what a trailblazer was, but now I know. I swear. So impactful.

AME5 recognized his impact as an African American male educator, I'm at a Title I school. There are a lot of African-American male students at my school. It's not African and American. They are a minority. Like I said before, seeing somebody in that position teaching them, somebody who looks like them, I think that makes a big difference. My gender because I believe that male figures in the classroom, they have this certain ... I guess, I don't know how to explain this. The impact that they have on younger people is more influential I think than a female figure. The respect that comes with being a male teacher, I think that makes a difference. Also, it's just different from being a female teacher. I think you automatically have that ... You don't have to work as a female to earn respect, and trust from the students, being a male teacher. That makes the teaching experience much easier, I think.

AME3 further discussed the need for African American male educators:

Our presence, in the school building is detrimental to the livelihood of so many students. A male figure, an adult male figure, educated, in their household, as far as students are concerned, on a general basis in the urban setting, the male is not present and active and engaging in the livelihoods of the children as they grow. So, my presence in a school is just that much more detrimental to the community, because there are not very many of us. So that means that one, we are, perhaps, not pressured by an outside force, but pressured by our own wheel and knowledge and morals to be a mentor for so many of the male students that we come in

contact with because of their lack of a father figure in their homes and communities. Not just for the male students, but also the female students who have that same lack. Let's see ... They tend to find, or cannot tend to find, the whole raising of a child, and I know many family units may not be complete in this millennial age, we've got blended families, and that's pretty much the norm, now. But many students do not grow up with a father figure, so the pressures on a male teacher in the school building are increased or heightened because we take on the role models of being a role model, of being mentors, of speaking to students when they are having mental, psychological, nutritional episodes. Often times, going out of our pockets and taking the children home, and those parental skills and practices, we often have to take on in a school setting. So, yes, I do believe that there is an increase of pressure and stress upon a male teacher due to the lack of our presence in the communities and homes.

Summary of the Findings

Chapter 4 examines the phenomenon of participants' lived experiences as African American male educators. Chapter 4 also presents the data collection and analysis procedures, a synthesis of the findings, and a narrative summary of the participants' responses to each of the central research questions. Their combined experiences and responses answered the three central research questions:

1. How do African American male educators describe their experiences as educators?
2. What strategies and teaching pedagogies do African American educators use to academically engage African American male students?

3. What roles do race and gender play in academically engaging African American male students?

Three recurrent themes were identified: (a) teacher-student relationships, (b) importance of African American men, and (c) teacher support. The recurrent themes produced insight into the participants' shared experiences as they responded to the interview questions and allowed the essence of their voices to be heard regarding the phenomenon. Their knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences make it evident that African American male educators face challenges. Yet, there is encouraging data illustrating that African American male educators can successfully engage African American male students.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Study

The intent of this phenomenological study is to explore the essence of the lived experiences of African American male educators in the southeastern United States. The primary investigator sought to discover African American male educators' lived experiences, knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, and perceptions within the K-12 public educational system. The goal was to better understand and expand the literature on the instructional strategies used to academically engage African American male students. The qualitative methodology was used because it is the study of lived experiences from the perspectives of those being studied. Accordingly, Creswell (2013) has stated that "A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 76). In this approach to phenomenology, the researcher focused on and investigated the commonalities of individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon. The researcher sought to frame those individual experiences into a description of universal essence.

In Chapter 4, three sub-themes emerged as outliers and commonalities among the participants. These sub-themes indicate the experiences of African American males who are employed in public educational system. To determine sub-themes, the researcher examined the lived experiences of the participants through their shared knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences as African American male educators. The themes were identified as (a) teacher-student relationships, (b) importance of African American men, and (c) teacher support. Three research questions were used to assist in the research.

Research Question 1: How do African American male educators describe their experiences as educators?

Research Question 2: What strategies and teaching pedagogies do African American educators use to academically engage African American male students?

Research Question 3: What roles do race and gender play in academically engaging African American male students?

The major themes in the responses to RQ1 were negative perceptions, called to teach, and teacher support. RQ2 produced high-frequency responses on the following themes: kinesthetic learners, teacher-student relationships, and role models. The major themes in response to RQ3 were mentoring, classroom management, and importance of African American men.

Interpretation of the Findings RQ1: Experiences of Black Educators

Ordered steps. It is not surprising that African American parents wanted to have African American teachers for their children. The community recognized the importance of African American teachers in moving African American people forward (Rogers-Ard, Knauss, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2013). While minimal salary is one of the key explanations why African American males do not enter the teaching profession, those who decide to leave the teaching profession do not cite pay as a major cause for leaving. This accords with other research that has suggested that African Americans become educators for altruistic motives such as being called to teach or making a positive impact in their students' lives (Hickman, 2017).

The participants cited encouraging reasons such as preparing pupils for a racist society, using culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum, developing self-importance and racial awareness, and empowering students to be active in their lives and community.

These reasons are consistent with the motivating factors of preceding generations of African American male teachers (Scott & Rodriguez, 2015). In addition, some teachers spoke of teaching being a moral calling from a higher power (Hill-Carter, 2013).

Negative perceptions of educators who are African American men. The marginalization of African Americans from the mid-15th century to the present has negatively impacted their lives, including being denied educational experiences. African Americans have consistently been marginalized: from the slave codes that made it illegal to teach slaves to read to discriminatory economic practices that caused a disparity in school finances that negatively affect African American students today. This legacy of oppressive practices has resulted in systems and structures that further marginalize African American males (Palmer, Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014). Thus far, notwithstanding that millennials seem more racially empathic and accepting than preceding generations, researchers have recognized that minority pupils often combat racially intimidating settings at predominantly White universities. These intimidating events extend from obvious harsh actions (e.g., a hanging noose or put on costumes that mirror stereotypical images of racial and social clusters) to more incidental actions that include cross-examining the intellectual aptitudes of minorities, assuming that the opinions of one member of a minority group mirrors those held by members of that same minority cluster, or regarding minorities as strangers to the United States' society (Brown, 2018). African American men who act as educator and mentor must often fill in for positive male figures that might not exist in homes or communities (Hill-Carter, 2013). Professional African American men and educators are a compelling contradiction to the negative images of African American males in their communities (Jackson, Boutte, & Wilson, 2013).

Interpretation of the Findings RQ2: Engaging African American Students

Using kinesthetic learning activities as a tool. Researchers and educators have investigated how kinesthetic learning has helped achieve student learning in the areas of science, mathematics (Kosmas, P., Ioannou, A., & Retalis, S. (2018), reading, and language arts (Cassar and Jang, 2010). Successful educators use a range of strategies to enhance learning for their students. More than half of the participants have effectively used kinesthetic learning strategies to academically engage African American male students. Engaging instruction is vital to maintain students' attention, stimulate learning participation, and impact academic achievement. Engaging instruction is essential to maximize learning. However, educational and learning sciences researchers have not reached a consensus on what engaging instruction means and entails. This concept has been understood in numerous ways. Some scholars and educators have focused on strategies that enhance learning participation (Efstathiou & Bailey, 2012; Lucas, 2009; Rocca, 2010). Other scholars and educators have focused on learning outcomes and conceptual understanding (Arghode, Wang, & Lathan, 2017). Kinesthetic learning activities vary from students rotating around the room to students illustrating planetary motion to postsecondary students producing full-scale structures from their own drawings (Mobley & Fisher, 2014).

Impactful role models. One surprising finding is that each participant has achieved a level of success. Almost all the participants indicated that they were first-generation postsecondary students. According to most of the participants, siblings, coaches, neighbors, cousins, and peers offered them encouragement to pursue a postsecondary education (Holland, 2017). There is also an unwritten necessity for the African American male educator to behave as a mentor or role model. This unwritten

decree is often interpreted to require the educator to be a proxy father for African American male students (Brockenbrough, 2012). Furthermore, the absence of the father often depends on challenging and sometimes fallacious assumptions about single mothers (Martino, 2015).

Interpretation of the Findings RQ3: The Roles of Race and Gender

Examples of mentorship. There are several problems within education: funding, the achievement gap, and the teacher shortages in several areas, for example. This research focuses on the shortage of African American men and the challenges and experiences they have faced. Many schools in the United States are now experiencing the minority population becoming the majority, although this trend does not apply to teachers. African American male students need role models, mentorship programs, and support. As students, the participants' involvement with mentoring at a young age made them realize that they were open to advice that was aimed at helping them maneuver through the educational pipeline. One of the participants pointed out that he had many different people serve as mentors in his life, and that mentors may not always be from the same culture or nationality (Lockwood, 2015). Aside from teaching and research consultants, educational systems should also study validating outlooks for athletic trainers to be mentors. Athletic trainers potentially spend the most time with pupil athletes, separately from their peers. As such, athletic trainers have a higher degree of encouragement over pupil athletes than other teaching and research staff members. The all-inclusive evolution of pupil athletes should be clearly arranged through promoting vigorous and optimistic mentorship, athletic trainers' contracts, and institutional outlooks (Cooper, 2016).

The importance of African American men. It is important to create a safe place for adults to care for, supervise, and problem solve for children who do not have family support and mentoring available. For instance, there are six reasons for the lower academic achievement levels of some Black males: impoverished living conditions, neighborhoods with high crime rates, exposure to substance abuse at an early age, low socioeconomic status, single parent households, and lack of male role models (Nichols, 2016). The impact of punitive criminal justice policies towards adults extend beyond the incarcerated individual. Children are possibly the most vulnerable of those who are collaterally impacted. Parental incarceration affects children through processes such as trauma experienced because of parent–child separation; the sense of social isolation and shame brought on by the stigma associated with having a family member incarcerated; or the social, psychological, and economic stress imposed upon children of the incarcerated due to family disruption, dissolution, or prolonged financial hardship. Moreover, research has demonstrated that harmful effects on child well-being can occur regardless of the resident status of the father at the time of his imprisonment. This suggests that incarceration uniquely impacts children beyond mere paternal absence (Haskins, 2016).

Prejudice and discriminating behaviors are also influences that play into the school-to-prison pipeline, which is a phenomenon that predominantly affects low-income minority youth. The school-to-prison pipeline replicates a process by which punitive disciplinary penalties are unreasonably give out to minority students in school settings. Black students have a greater likelihood of expulsion and suspension than White students as early as pre-school. Further, lesser educational achievement is a risk factor for incarceration. For instance, a one-year increase in education decreases incarceration rates by 11%. Furthermore, African American male students born between 1965 and 1969 and

who drop out of high school had a nearly 60% probability of penal incarnation by the end of the 1990s. The progressively disciplinary procedures of schools decrease educational accomplishment of African American students and intensify their probability of incarceration into the adolescent and adult penal system (Taylor, Chatters, Woodward, & Brown, 2013).

Historical trends have demonstrated that more African American students are being educated by teachers from different racial or cultural backgrounds than any other point in history. There are approximately 3.3 million teachers in U.S. public schools. Approximately 82% of all public-school teachers are White, seven percent are Black, and less than two percent are Black males. Consequently, Black males are in demand in U.S. public schools due to a greater focus on the need to diversify a profession that has been historically dominated by White females (Green and Martin, 2018).

Black culture forces the Black person to struggle with society's negative images of blackness and the positive images promoted by the Black community. Furthermore, educators unreasonably track Black boys into remedial or developmental courses, although many of their White counterparts are placed in advanced placement courses that can prepare students for college placement (Dancy, 2014). This reduces the number of African American men entering the teaching field. Some scholars have also suggested that having more African American men in the teaching force to serve as role models for boys who experience poor outcomes can help diminish the troubles that these students endure in the school system.

Implications of Findings

This qualitative phenomenological study aims to more precisely comprehend African-American male educators' knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions,

and experiences within the K-12 public educational system. The findings do not indicate that African American males cannot enter the teaching field, although they face numerous hindrances. The findings signify that African American males who elect to enter the teaching field conquer those hindrances due to their intrinsic aspiration to help students accomplish their educational goals, which is intrinsically rewarding. The findings attest to the African American male educators' ability to academically engage African American male students. Furthermore, the findings of the study provide knowledge of how African American male teachers collaborate to build their characterization in the profession and help African American male students.

Several implications emerged from the data concerning African American male educators' experiences and effective pedagogy for academically engaging African American male students. Firstly, African American male educators have aspirations to empower African American male students and to give back to their community (Lofton, 2019). Data revealed that African American male educators are underrepresented in the field of education due to a lack of respect and support from administrators, racism within the K-12 public educational system, and the low percentage of African American males pursuing postsecondary education (Jones, Holton, & Joseph, 2019). However, a few optimistic implications were noted. The first, African American male students have a higher probability of achieving academic success when they have a solid family and mentorship support systems (Orrock and Clark, 2018). Secondly, African American male students can exceed expectations if they are provided with essential tools for academic success such as caring educators, additional instruction time before or after school, role models, and effective teaching strategies (Ellis, Rowley, Nellum, & Smith, 2018). As it relates to delivery of instruction, kinesthetic learning contributed to successful

instructional strategies that can be implemented across the United States to academically engage African American male students (Mobley & Fisher, 2014). Finally, effective African American male educators should be rewarded for the challenging and add-on demands placed on them due to their race and gender in public K-12 educational systems (Cook et al., 2018).

Limitations of the Study

This phenomenological study aims to explore the lived experiences of African American male educators by examining their knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences within the K-12 public educational system. The first limitation was the

researcher. The researcher is an African American male who educated African American male students for at least 15 years. For that reason, there is a chance for some oblivious bias.

Nonetheless, data was effectively collected, categorized, coded, and analyzed. Second, the study was limited to participants working in a specific geographical area. The participants were African American male educators who were selected from the southeastern region of the United States, and a majority were employed within one school district. As a result, the findings are not generalizable for all African American male K-12 public educators in the United States. The selected participants lacked diversity, and the findings were inclusive to only African American male educators. The excluded groups' knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences are not identical to those of African American men. Another limitation is the study's exclusion of the knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogies, perceptions, and experiences of the African

American male students' family members, non-African American male educators, and female educators from all ethnicities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study discussed the knowledge, actions, beliefs, pedagogy, perceptions, and experiences within the K-12 public educational system for African American male educators. The findings in this study can be used by educators, parents, educational institutions, educational policy makers, and administrators. The recommendations can be utilized as constructive modification to the continued effort to boost the number of African American male educators in the K-12 educational system. This current study revealed results that found implementing encouraging mentorship programs, forming beneficial student-teacher relationships, and utilizing kinetic learning strategies are necessary implementation to academically engage African American male students. As a result, a broader study is needed that specifically focuses on the perceptions of African American students' family members, non-African American male educators, and female educators from all ethnicities. Comprehensive strategies and recommendations for improving the academic achievement of African American male students would be valuable knowledge. There is encouraging data that illustrates how African American male educators can successfully engage African American male students. Therefore, further studies should investigate and distribute best practices and methods of engaging African American male students to educators and parents.

Conclusion

More than 3.4 million teachers retired in 2011. Many states may soon face a dwindling pool of qualified teachers (Phillip, 2013), and it is evident that there is a shortage of teachers. Historical trends have demonstrated that African American students

are now being educated by more teachers from different racial or cultural backgrounds than any other point in history. There are approximately 3.3 million teachers in United States' K-12 public schools. Approximately 82% of all public-school teachers are White, 7% are Black, and less than 2% are Black males. Consequently, Black males are in demand in United States public schools due to the greater focus on the need to diversify an occupation that has historically been dominated by White females (Green and Martin, 2018).

The collection and analysis of the data produced for this study is a startling remembrance of African American male educators' experiences in the United States. Most importantly, data from the study revealed the existence of social and financial barriers that marginalize those who are of African descent and live in the United States. For example, during an interview with Dr. Kenneth Clark, he examined and validated the effect that racism has had on young African American children. Dr. Clark reasoned that racism and discrimination in the United States clearly demonstrated the destruction to African Americans' self-awareness and their self-esteem, which racial refusal was doing to African Americans at such an early age. (Nyman, 2005). Nonetheless, African American male educators have successfully proven that they have the ability and intrinsic duty to promote the importance of obtaining a valuable education within our schools and communities. They have done so even though we exist in an unfair and racist society. All educators must take the time to invest in their children's education and are encouraged to implement strategies that foster retention and thus optimize student outcomes in their classrooms.

Finally, educators need instructional tools and strategies to effectively teach today's African American male students. All male students need male role models,

whether they are Black, White, or Hispanic. It is wholeheartedly believed that it only takes one caring and effective educator to make a positive influence in their students' lives. For this reason, and the other reasons revealed in this study, this nation must recruit and retain more African American male educators. It is essential for educators of African American male students to apply kinesthetic learning activities that promote learning, create mentorships that will repair their self-awareness, and develop and utilize effective programs that attempt to eradicate discrimination and unfair treatment towards African American male children. These are some suggestions to help eradicate the school-to-prison pipeline for African American male students.

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Appendix A
Demographics of Participants

Demographic of Participants

PSUEDONYM/IDENTIFICATION CODE _____

1. What is your age?

 21-30 31-45 46+

2. What is your gender

 Male Female Choose Not to Answer

3. How many years have you been an educator?

 0-3 4-8 9-14 15+

4. What grade level are you currently teaching?

 Middle School/Jr. High High School None of the above

5. What is your ethnicity?

Native American

Pacific Islander

Asian

African American or Black

Hispanic or Latino

Caucasian or White

Two or more ethnicities

Choose Not to Answer

Appendix B
Interview Transcript

PSUEDONYM/IDENTIFICATION CODE: AME1

1. How old are you?

a. Response: Thirty-four years of age.

2. How many years have you taught and at what grade level(s) and subject(s)?

a. Response: Has 11 years of teaching experience. Taught grades 3rd through 7th.
Currently, teaching 7th grade/history.

3. What skills do teachers need to effectively teach today's students?

a. Response: Compassion, patience, and affection.

4. As an African American male teacher, do you think you have any advantages or disadvantages as the K-12 education system?

a. Response: I feel like I have an advantage because female teachers dominate the field.

b. Prompt: In what ways do you have an advantage that female teachers do not have in the K-12 school system?

c. Response: Employment. Most principals will hire a male over a female if both applicants are equal.

5. How do your life experiences influence the way you teach African American male students?

a. Response: From my past experiences, I have learned from my errors. Therefore, I can make the history lessons in my classroom relate to what African American male students need to learn. Hopefully, they do not make the same mistakes I made.

6. What were your personal life experiences that prompted you to enter the teaching profession...a mentor, teacher, family member or career development? Please explain.

a. Response: A teacher. He was in a fraternity. He told me stories about his college time. So, I wanted to go to college.

7. What advantages or disadvantages do you think you have as an African American male teacher as it relates to teaching African American male students?

a. Response: African American students look up to me and respect me more than the female teachers.

8. What effective strategies have you used to teach African American male students?

a. Response: Compassion is one of the top skills. Patience. Being more affectionate.

9. How does the desire to be a role model for young students impact your decision to become a teacher?

a. Response: Throughout my school years, I only had four African American male teachers. One teacher of my African American male teachers was in a fraternity. That teacher is one of the reasons why I decided to join a fraternity. So, I hope to be a role model, like those African American male teachers were role models for me.

10. What are your views on teaching African American male students?

a. Response: It gives African American male students something to look up to someone. Someone that looks like them because female teachers dominate the field.

Appendix C

Combined Thematic Results

Themes	AME 1	AME 2	AME 3	AME 4	AME 5	AME 6	AME 7	AME 8	AME 9	AME 10
Policy Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Negative Perceptions	X			X			X			X
Mentoring	X			X	X	X	X		X	X
Called to Teach	X	X								
Relations	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Valuing Education	X		X	X				X		X
Classroom Management	X	X						X	X	
Social Influences	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
College Experiences	X			X						
Critical Race	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Successes		X							X	
Students' Self-Concept		X								
Successful Students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Pedagogy	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Educators' K-12 Experiences					X		X			
Teaching Experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Note. AME = African American Male Educator.