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RETENTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS, LESSONS LEARNED
FROM THE FIELD

By
Patrice Holmes

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2021

Approval Page

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I want to say a heartfelt warm thank you to my committee members Dr. Stone, Dr. Barnes, and Dr. Widener. I appreciate all the words of encouragement and the gentle push to “Get It Done.” I would like to dedicate this work to my brother who lost his life at a young age and did not have the best educational experience as a young African American male. To my mother for always providing opportunities for me to grow as a student even when I did not want to. Last, I dedicate this work to my sons and grandchildren. Thank you all for being there for me when I could not always attend events due to school and work obligations. You all are special to me, and I pray this motivates you all to reach for the stars.

Abstract

RETENTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS, LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD. Holmes, Patrice, 2021: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

A lot of research has been written on why African American males decide to leave the field of education; factors such as pay, job satisfaction, prestige, and lack of growth opportunities are major influencers on their decisions. A number of studies noted that African American males face job discrimination in a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways which contribute to their leaving the profession. This research surveyed African American male teachers who left the classroom to share personal reflections that led to leaving the classroom and what steps could have been taken to retain them in the classroom. The research found that participants shared the same reasons for leaving the field as supported by prior research. Additionally, the research showed that participants had a deep connection with teaching and desired to remain in the classroom. The research found that participants felt a strong desire to be role models and to provide support for minority students often missing in our public schools. Even though they left the profession, they understood the vital importance of African American children and other minority children having teachers of color and specifically male teachers of color. The study offered timely suggestions school districts could adopt for improving the retention of African American males in the classroom.

Keywords: African American male teachers, retention, recruitment, role models

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The instructor can see the meaning, integrity, significance of the pursuit of truth, and the conviction that every student is held to the highest ethical standards (Baines, 2010). African American male teachers who work and serve in their districts, like many other teachers, often are pressured to assume more of a social and moral obligation to students based on the common connections due to a shared racial, ethnic, or class background with their students. An African American male educator must meet the same criteria as all teachers and yet be consonant of the societal distinctions based on gender and gender identification, race, language barriers, perceived and real social status, and the environment in which they find themselves. Consciously or unconsciously, as teachers and leaders, African American male teachers must fill many posts: the absent male in the home figure, role model, and disciplinarian. Teachers who are not of the same gender or racial/ethnic heritage can and do develop positive role-modeling relationships with students based on positive relationships built on mutual respect and confidence. The presence of African American male teachers in and around the classroom can make a valuable contribution to the learning atmosphere and culture of the classroom and school. However, the question becomes, why do African American male teachers disappear from the classroom and ultimately the profession?

The involvement of African American male teachers offered an incentive for schools to understand the significance and value of African American males as teachers and their impact on young African American males as they prepared them for life whether that is in secondary education, technical schools, or the military, and to give

them the social skills needed to become engaged and productive members of an evolving and complex 21st century society. Researchers have noted that the long-term educational benefits of having an African American male teacher extend well beyond the K-12 classroom setting and into university enrollment and success leading to better opportunities and choices in life. In 2016, the United States had an average of 3.8 million schoolteachers, of whom only 77,900 were African American males (McClain, 2016).

Becoming a male teacher was once a respectable and esteemed occupation, yet today becoming a male teacher has become an unattractive and unpleasant career due to various factors. These include being pigeonholed into teaching in high needs schools, inadequate teacher preparation programs, and salary. Cole (1986) reported that in 1950, teaching accounted for more than half of the African American workforce in the United States, primarily men. Starting with the racial tension and division of the 1960s, school districts began, after successful court challenges, to desegregate. This saw the traditional African American schools disappear as they were integrated with the schools for Caucasian students. Even though integration was legal, Caucasian parents often refused to allow their children to be educated by African American instructors. As a result, many African American teachers left the profession.

In 2019, the United States had an average of 3.8 million schoolteachers, of whom only 77,900 were African American males. There was a severe lack of African American male educators who could serve as role models to whom students could connect (Ozuna, 2018). Wimbush (2012) stated that some students attended kindergarten through high school without ever having an African American male instructor. While there has been less robust research available on the retention and attrition of African American males as

compared to the field in general, researchers, in general, see this as a growing need for academic scholarship. Recruitment of teachers was a consistent subject of study even as the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996) reported that the turnover rate of teachers was 16.8%, as noted in data from their High-Cost Teacher Turnover Reference. According to Ingersoll and May (2011), the emphasis on turnover was on teaching as compared to other professions. The recruitment of teachers did not significantly impact teacher turnover rates due to financial problems. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future reported that attrition costs of the high teacher turnover rate in the United States are more than \$7 billion annually.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the 1960s Civil Rights movement, the African American community worked hard to defy stereotypes about their abilities and what they could be capable of accomplishing in all realms of society. Many sought advancements through education and became educators to ensure their history was not forgotten and that future generations felt enlightened and believed they could achieve more (Kane & Orsini, 2003). This study aimed to understand why African American male teacher representation is so low and to explore why they leave the profession. Finally, this study sought to understand what would have been needed to keep these teachers in the classroom. Specifically, this study looked at (a) the classroom shortage of African American male teachers; (b) the absence of African American male teachers; (c) the cultural significance of African American male teachers; (d) the current recruitment, preparation, and retention of African American male teachers; and (e) incentives to keep teachers in the classroom.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), White students accounted for 49% of the K-12 student population, while Black students accounted for 17%, Hispanic students accounted for 26%, Asian Pacific Islander students accounted for 5%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native students accounted for .99 % of students in public schools in the United States. The presence of African American male teachers in elementary schools has been shown to have increased the aspiration and accomplishment levels for young Black elementary students. It shaped Black educators' images to align with the images of White elementary students and teachers (Kane & Orsini, 2003).

Teacher demographics for the nation's K-12 public schools are noticeably different: 81.9% are White, 6.8% African American, 1.8% Hispanic, .1% Asian Pacific Islander, .1% American Indian, and .1% Other. According to Scott (2016), the disparity is stark: Over 2 million of the nation's K-12 education teachers are White females, compared to close to 700,000 White male teachers. There are approximately 205,000 female African American teachers, compared to only 72,000 African American male teachers. If the educational system wishes to retain more African American male teachers, it is critical to examine the factors that contribute to current African American male teacher retention in the profession. Table 1 illustrates the teacher demographics in K-12 education in 2016.

Table 1*Teacher Demographics in K-12 in 2016*

Demographics	Percentage
White teachers	81.9%
Afro-American teachers	6.8%
Hispanic teachers	1.8%
Asian Pacific Islander teachers	.1%
American Indian teachers	.1%
Other teachers	.1%

This study aimed to determine factors that contributed to the lack of retention among former African American male teachers. The number of African American male teachers is at a record low. I interviewed a sample of 11 former African American male teachers in North Carolina who left the profession over the past 2 years.

It is important to know and understand the reasons and experiences that motivated African American male teachers to first enter the teaching profession. However, since the existing number of African American male teachers is at a low level, this makes getting the needed amount of knowledge and insight from being addressed and exchanged about how they feel and are inspired to stay hard (Ozuna, 2018).

Griffin and Tackie (2017) stated that schools should prioritize the retention research of teachers of color while diversifying the teaching force through recruiting and innovative hiring strategies. African American male teachers are underrepresented in K-12 public schools (Black & Rice 2020). Several researchers, including Peatross (2011) and Wimbush (2012), related that it was important to continue hiring minority male

teachers in all our schools, but it is especially important in schools housing large minority populations. Teachers believed that having a multicultural (various races and socioeconomic statuses) classroom helped minimize and eliminate the achievement gap while fostering a supportive caring learning atmosphere where students can build positive relationships with others, experience many diverse learning styles, and experience some of their and other's cultural significance.

Additional research was needed to ascertain the factors that influenced the decisions of African American males to pursue and continue education as a career. There is a great need to research and assess the initial decision of African American male teachers to enter the profession as compared to their decision to leave the profession entirely. This could provide future administrators and recruiters with new and relatable information.

Purpose of the Study

This study's purpose was to examine and analyze the responses of former African American male teachers who decided to leave the education profession. The primary sources of information were by probing and open-ended interviews. This qualitative study allows for more detailed information on the variables than numerical data point information (Ozuna, 2018). The study focused on former African American male teachers who chose to leave the classroom and an analysis of those factors. Research findings were solicited based on common experiences, mentoring, psychosocial-emotional factors, reasons why they wanted to be in the teaching profession, and the most influential factors in their decisions to leave the educational profession. Additionally, data were collected on factors that were missing that could have contributed to them

staying in the classroom.

The detailed responses from former African American male teachers identified reasons for the original career choice and the collections of choices as to why they left the field. This study explored existing literature on African American male teacher experiences, added with mentoring and the support given to young African American males. Additionally, it reviews the research on African American male students in the education profession.

Research Questions

This research paper examined the existing trend in the low number of African American male teachers by examining the factors that led to their decisions to leave teaching as a career. The research paper's objective was to address and provide findings for the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to African American male teachers remaining in the field?
2. What factors do African American male teachers say would contribute to them staying in the field of education?
3. What do African American male teachers say is the greatest benefit for students to have African American male teachers?

Significance of the Study

There is an abundance of existing literature and research on African American male teachers and retention. However, there is a dearth of research on factors that would have significantly impacted African American male teacher decisions to remain in the classroom. The subject was significant because, in the United States of America's current

educational system, the number of current African American teachers is low when compared to the corresponding student population. To reverse and rectify this situation, administrations must identify factors motivating them to remain in the field and eliminate any factors that will discourage them from leaving (Wiggin, 2014). This research paper examined the existing trend in the dwindling number of African American male teachers while identifying the factors that impacted their decisions to pursue teaching as a career. This research paper surveyed students about their initial interest in a career in education to see if there was a disconnect between what African American students and students of other races may have been told about the career opportunities available in education and reality. What information originally persuaded them to consider a career in education rather than pursue alternative careers? Although there is research and significant data on why African American males pursue teaching as a career, more research shows that engaging African American students early and supporting African American male teachers altered the profession's perception, making it more desirable to minority students as they explore career options (Ozuna 2018).

Understanding how African American male educators relate to and feel about their students can lead to better academic performance by the students and building more healthy relationships between teachers and students. This study provided school systems with a data-based approach geared toward improving the retention of African American males by providing specific information that helped them develop a positive and intentional approach beyond the teachers' initial recruitment. The various perspectives on the subjects allowed for consideration of numerous possibilities when examining African American male teacher retention. Policy makers at educational levels will be able to

interpret the data and make their own conclusions and decisions about the factors that motivated African American males to stay in education and those reasons that caused them to leave the field, based on data collected from this limited study. Knowing the social, environmental, professional, and financial experiences African American male teachers face offered a unique perspective that increased the interest of district officials in hiring and retaining more African American male teachers.

Extrinsic motivation was defined as motivation based on the inner needs of an individual such as acceptance, love, and value. This is in contrast with intrinsic needs such as food, clothing, and a place to live. Having looked at extrinsic motivational factors, the study examined the external elements that influenced African American male teachers to enter the profession. Former teachers and mentors were cited as two of these external factors. An intrinsic factor cited by participants in this study was that all students deserved a culturally literate teacher.

Role of the Researcher

I have been in the education field for the past 25 years. As I began to look at the classroom demographic patterns of teachers, I observed there was a minimum number of African American males who served as teachers. I noticed how they would get hired but not be there after Christmas break or complete the year and not return by mid-year. The phenomenon has always intrigued me. I had the opportunity to create a virtual program that allowed African American male students to enroll in Advanced Placement courses not available in their schools at the high school level. As an elementary principal, I was determined to place a male within each grade level. I was able to place a male at each grade level, but of the five, only two were African American. I had access to numerous

resumes of the male teacher positions; however, there were limited African American resumes for the elementary level.

As a former middle school assistant principal, I had worked with three African American male teachers. Two chose to leave the profession.

I am currently working at a school that has a staff of 90 plus educators and only seven African American male teachers, but two of them left before the school year was finished; hence, my rationale for choosing to look at teacher retention related to African American males. Of unique interest to me is my observation that the African American male teachers who stay seem to have a good report with the students and make a positive impact.

Definitions of Important Terms

The following terms were used in this study.

African American

This colloquial term (Black or African American) refers to members of an ethnic group in America who have total or partial ancestry with any Black racial group(s) from the African continent and who possess dark skin pigmentation.

Educator

Related to people who were teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, and individuals who follow work in school settings to teach and guide student growth.

Racism

The opinion in one race's superiority over another race that leads to possible actions deemed discriminatory and prejudice towards people based on race or ethnicity.

Retention

The ability to keep someone in the setting such as the classroom.

Socioeconomic Status

An individual's or group's social standing or class. It is frequently quantified in terms of a composite of factors of education, salary, and job.

Student

A person who attends an educational institution as a student or learner.

Summary

This research paper aimed to explore the experiences of former African American male teachers in the education field, why they leave the profession, and what factors were missing to retain them in the classroom. The study's goal was to collect and analyze the thoughts of former African American male teacher participants who decided to leave the teaching profession regarding their reasons for coming into the field of education and their reasons for leaving the field of education. Additionally, what options would have kept them in the field were studied. Finally, a review of what they felt were their major contributions to being an educator were studied.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the research relative to the study and includes a brief history of African American teachers, the importance of African American male teacher presence in the classroom, and an analysis of current and relevant studies of changing demographics of America's public schools. Chapter 3 covers the methodology of this study and the study's context, population and sample selection, research tools used, data compilation procedures, and data analysis. Chapter 4 summarizes the study's findings and conclusions as well as the research conducted to address the aforementioned

questions. Chapter 5 covers a review of the research findings, offers topics for additional research, and makes recommendations for administrators who wish to recruit and retain more African American male teachers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The research on African American teacher labor markets and the factors influencing their career choices and their career path is limited but emerging. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported that “over the last two decades, the percentage of teachers leaving the profession has increased significantly” (p. 27). According to the literature, the study's purpose was to research and document the factors that contributed to the retention and job attrition of African American male teachers. While various factors impacted teacher retention, this research report focused specifically on African American male teachers and their “why” when deciding to leave education. African American teachers serve as role models, which supports the evidence that academic success and increased retention rates were used to promote the profession (Peatross, 2011). Retaining African American male teachers can be essential for the academic and social success of students while presenting a positive reflection of the profession in a student’s eyes and useful in building the profession as a worthy job prospect. However, since African American male teachers work in a field where White females are the dominant jobholders, it becomes difficult to develop and maintain collaborative relationships that foster an interest in education, given their low representation in the field (Harper, 2012).

African American male teachers feel additional pressure to address the achievement gap, being the go-to disciplinarian, job layoffs, and promotions that lead a teacher to transition to an administrator role. These were just a few of the factors that contributed to African American males leaving the classroom setting. In many urban

areas, the majority of students are Black, while the majority of teachers are White (Brockenbrough, 2014). While there was research on the factors that influenced career choices across races, research on African American male career choices in the teaching field highlighted significant others and mentors (Green & Jordan, 2018). While teaching is a career that offers longevity and numerous employment opportunities, there is still a shortage of African American male teachers. This literature review examined research on the gradual disintegration and reduction in numbers of African American male teachers through the voices of former African American male teachers. The survey components each participant completed included beginning teacher support, mentor assignment, professional development, observations, and their interpretation of bias within their respective settings.

Teachers in U.S. public schools have long been a topic of public concern (Sun et al., 2018). The related government interventions to achieve educational diversity in the workforce stemmed from three key contexts: demographic changes in the student population, the possible advantages of a diverse teaching workforce for student learning outcomes, and the common belief that teachers of color have a higher turnover rate (Sun et al., 2018).

Research indicated that while student population demographics shifted, becoming more diverse, the teaching workforce has not maintained the same pace. Students of color accounted for 49% of the national prekindergarten through 12th-grade student population by 2012 and are expected to constitute 54% by 2024. In comparison, teachers of color accounted for just 18% of the federal educational workforce in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Additionally, the National Center for Education Statistics

(2017) reported there were 3.5 million full-time and part-time public school teachers in the 2017-2018 school year; this number included 1.8 million K-5 school teachers and 1.7 million sixth- through 12th-grade school teachers. Overall, in 2017-2018, the number of public school teachers employed in the United States was 18% higher than in 1999-2000 (3 million). The growing numbers of teachers were supported by an 8% increase in public school enrollment. This number rose from 45.5 million students in the fall of 1999 to 49.1 million in the fall of 2017. At the K-5 level, the number of teachers in 2017-2018 was 11% higher than in 1999-2000 (1.6 million), while in sixth through 12th grades, the number of teachers in 2017-2018 was 26% higher than in 1999-2000 (1.4 million).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2020) reported that most public elementary and secondary school teachers were White in 2003-2004 (Year 1 for which figures were available for all racial/ethnic groups); however, the number of White teachers in 2015-2016 was lower than in 2003-2004 (80% vs. 83%). The rate of teachers who were African American was also lower in 2015-2016 than in 2003-2004 (7% vs. 8%). In contrast, the percentages of Hispanic, Asian, and Two or More Races were higher in 2015-2016 than in 2003-2004. Other races of teachers were not significant between the years.

Teacher school placement options also differ across teacher subgroups. Ingersoll and May (2011) found that minority teachers of color were two to three times more likely than their White peers to serve in the nation's high-poverty and high-minority urban schools. School demographic makeups are critical factors in initial employment decisions for teachers of color. However, these characteristics did not inherently influence their subsequent decisions to stay or leave (Sun et al., 2018).

In the second-level study, the potential benefits of diverse teaching staff on student learning stemmed from emerging research and evidence; diverse teaching staff benefits all students, especially students of color. This was found to intersect several dimensions by providing high-quality learning opportunities (Grissom et al., 2015). Minority teachers spend significantly more time with students of color, have a more favorable assessment of their academic abilities, and refer them to gifted programs at a higher rate (Gershenson et al., 2016; Grissom et al., 2015).

Teachers of color have impacted not only their own students' learning but also their colleagues' beliefs and practices (Grissom & Loeb, 2017; Sun et al., 2018). For example, because collaborative teams of teachers contributed to student learning outcomes collectively, the presence of a teacher of color on a teaching team re-socialized their colleagues, increased their own cultural awareness, and changed their classroom interactions with minority students (Grissom et al., 2015). These findings signified the ongoing importance of recruiting and retaining the best teachers of color.

Myths regarding the attrition rate for teachers of color were based on a lack of understanding of the available labor market's specificity for teachers of color. Previous research on these labor market trends supported that teachers of color were more likely to be placed initially in a system's highest-need school. These are often schools that serve a large percentage of disadvantaged and minority students. These teachers of color had a higher turnover rate than their White peers (Ingersoll & May 2011; Sykes, 1993).

However, we know less about the productivity of teachers who tend to retire, what affects their career choices, and what professions they land in after leaving. We have limited knowledge of the specific school supports that help retain teachers of color,

especially successful ones, so those systems can be highlighted and maintained. Our underdocumented understanding of movement patterns among teachers of color constrained our ability to develop an array of potential ways to diversify the teaching workforce and to spread effective teachers of color throughout schools.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework assisted in defining “the major subjects to be studied, the key factors, constructs, or variables, and the presumed relationships between them, either geographically or narratively” (Miles et al., 1994, p. 18). Frederick Herzberg (1923–2000) was a clinical psychologist and the pioneer researcher of “job enrichment.” He is widely hailed as one of motivational theory's greatest innovators and researchers.

Frederick Herzberg was born on April 18, 1923, in Massachusetts. He completed his undergraduate studies at City College of New York. He completed his graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh. Herzberg created the Department of Industrial Mental Health at Case Western Reserve University and served as a professor of management. In 1972, he was named a professor of management at the University of Utah's College of Business. In 2000, he passed away in Salt Lake City (Herzberg et al., 2011).

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) *The Motivation to Work* laid the groundwork for his theories about workplace motivation. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) survey of 200 Pittsburgh engineers and accountants remains a go-to and baseline reference in job motivational research. While the study enrolled only 200 participants, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) extensive preparatory work and the design of the study enabled Herzberg et al. (1959) to collect and analyze complex data sets.

Hertzberg et al. (1959) research pioneered a method of gathering and analyzing

details of “critical incidents” as recalled by survey respondents, relying on open questioning and making few assumptions. His first application of this style came when he was working on his doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh while partnering with John Flanagan who became the director of the American Institute for Research. Flanagan later was credited with inventing the critical incident method for selecting Army Air Corps personnel during World War II. Herzberg et al. (1959) employed an open interviewing technique that yielded more succinct and deeper results than the more common practice of using close-ended (yes/no), multiple-choice, or extent-based questions, which prompt a particular type of response. His modified approach continues to be the most utilized and effective style of surveying today. This is especially so with researchers who are seeking a particular agenda or favored conclusion (Herzberg et al., 2011).

Herzberg also spent considerable time preparing for his 1959 study by scrutinizing, developing, and comparing the results and methodologies of all 155 previous research studies on job attitudes/motivation conducted between 1920 and 1954.

The level of preparation, combined with the critical incident aspect and the breadth of care and analysis applied during the 1959 project, contributed to Herzberg et al.’s (1959) strength and sophistication.

Herzberg developed his theory of motivation-hygiene in several of his later books, including *Work and the Nature of Man* (Herzberg, 1966), *The Managerial Choice* (Herzberg, 1982), and *Herzberg on Motivation* (Herzberg, 1991). Notably, Herzberg observed in 1984, 25 years after his theory was published for the first time, the original research has been replicated more than any other in the history of industrial and

organizational psychology (Kena et al., 2016).

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) central theory is extremely applicable to contemporary understandings of job relationships, mutual respect and understanding, and alignment within the psychological contract. It has been replicated in all types of jobs and levels inside and outside the business world. It has been effectively utilized in the realm of educational research for many years.

Herzberg et al. (1959) was the first to make the connection that satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work almost always resulted from distinct factors rather than being simply opposite reactions to the same factors, as had previously been believed (and continues to be believed by the unenlightened).

Herzberg et al (1959) coined the following useful phrase to illustrate this central tenet of his theory, namely that the factors that motivate people at work are distinct from and not simply the inverse of the factors that cause dissatisfaction: "We can expand on this by stating that job satisfiers are concerned with the factors that contribute to job performance, whereas job dissatisfiers are concerned with the factors that define the job context" (p. 5).

In conclusion, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) research showed that employees must be motivated to experience on-the-job satisfaction and that unacceptable working conditions contribute to a lack of satisfaction. The presence of sufficient maintenance factors prevents employment discontent, whereas adequate motivators may direct occupational contentment (Herzberg et al., 1959).

While Herzberg's two-factor theory has been the subject of scrutiny for decades, it is still considered relevant today (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). The theory is widely

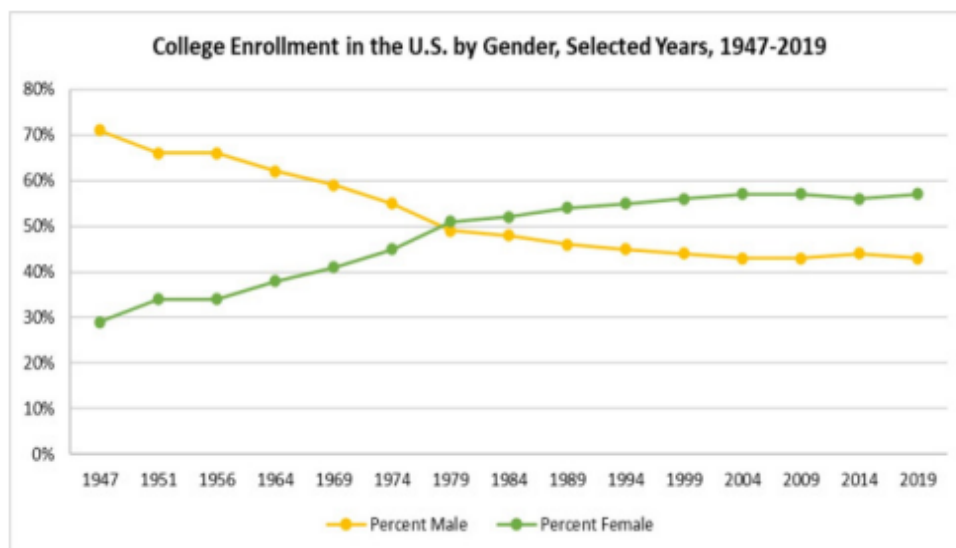
cited as a prominent framework studying job satisfaction and serving as a foundation for research in the fields of human resource development and management (Gawel, 1997; Herzberg, 1987). It is for that reason that I have my research aligned with motivational theory. What follows is a review of current research on the African American male phenomena in education, African American male retention trends in education, and the changing demographics of the American educational system.

African American Males in Education

African American males who teach, with few exceptions, must hold a degree from an accredited university. Research done by Dr. James Johnson of the UNC Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise shows a disturbing trend of declining college enrollment for African American males, as noted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

College Enrollment in the U.S. by Gender, Selected Years, 1947-2019



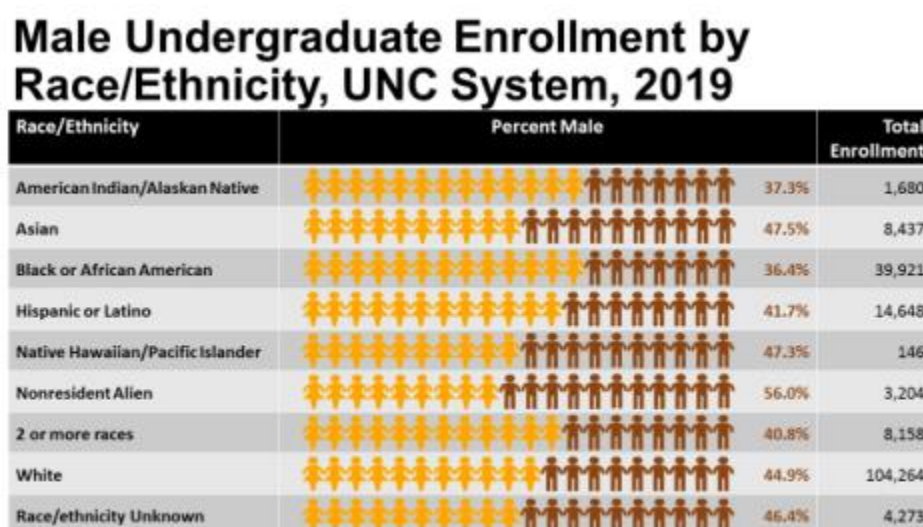
Source: UNC System Data Dashboard (2019).

Figure 1 shows a declining percentage of males enrolling in college. As noted,

this gender gap currently is approximately 40% male to 60% female. Also noteworthy is the gender gap for college students of color in the UNC University System, as shown in Figures 2 and 3. In the UNC System, American Indian and Black student enrollment was 37% and 36% male respectively in 2019. Males were similarly underrepresented in enrollment in the UNC System’s Minority Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities—hovering around 35% on these campuses.

Figure 2

Male Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, UNC System, 2019



Source: UNC System Data Dashboard

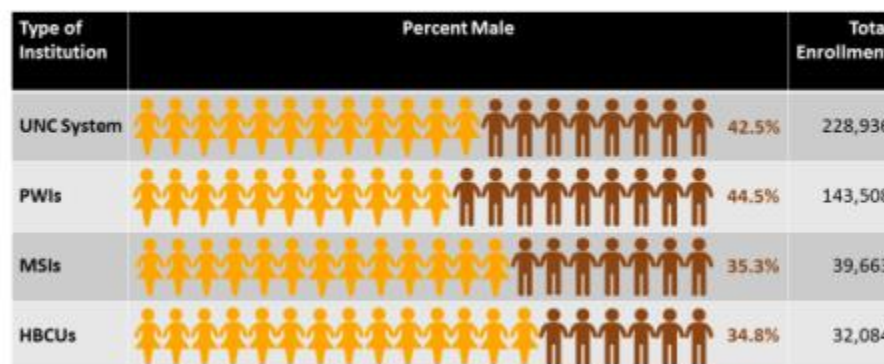
Source: UNC System Data Dashboard (2019).

Over the 5 years between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, the UNC System awarded 45,260 more degrees to women (160,587) than to men (115,327). During this period, 15,233 more degrees were awarded to Black women (30,394) than Black men (15,161).

Figure 3

UNC System Total Enrollment by Type of Institution and Gender, 2019

UNC System Total Enrollment by Type of Institution & Gender, 2019



Source: UNC System Data Dashboard

Source: UNC System Data Dashboard (2019).

The gender ratio imbalance in college enrollment and degrees awarded can be traced back to the K-12 public school experiences of students of color. Issues of overuse of discipline, lower expectations, and a lack of role models for children of color led to a lack of enrollment in colleges.

This section represents the literature review related to African American male teacher experiences in K-12 public schools and their educational and career journeys. It includes findings from prior researchers and experts in their perspective fields who researched the critical role of African American male teachers. Section 1 summarizes the current and historical literature on African American male teachers and their impact on student educational journeys. Section 2 discusses cultural empathy and how race has contributed to the spotlight being placed on the achievement gap between African American and White students. The third section discusses recent research findings

indicating a decline in the presence of African American male teachers in elementary and secondary school classrooms. The fourth section discusses the findings regarding the importance of African American male teachers in the classroom.

African American male candidates applying for a teaching position are frequently interviewed and initially offered teaching positions at the district's low-performing and less-desirable schools or schools not on the applicant's wish list. Peatross (2011) stated that African American male K-12 students experience the following in schools: a high percentage of placement in special needs classes, grouping without justification in classrooms, poor academic performance on measurable tests, and increased discipline referral rates. Those factors were the most-cited justifications for educational, economic, social, and cultural factors apparent in the literature. Black elementary and middle school students who face many and varied challenges at school without an advocate may view their teacher in an adversarial way and less as a potential ally (Beaumont, 2009). This perspective was an often-cited factor in why African American males chose not to consider the teaching field as a viable option for a career choice.

Another obstacle to the Afro-American male teaching force was the state teacher credentialing process that requires teachers to pass state prescribed standardized tests with a determined cut-off score. While all public school teachers must be licensed, not all of them are deemed highly qualified. Peatross (2011) discovered that African American male candidates for positions in large city schools had a disproportionately low passing rate on tests required for certification.

Black educators are role models that academically, socially, and professionally cultivate Black and minority youth. Tyson (2002) stated that Black students begin school

like White students, with a mix of excitement and interest. Gordon (2002) surveyed a sample of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders and found a lack of interest in the school in Grades 4 and 5. This lack of engagement began as soon as third grade. Ladson-Billings (2009) reported that Black students often say that cultural teaching is a hypothesis focused on effective practice. Activities as such have an impact on how much a student can achieve. Gershenson et al. (2016) proposed that more attention be paid to concerns related to African American teacher retention for those “early years” (p. 30) when students are disengaged. African American teachers become involved in or knowingly acquainted with initiatives in the struggle for equity and rights.

Both the classroom and the workforce require that African American students have equal levels of passion and obligation. That can come from an excellent Black teacher. In Dinkins and Thomas’s (2016) research, the teachers expressed a desire that it was essential to assist Black students in understanding their abilities; their identities; and barriers such as living in poverty, the allure of drugs, and false worldly perceptions to succeed in school and life.

Gershenson et al. (2016) indicated that Black first-year college students are deterred from entering education by the pay relative to the district's work hours. In their research, Gershenson et al. found that African American teachers were more likely to leave private or public schools when compared to their White peers. Minor wage increases have no bearing on their decisions. When a school restricts a teacher's advancement and economic elevation, there is a lack of job satisfaction which leads to job insecurity and therefore a decrease in retention rates (Gershenson et al., 2016). During teaching, professional development and necessary state documents are made to

assist African American male teachers to continue working in the classroom.

Teachers are required to develop student growth goals and Student Would Be Able To (SWBAT) classroom displays that have become more of a challenging task that is designed more to impress administrators than to add value to student classroom performance. A student growth goal is an academic target over the academic year that teachers use for conversations with administrators about their students' progress. A student growth goal is intended to be precise and measurable, consistent with state curriculum requirements, assess progress and achievement, and be realistic and obtainable. SWBAT displays involved students working individually for a particular academic lesson by following set objectives on a poster board for accountability. A common misperception was that students are disinterested, and African American male teachers kept their students occupied rather than involved.

At present, the number of African American teachers in K-12 public schools is minimal. In my previous study, done as an undergraduate, five African American students were interviewed and questioned about their potential careers as classroom teachers. I discovered that more commitment and encouragement were required to attract Black children into the profession. Participants chose the profession because they had few African American teachers in their own educational journey. Many cited a belief that their White teachers could not easily relate to them and their life situations. Some White teachers did not push them to achieve their full potential in elementary school and high school. Research showed that the most noted motivation of this study group was all about inspiring and giving back to their families. Roberts (2010) found that Black students taught by African American male teachers had the potential to incorporate conventional

and cultural information into a school curriculum that cannot be taught effectively by a White teacher. What motivates African American male teachers to continue teaching or to decide to quit the teaching profession entirely? Peatross (2011), exploring the experiences of seven African American male teachers in Michigan, addressed this topic. Peatross tried to understand why African American males were teaching and their understanding of what African American males need to be successful. Additionally, they studied African American male teachers and the importance of these male teachers in the classroom as role models. The profile featured seven African American males, two from the suburban school districts and five from Michigan city school districts. The group of teachers included two who had an excess of 30 years of experience, two with more than 20 years of experience, two with more than 10 years of experience, and one who had less than 9 years of experience.

Peatross (2011) observed numerous trends during his one-on-one interviews. Participants identified the acute shortage of African American male teachers. Frequently cited was that low pay was a significant factor in why African American males decided not to select education. Participants cited that having a mentor and developing positive work relationships was the most critical component of becoming a successful instructor. Findings indicated that specific pedagogical strategies tended to promote healthy relationships between the teacher and student. Peatross's results showed that each of the significant factors described in her study influenced why African American male teachers exit the profession. Peatross argued that neither African American nor male teachers should be judged for their performance but their cultural awareness and classroom management pedagogy.

Peatross (2011) used Maslow's (1970) motivation theory to explain African American male teacher perspectives and inspiration. Using his approach, Peatross established that all participants widely expressed class management and other extrinsic principles as a deterrent. Those with an urge to pursue education included a dwindling number of African American male representations and those of non-majority cultural backgrounds. Last, he reported that reasons given by African American male teachers for wanting to stay in the field ranged from the improved academic achievement of their pupils, the mentoring of younger teachers, and the abandonment of a legacy of education.

This study's findings could change how high school counselors inform students about career choices, how higher education attracts prospective students, how school leaders seek to recruit teachers, and how school systems work to retain minority teachers. Furthermore, this research might help inform teacher professional development programs to discuss the cultural significance of African Americans in the classroom. This research is unique to the state of North Carolina. Perceptions of former African American male teachers provided analytical evidence used to improve and refine underrepresented male recruitment to the profession. Additionally, there is a problem with the lack of a diverse faculty, significantly in areas where there is a plurality of minority students with a lack of diversity in faculty and staff.

Agee (2004) noted there is a growing demand for more teachers of color in American schools to reflect the expanding diversity of student populations to properly serve those students' needs. As Gay (2010) phrased it,

There is little doubt that the United States' schools require an increase in Latino, Asian, Native, and African American instructors. However, conflating boosting

student achievement of students of color with meeting this requirement is a very erroneous and hazardous assumption. It presupposes that teachers must be members of an ethnic group to practice culturally competent education. This is as absurd as claiming that just because one is a native English speaker, one inherently knows how to teach English to others. (p. 205)

Agee (2004) noted that a substantial amount of research has been devoted to how the experiences and knowledge of African American male teachers contribute to the academic and social results of diverse groups of pupils, particularly African American males (Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Walley, 2018).

According to Agee (2004), Black teachers have a distinct drive to establish their own identity as educators; they frequently have to adapt and refashion that identity in response to their immediate surroundings. Only through such a lengthy process of identity creation can teachers accommodate their students' different needs and expectations. Agee noted that African American female teachers have a different gendered experience that has been previously overlooked or downplayed. While African American males have historically faced prejudice in various professional fields, African American females have faced even more discrimination based on their sex and race. They have been historically barred from professional spheres in their communities that may have been open to their male counterparts, therefore suffering a “double whammy” of discrimination. Traditionally, teachers have been women from the White community. African American females were frequently excluded from scholarly discussions about education and teaching, especially when race was the topic of discussion in American society (Agee, 2004).

Gay (2010) asserted that numerous college and university teacher education programs are structured to satisfy the demands of White teachers rather than to accommodate and encourage minority teachers, particularly African Americans. This is an important issue, particularly because the United States public school system is experiencing a severe shortage of African American teachers, given the decline in African American pupils' academic achievement (Walley, 2018). According to Thomas and Warren (2017), African American pupils are in critical need of teachers who understand and appeal to their cultural and social perceptions. Wang and Huguley (2012) noted that African American students also face a fatherlessness issue, which harms their social and academic progress. As Wang and Huguley pointed out, having more African American male teachers can address some of these challenges by them serving as role models for boys and young men who grow up in fatherless households. When compared to their peers, children living in households with absent fathers are more likely to have a variety of behavioral problems and lower academic attainment (Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Walley, 2018).

According to Thomas and Warren (2017), children who grow up without a father are substantially more likely to divorce or never marry. Additionally, these children are less likely to enroll in and attend college and are even more likely to end up in prison at some point in their lives. A growing amount of empirical data shows that fatherlessness correlates directly or indirectly to a variety of undesirable behaviors among adolescents, including school violence, drug and alcohol misuse, sexual assault, criminality, and other forms of mischief (Wang & Huguley, 2012). Notably, recent research indicates that the absence of a father has a varied effect on boys and girls. According to Wilson-Jones and

Caston's (2012) empirical study, boys are more prone to indulge in drug and alcohol misuse and have various sorts of psychiatric and mental health disorders throughout their lives.

Additionally, Wilson-Jones and Caston (2012) established a correlation between the absence or poor quality of a father-adolescent interaction with delinquency and other depressive symptoms. According to Wilson-Jones and Caston, several behaviors contribute to the perpetuation of such consequences. One of them may be a father's lack of consistent affirmative and caring actions. Children of all ages who receive consistent affirmation and care from both parents are less likely to exhibit negative behaviors or suffer from various mental health problems (Agee, 2004). Numerous studies have demonstrated that a father-child relationship that is consistent and healthy in terms of emotional connection and interaction benefits both socioemotional development and academic achievement. Children who grew up in households with more involved fathers consistently outperformed their peers from fatherless households or homes where fathers were not emotionally invested in their children's lives or education for a variety of reasons (Walley, 2018). Another study found that children growing up in fatherless homes are at a higher risk of engaging in risky and harmful behaviors during adolescence and later in life (Walley, 2018). These data imply that dads play a significant role in their children's academic achievement, learning processes in general, and discipline. This makes having African American male teachers critical in those high-poverty and high-needs schools where more students come from fatherless homes. Growing up in households where fathers are actively involved has also been associated with greater cognitive scores, self-esteem, and confidence in children of all ages; thus, active

involvement and interactions with a father can be regarded as a significant predictor of a child's healthy and effective cognitive development, as well as their social and academic achievement (Walley, 2018).

According to accumulating data, the absence of a father begins to have a harmful effect during the baby stage or even during pregnancy. For instance, it has been established that the father's involvement throughout the earliest phases of a child's development significantly impacts cognitive activity by stimulating physical and brain development and triggering cognitive processes (Walley, 2018). Apart from the earliest phases of human development, dads are critical in adolescent males' socioemotional, physical, and intellectual growth and performance (Thomas & Warren, 2017). It has long been argued that dads are critical and vital for the development of children, particularly adolescent boys (Alston, 2018). A father's presence and active involvement in their children's lives teach the latter how to manage their emotional, physical, and academic well-being. Alston (2018) pioneered longitudinal studies by following the development of many boys, ages 7 to 11, over 11 years. He gathered quantitative data to establish connections between exposure to father-daughter activities and adolescent behavior and development elements. Participating in activities with fathers was positively connected with the likelihood of completing high school rather than dropping out. In terms of emotional bonding and wellness, children growing up in fatherless families have a harder time forming emotional connections with other people and socializing during their adolescent years. Additionally, Alston found a cumulative influence on the father's degree of engagement and the child's overall academic achievement in school. Brown (2012) asserted that the lack of a dad has a significant impact on the development of

African American children, both males and females. This issue is more severe for boys since they frequently lack the presence and example of a masculine norm, making them more prone to develop deviant behaviors (Bristol, 2018; Ingersoll, 2015). As a result, African American males look for other role models and examples, such as those provided by their mothers, which has a skewed effect on their sexual development and masculinity.

In light of these thoughts and arguments, Bristol (2018) urged academics to look for additional male role models or examples of masculinity that African American boys may experience outside their households. Male African American teachers, when present, can serve as an example for minority male students in the school. Increasing the number of African American male educators and counselors can counter some of the harmful effects of a fatherless home and help buffer the negative impacts of fatherlessness, resulting in improved academic and social skills for African American kids. Another concern is that many textbooks and written recommendations utilized in K-12 learning environments are geared toward the White majority's ideas and attitudes (Gay, 2010). On the other hand, African American teachers' unique educational objectives, cultural views, and attitudes, and academic and social backgrounds are misinterpreted and overlooked (Agee, 2004). According to many teachers' experiences, "it is not a teacher's ethnicity alone that makes him or her a role model; rather, it is the teacher's knowledge, experience, and deeds that cause kids to draw toward such teachers" (Walley, 2018, p. 108).

It is critical to recognize that African American children, particularly men, require exposure to a diverse range of role models, not simply African American role models. African American male teachers are indeed considered as prospective role models due to

their cultural and socioeconomic commonalities and in-depth understanding of students' needs (Agee, 2004). This rationale creates a risky situation in which workplace diversity is overlooked and underestimated (Thomas & Warren, 2017). Agee (2004) cautions against embracing the prejudiced, discriminatory, and potentially deadly belief that children of color can learn exclusively from teachers of similar ethnic origin.

Walley (2018) observed a reoccurring trend in various discourses shared by African American male teachers in public schools. According to respondents, African American male teachers were considered as disciplinarians capable of maintaining control over “difficult” (Walley, 2018, p. 54) classrooms in a school setting and workplace dominated by White females. Frequently, teachers were approached by their White colleagues to speak with African American boys who had misbehaved and who the White teachers lacked the confidence to approach. According to Walley, White teachers frequently did not know their African American male colleagues well. However, they continued to operate under the assumption that, due to their shared ethnic and presumably cultural origin, African American teachers and African American male pupils shared a great deal in common (Walley, 2018).

According to Brown (2012), “since Black male students are stereotyped as aggressive or rebellious, Black male teachers are expected to act as disciplinarians and aggressors in their interactions with their Black male pupils” (p. 331). Walley (2018) reported that African American male teachers do not always agree that they are the most appropriate person to serve as disciplinarians. Indeed, many perceive that their colleagues' behavior is excessively stereotyped and even discriminating. Being an African American male teacher does not ensure that an individual instructor can

discipline and control the most challenging behavioral children (Bristol, 2018). Research has concentrated on the unique instructional strategies and approaches employed by African American teachers. Research supports the notion that African American male teachers are frequently viewed as the individuals responsible for adopting innovative teaching concepts and methods.

Pabon (2017) reported that African American male teachers are frequently seen as culturally relevant due to two critical tenets of their teaching approach. To begin, they believe that learning is socially mediated; second, they regard knowledge as a social construct that necessitates critical appraisal and dissemination to all members of society (Pabon, 2017). Additionally, African American teachers frequently view teaching as an art form that cannot be reduced to a collection of technical information or skills. Another critical principle many African American male teachers embrace is the one that encourages them to build a more personal relationship with their students, one that frequently extends beyond the classroom (Bush & Bush, 2018). Interestingly, Brown (2012) asserted that this commitment and attention to progressive approaches and teaching strategies derived from African American male teachers being frequently viewed as regressive in their classroom instruction methods. Due to their reluctance to accept such assumptions, African American male teachers face more pressure to incorporate fresh teaching ideas into their daily activities (Walley, 2018).

Another probable explanation for why African American male teachers are viewed as progressive and forward-thinking is that these teachers are often viewed as the most likely answer to the problem of African American male student underperformance (Brown, 2012). Subsequently, African American male teachers are frequently under

pressure to devise instructional strategies to enable Black boys to achieve academically. Frequently, African American male teachers are called upon to serve on specific school or district committees that address the achievement gap, discipline and placement committees, and other teams that are designed to expand outreach into minority communities. African American male teachers quickly understand their role as a token in these assignments and rarely report any real authority in their decision-making process.

African American male teachers report frequently being under pressure to devise instructional strategies that will enable Black boys to achieve academically. Due to persistent discrimination and underrepresentation of African American males in the public school system in the United States, this group of educators saw themselves as responsible for dismantling “hierarchies of power and oppression based on socioeconomic status, language, ethnic origin, race, and gender” (Walker, 1983, p. 4). This finding is corroborated by Walley (2018) and Pabon (2017), who both noted that many African American male students grow up without male role models or examples of successful guys who show respect for African American females. To compensate for such challenges, African American male and female teachers frequently attempt to incorporate womanist and feminist concepts and ideas into the classroom (Pabon, 2017), as if to compensate for the issues prevalent in their everyday lives and African American communities. This dedication to feminism's ideas and ideals stems from years of oppression endured by African American women, as well as a sense of responsibility and concern that motivates both individual and collective efforts to end such discriminatory practices within African American communities in the United States (Bush & Bush, 2018).

Indeed, research suggests that because racism, sexism, and elitism are endemic to American society, progressive African American male and female teachers believe they must teach a liberator pedagogy that focuses on the development of American cultural identity and an awareness of social inequality among Black students. However, as Walley (2018) demonstrates, individual instructors' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs all contribute significantly to the molding of their teaching strategy and philosophy. As a result, such broad strokes should be scrutinized and investigated within each specific case.

Researchers agree that the pressure on African American male teachers to serve as role models, unique disciplinarians, and representatives and models for their community and culture all while being effective teachers in the classroom adds an extra layer of stress and burden on them. Coupled with all that pressure is the expectation that they successfully address the achievement gap between African American and White students. When African American male teachers leave the classroom and the field of education and are not replaced with more African American male teachers, students lose, school culture loses, and the public education system loses.

African American Male Retention Trends in Education

Being African American and male in the American educational system carries a slew of social implications (Black & Rice, 2020). The intersection of Blackness and maleness results in an educational construct that is informed by factors other than race (Hicks Tafari, 2018). A report from the Albert Shanker Institute noted that teachers of color (including Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Multiracial) and particularly male teachers of color are underrepresented in the

workplace, with significant disparities between teacher and student representation (Griffin & Tackie 2017). What is more astounding is that the percentage of African American teachers in the workforce has decreased in nine major cities across the United States over the last decade (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). According to Bianco and Bal (2016), the complexities of being Black and male in education have had an impact on the teaching profession in the following areas. Personal history and the experiences of many African American males in public schools help to contextualize their early resistance to entering the education field, which may add another challenge to teacher recruitment efforts. To address educational inequities experienced by African American students, the need for soundly prepared and intrinsically culturally responsive teachers is essential and critical to their success regardless of race or gender. However, that need for African American male teachers is critical.

Currently, only 2% of all teachers in the United States are African American males (Kena et al., 2016). This results in an overburdening of African American male teachers in unexpected subsequent roles. The need exists for African American male teachers, but available financial support and opportunities for support are scarce.

There is a wealth of research demonstrating the critical need for African American male teachers; there is less research regarding how to support them (Black & Rice, 2020). The demand for African American male teachers will continue to outpace the supply of African American male teachers, and that supply will continue to be limited. While this need makes a compelling case for accelerated recruitment of African American males, the lack of enhanced support structures needed to support African American male teachers once hired has a detrimental effect on their retention. This

requires increased recruitment and support for African American men who choose to enter the teaching profession. African American male teachers have expressed a desire to teach as a way to make a difference in the lives of Black children (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Lewis, 2006; Lynn; 2004).

African American male teachers are required to do more than teach and serve as role models; they are also expected to act as disciplinarians (Emdin et al., 2016). An uncommon stereotype is that they are the most suited to administer “tough love” to challenging students. They are denied the opportunity to build positive working relationships in this model, while African American male students are denied opportunities to flourish and succeed.

Teachers frequently understand that the phrase tough love is used to justify heinous practices such as denying African American students opportunities for a second chance that other students receive to complete assignments or disciplining students for violating minor rules. This exposes practices by some teachers such as yelling at students for being playful or asking too many questions (Emdin et al., 2016).

Many African American male educators initially buy into the importance of tough love. Confronted with the reality that this is code for socially harming Black students, they are overcome with remorse and frequently leave the field of education (Emdin et al., 2016). Recruitment and retention are both issues, while recruitment appears to be the more tangible and actionable of the two. Retention of African American male teachers appears to have fewer obvious solutions or strategies for improvement (Griffin & Tackie, 2017).

African American male teachers leave based on poor working conditions.

According to Albert Shanker Institute's research, teachers of color perceive a lack of voice in educational decisions and a lack of professional discretion and autonomy in the classroom (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Researchers have shown that teachers of color are disproportionately employed in schools known for their less-than-adequate working conditions, which affects their ultimate decision and willingness to stay.

Changing Demographics of American Education

America's demographic make-up is changing and, in the process, dramatically transforming the nation's workforce, workplaces, and consumer markets, as well as all other social, economic, and political institutions. Moreover, our shifting demographics are changing both the composition and complexion of the nation's school-age population—the next generation that will fill seats in higher education institutions, compete for jobs in our dynamic and ever-changing economy, and fuel economic growth through their consumer purchasing power. (Johnson, 2019, p. 3)

Since 1995, the total enrollment numbers for students enrolled in the nation's public schools have significantly increased but not equally across subgroups of students. As a result, the racial and ethnic composition of students has shifted.

A significant change in public school enrollment has been the rapid increase in Hispanic students. Hispanic student enrollment numbers have increased from 6 million in 1995 to over 13.6 million in 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Hispanic students increased from 13.5% to 26.8% of public school enrollment during that time period. The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) predicted that Hispanic student enrollment will grow and reach 14 million students in 2029 and comprise 27.5%

of total public school enrollment by 2029.

While this student population has increased, the number of White students has decreased, falling from 29 million in 1995 to 24.1 million in 2017. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), White student enrollment will continue to shrink, to a possible 22.4 million students in 2029. In 1995, 64.8% of public school students were White; by 2014, this percentage had fallen below 50% (to 49.5%). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), White students will account for 43.8% of public school enrollment in 2029.

African American students as a percent of the total population in schools also decreased from 16.8% in 1995 to 15.2% in 2017. It is expected to remain at 15.2% in 2029. African American student school enrollment increased from 7.6 million in 1995 to 8.4 million in 2005 and is expected to decline to 7.7 million by 2029. From the fall of 2017 to the fall of 2029, the number of public school students who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander is expected to increase (from 5.6% to 6.9%) as well as the number who identify as Two or More Races (from 3.9% to 5.8%; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

In North Carolina, those trends mirror national statistics. Dr. James Johnson, William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship and Director, Urban Investment Strategies Center, has spent the last decade of his career specializing in demographic shifts in North and South Carolina. By analyzing census data over the last several decades, he has become a national expert on changing demographics. His research has been a catalyst in the business world as leaders seek to learn what demographic trends are coming that will impact their business operations. Government

leaders have also called upon his expertise to understand housing, employment, and population trends. Finally, the education world has embraced his research as a tool to plan future school operational and personnel needs. Equally noteworthy is the education world's interest in the impact on curriculum, auxiliary services, second language services, and support services.

In North and South Carolina, as in the nation, there are three major themes of demographic shifts that are currently impacting our culture. Johnson (2020) identified those as the “Great Demographic Disruptions.” They are

- The South Rises Again

Population growth in the South as more people migrate and settle in the South. It should be noted that the population growth has been concentrated in Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, and Virginia. In those states, the migrations have been mostly to the urban areas of the South. Rural populations in the South have declined.

- Cooling Waters from Grandma's Well and Grandpa's Too

More and more children are being raised in households with their grandparent(s). This demographic trend finds more children in homes without their parents or the support network parents provide.

- The Browning and Graying of America

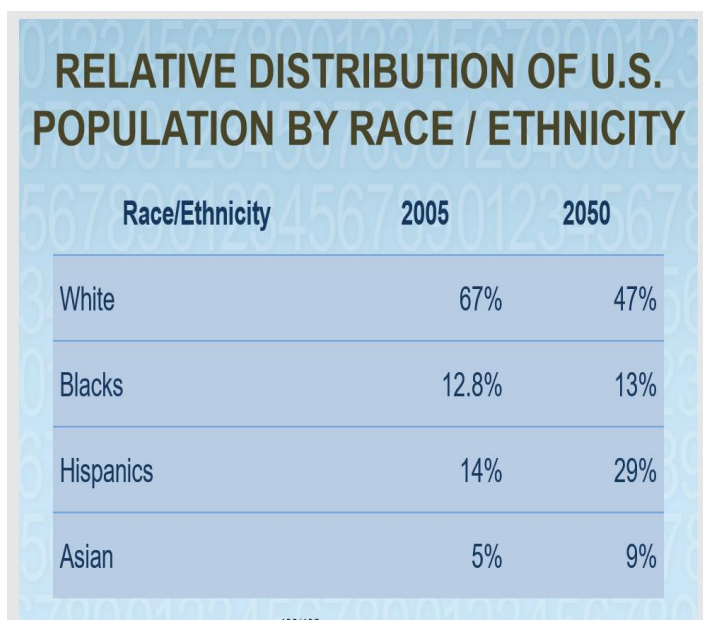
More than any of the other trends, this one has the most impact on public education and its disturbing lack of minority teachers, most specifically African American male teachers. Johnson (2020) defined “browning” to describe demographic shifts in the race and ethnic composition of the U.S.

population. Greying is the term he employed to show the trend of an increase in the age of the population. He noted that as a county, our population's average age has continued to increase over the last decade.

Figure 4 shows the browning trend.

Figure 4

Relative Distribution of U.S. Population by Race/Ethnicity



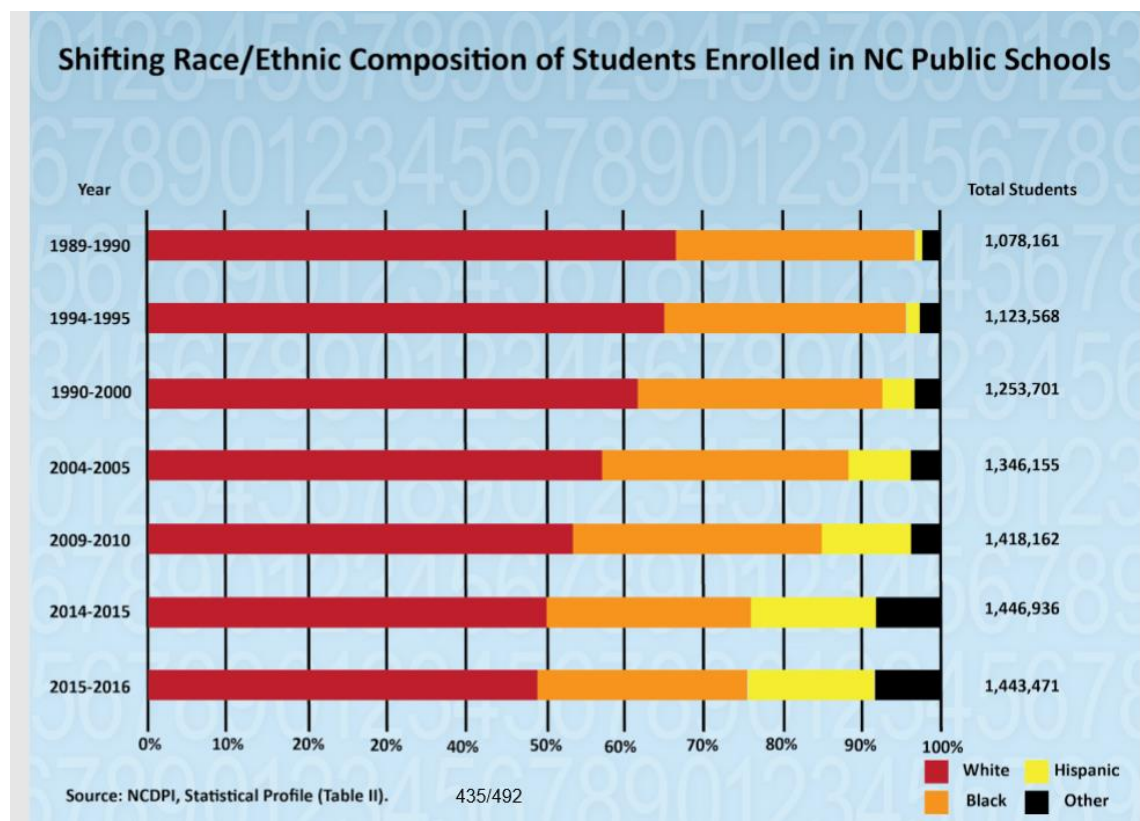
Race/Ethnicity	2005	2050
White	67%	47%
Blacks	12.8%	13%
Hispanics	14%	29%
Asian	5%	9%

Source: Johnson J. (2016, May). North Carolina's Disruptive Demographics: Implications for K-12 and Higher Education.

Noted from Figure 4 is that most of the browning of America is a result of non-White Hispanic growth; however, a more in-depth look at the chart shows that the African American population also shows a steady but not as significant increase. This marks a .2% change. Digging deeper into the census data as reported by Johnson (2016), the impact on North Carolina schools is troubling given the declining number of African American teachers coming into and staying in the classrooms. Figure 5 shows the shifting race/ethnic composition of students enrolled in North Carolina's schools.

Figure 5

Shifting Race/Ethnic Composition of Students Enrolled in North Carolina's Schools.



Source: Johnson J. (2016, May). North Carolina's Disruptive Demographics:

Implications for K-12 and Higher Education.

This graph shows the continuing browning of students in North Carolina's public schools. The largest growth is in the Hispanic and Other populations. The African American (Black) student population has a slight decrease; however, this population still accounts for almost 26% of the students in North Carolina public schools. Given the declining numbers of African American teachers, this means that increasingly more students will be taught by teachers who do not look like them.

African American Males Leaving the Profession

Numerous findings are shown in the literature for why African American males

choose to not begin and remain in the K-12 teaching profession. According to Achinstein and Ogawa (2015), because teachers of color are frequently hired for hard-to-staff schools, their African American male teachers are more likely to exit the district and the profession entirely (Kane & Orsini, 2003). They interviewed 21 teachers, six of whom were African American male teachers. They discovered that two major domains contributed to national trends in retention and hiring of African American male teachers: school working conditions and commitment to staying in high-minority schools. Male African American teachers who are denied some autonomy to teach Grades K-8 often are discouraged and leave. Many African American teachers are denied autonomy while teaching Grades K-8.

According to Hanford (2017), the teaching population increased from 1988 to 2012. Although the African American male teacher population grew by 30% in the United States between 2008 and 2012, it was the only demographic that grew at a slower pace. Within 4 years the number of African American male teachers decreased by 5%. Additionally, some research suggested that school working conditions, curriculum demands, and the cultural and social environment discouraged K-8 students from pursuing careers in education.

African American male teachers excel, while others appear to struggle, according to Gross and Lo (2018). Principals recognized their impact and the development of their students' academic and social opportunities. Brockenbrough (2014) demonstrated that when students from predominately African American primary and middle schools first met their teachers, they formed prejudices, and the race and gender of their teacher continued to play a significant role in their academic careers. Minority students in

elementary and middle schools who saw an African American male often cited an increase in concern for their well-being. Those students who sought mentors were more successful academically. Positive and engaging regular contact with students often was cited as the major factor that affected an African American male teacher's decision to stay.

When African American male teachers had their students' respect, attention, and cooperation, those added to the emotional self-satisfaction that influenced them to continue in the profession (Brockenbrough, 2014). In K-5 schools, students often struggle to communicate with their guardians but prefer to talk to their teacher as someone who can subjectively give the student the attention and time they are looking for. "It's all about the kids; I got tired of ill-informed people who didn't care about the kids they were dealing with. It's all about the kids" (Wimbush, 2012, p. 54). In Wimbush's (2012) report, many African American male teachers wanted to remain as teachers and impact in a positive way the lives of children and assist African American students who needed someone who cares.

African American students in public school who have African American teachers who show concern are found to be better able to manage and succeed in their academic development (Payne, 2007). African American male teachers came into the classroom and remained (Boswell, 2010). Wimbush (2012) conducted a qualitative study investigating African American male teacher perspectives in several counties in Georgia. Wimbush reported that the critical retention factors for African American male teachers were (a) the opportunity to influence the lives of students, (b) acting as a role model, and (c) shifting the profession's view of manipulating learners into being potential educators.

School districts that understand these variables retain professional African American teachers with pay increases and more support services.

According to Williams et al. (2009), African American male teachers better understand justice issues. Their capacity in any school to build the moral character of students is crucial. Significant literature and research support the finding that African American children benefit from regular instruction by African American male teachers (Boswell, 2010; Payne 2007). As peers, African American male teachers promoted cultural awareness with their counterparts and administrators from different cultures and races. Administrators and school boards who understood the importance of African American male teachers in their schools who can build a network of support around K-8 students now have a proven tool in their efforts to promote increasing teacher pay in hopes of keeping or providing them with advanced services.

Since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), many K-8 African American students have continued to lag behind their White peers socially, culturally, and academically (“History,” n.d.). Schools and students were not created uniformly, and those who struggle academically inside and outside the classroom are typically urban and poverty-stricken students. According to Ladson-Billings (2013), equal opportunity was affiliated with the understanding that African American students should have equal access to the same educational opportunities as White students, including tuition, funding, instruction, and access to highly qualified teachers. To successfully compete with their White peers, African American students must overcome those glaring inequities, laws, tests, and instructor experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1998). African American male teachers contributed culturally and have experience and information that can be immensely useful

if shown to students, thus improving their academic progress and developing more sustaining and upbeat attitudes towards education (Nieto, 2001). Experiences such as these are better understood when phenomenologically experienced.

Clear and precise accounts of human experience are a phenomenological method study (Vagle, 2016). Unlike those of the predominantly White female teacher, African American male instructor interactions must work through social and racial paradigms differently. Peatross's (2011) research on the phenomenological approach found that all seven African American male participants expressed being looked over as K-5 students and not predicted to succeed as well as their White counterparts. Given the history of racism and segregation in the United States, it is not unrealistic to think that African American students were not held to the same expectations or challenged to reach the same degree of achievement as White peers. Wimbush (2012) claimed that many of his participants shared unfavorable interactions with White teachers while enrolled in K-8 schools as they sought to pursue improvement for minority students.

In the Topeka's court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Thurgood Marshall headed the prosecution team that argued that it was unconstitutional to segregate African American and White students ("History," n.d.). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) claimed that trends in schools today suggest that students are more segregated than ever. While African American students are the majority population in 21 of 22 urban large school districts, these same districts lead the nation with the highest dropout rates (Boswell, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Historically, African Americans were unable to own property and therefore had little to no opportunity to influence policy. Critical race theory scholars argue that the U.S. is a property rights-built

country, and those who own property are entitled to make decisions about it. They were not given equal rights because of their race but also because they did not own land (Ladson-Billings, 2009). White Americans owned land and held power over decisions. This laid the groundwork for dividing students between African American and White and established an educational framework for White students with more updated buildings, new books, new playgrounds, equipment, and after-school programs. African American families had little choice, so many migrated to places where they could live or purchase property served by underfunded schools without many of the services offered in the White-only schools.

Gordon (2002) reported that many African American male teachers shared mutual experiences and histories, making communication easier and connections to African American students easier. As a result, these teachers were in a more vital position to connect to African American students than their White peers. Griffin and Tackie (2017) said many African American teachers had many of the same experiences in schools as they see their current students experiencing. Many African American students lived in poverty with poor clothing and food insecurities, something experienced by these African American male teachers. This greatly sensitizes African American male teachers to recognize a student in need and make a connection.

Teachers at middle and high schools have noticed that African American male teachers fuel a drive to establish better-sustained connections with supervisors in support of their relationship with African American students. African American male teachers have a unique perspective. Many are great at recognizing their male students' needs and assisting in the development of initiatives that promote academic proficiency while

promoting etiquette and integrity in school settings. Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990) argued that African American teachers should be competent in leading these specific outreach efforts on behalf of African American children. Educating African American students demonstrates the educator's commitment to the African American culture. Increased engagement and the regular presence of influential African American males benefit the total school experience including the academic and social development of African American students (Peatross, 2011).

Summary

This literature review provided a framework for understanding the plight of African American male teachers related to their retention in our schools. Researchers recommended that administrators and district leaders need to concentrate on building and fostering relationships and promoting programs that African American male educators can utilize to ensure success with African American students. It was critical to discuss the factors that influenced African American teachers and students to pursue career choices in education, the retention of African American male teachers, and finally the impact of African American male teachers in the classroom. The aim was to determine the unique factors African American male teachers must have to keep those already in the profession.

Adequate funding, emotional support, classroom services, and administrative support are areas that need to improve. African American male teachers are more influential in real day-to-day school activities as witnessed by minority students. This study aimed to address the effect and importance of the retention of African American male teachers in schools based on research showing how to determine the potential for

further retention and recruitment of African American male teachers in public schools.

Assisting African American students in a manner that preserves and enhances their academic achievement and creates relationships within the educational institutional community was a major priority. African American male teachers will improve African American student performance in the classroom, resulting in higher test scores and students seeking to join the profession themselves.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study was purposefully formatted as a qualitative research method study of the retention of African American male teachers in the classroom and what factors played a role in their decisions to leave the classroom. Additionally, the study sought to understand what factors would have played a role in keeping them in the classroom.

Research Design

The research method design that was used to collect data for this study involved a mixed methods approach. “Mixed methods involve combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study. Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually includes close-ended responses” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 14). The study's qualitative data were collected through interviews, and its quantitative data were collected through surveys completed by participants. Both sets of data worked together to ensure the validity of all responses. This is also known as a convergent form of qualitative research. Qualitative and quantitative data sets are merged to form a more comprehensive analysis of the researched problem. Both data sets are also generally collected at the same time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants included 11 African American male teachers who recently left the classroom. An explanatory sequential qualitative research method design was used in this study. This particular design involves the collection of quantitative data first and then explaining the quantitative results with an in-depth focus on qualitative data. In Phase 1 of the data collection survey (Appendix), data were collected from the 11 participants. The second phase of data collection was a qualitative application through follow-up

interviews with the 11 participants for more data-rich mining.

This research design identified why African American male teachers leave the classroom and what they say could have enticed them to stay in the field. What was missing in their experiences? What could have been done or said to keep them in the classroom? Finally, what they say is needed to keep current and future African American male teachers in the classroom. The research questions in this study helped to develop the survey questions used to determine what components of the qualitative model were to be used. My research questions addressed the actual assessment of African American male teacher perceptions and life experiences that drove them to leave the classroom.

An understanding of why African American male teachers elected the field of education in the first place will provide helpful information for administrators of what has led them to their school systems and provide insight on their retention. This study aimed to identify and dissect the responses of African American male teachers who leave the education field. Their views and experiences will better inform school administrators as they seek to retain more African American male teachers in the education field. This research is based on the conceptual framework of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivational theory. The theory of motivation addressed what motivates people in the workforce. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from differing poles and not simply one or the other reaction under the same circumstances (Herzberg et al ,1959).

This phenomenological research aimed primarily to examine and analyze the current trends of the low number of African American male teachers in the K-12 academic setting by understanding why former African American males choose and finally do leave education as a profession. This research aimed to understand and

describe African American male teacher responses to factors leading them to leave the teaching profession. The most recent trends show a slight increase in the number of non-White student enrollment in K-8 schools, and this is magnified by the alarming decline in the supply of African American male teachers. I interviewed former African American male teachers about their experiences and motivators to exit the classroom. This research added to the existing body of research.

Research on former African American male teachers was the topic chosen for this study as a factor in the shortage of racial diversity of teachers serving in predominantly minority K-12 school student populations. Creswell (2013) noted that qualitative research focuses on humanistic factors that can interact naturally. Choosing qualitative research provided opportunities to further advance teacher perceptions by active engagement with them in one-on-one dialog sessions via interviews. The overall aim of qualitative research is to interpret and make sense of their lives and experiences.

This phenomenological study was designed for a deep dive analysis of the perspectives of former African American male teachers who exit education. This led me to conduct a qualitative case study design (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative case study design can apply to discovering the methods, routines, and procedures of exceptionally competent individuals or groups in all types of environments. This case study aimed to secure data in their natural and most comfortable settings.

This research is an addition to previous research seeking to provide additional explanation and knowledge into the topics of African American male teacher retention in America's classrooms. For this study, I chose to conduct a phenomenological analysis. Creswell (2013) prescribed the following steps in a phenomenological analysis:

1. The researcher describes their own experience with the object of study to identify personal judgments and prejudices so they do not affect the process of analysis.
2. The researcher proceeds with the “horizontalization” of data. This refers to the process where the researcher lists each of the relevant quotes of the studied topic and gives them equal value with regard to the expressions of the group. This is where the textual description begins: What are the participants saying? What are the relevant topics expressed by the research participants?
3. The researcher groups the relevant topics into units of meaning.
4. The researcher writes the textual description and includes “ad verbatim” quotations.
5. The researcher writes the structural description.
6. Finally, according to the textual and structural analysis, the researcher proceeds to identify the essence of the phenomenon. What are the common elements repeated in each of the researched participants?

My first research question focused on what factors contributed to African American male teachers remaining in the classroom. This seeks to draw upon the experiences of African American male teachers who exited the field as they offer suggestions and insight into what could or should have been done to keep them in the classroom. Their candid responses can form a framework for recommendations to current administrators who struggle with retaining African American male teachers. I selected a qualitative interview method, adapted with permission granted from Ozuna (2018). Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 from the survey were used to collect data for this research

question's findings as reported in Chapter 4.

The second research question sought to draw responses from the subjects on the factors that would have kept them in the field. Questions 5, 7, and 8 from the survey were used to collect data for this research question's findings as reported in Chapter 4.

The final research question asked the subjects to identify what they perceived to be the greatest benefit for students to have African American male teachers. Question 4 from the survey was used to collect data for this research question's findings as reported in Chapter 4.

Additionally, I sought to discover how African American male teachers would report their teaching challenges, retention and recruitment strategies, and benefits utilized at a predominantly minority school. Interviews were conducted using a qualitative case study design to understand 11 African American male teachers' motivation. The data analysis method was a series of multiple steps of the interview analysis and interpreting archival data. I transcribed the audio into notes, the information was reviewed, and corrections were made for accuracy. Coding followed and was done with responses classified into specific categories. Finally, all the transcripts and notes were analyzed for concept similarities and emerging themes.

Participants

The population for this research was selected by purposeful sampling. They were recruited through social media platforms, self-identification of former teachers from across the state of North Carolina, and principal and teacher referrals.

The population was limited to former teachers who identified as African American and male. Eleven African American males were selected for this study.

Interview participants could be further identified by their career status as defined by North Carolina and their teaching years of service:

1. former African American male teachers who just started teaching (1 year or less),
2. non-tenured teachers who had been in the classroom for 4 years,
3. former African American male teachers who recently acquired tenure with 4 years of teaching experience and
4. veteran African American male teachers with 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Additionally, they were identified by their entry point into teaching: those who secured a license from a university and those who entered through an alternative licensure program. Demographic data were collected which included school assignment demographics, school staff demographics, and administrative demographics.

Instrument

I utilized a qualitative interview method, adapted with permission granted from Ozuna (2018). The 11 former African American male teacher interviews were semi-structured regarding their classroom experiences, why they chose the teaching profession, professional influencers, and personal motivators in the job. Interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes per participant. There were nine open-ended survey questions for each participant to complete.

Interview questions were modified from the research performed by Ozuna (2018). The nine open-ended questions addressed in this study were classified into five sections: Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 in the instrument were designed to address Research Question 1

on how participants perceived their current and past classroom experiences. Questions 5, 7, and 8 addressed the issue of their motivation to be a teacher and what influences attracted African American male teachers to select the profession. Item 4 related to research recommendations to increase African American male teacher hiring while improving retention based on the positive impact they have on students, which addressed Research Question 3.

The open-ended interview questions were as follows:

1. Why did you choose K-12 education as a professional career?
2. Who or what inspired you to become a teacher?
3. Please describe what it was like teaching in your school? Did you feel supported? Please explain.
4. What type of input do you think African American male teachers have on students and the overall school setting?
5. What can/should districts do to increase the number of African American male teachers recruited and retained?
6. What reason(s) would you attribute to the current representation of African American male teachers in K-12?
7. Do you believe you had a role in recruiting/retaining African American male teachers?
8. What recommendations would you make to increase the number of African American male preservice teachers in Grades K-12?
9. Are there any other points you would like to make?

To ensure the survey validity, I used the Lawshe (1975) method for content validity. I

utilized a panel of four subject matter experts, current African American male teachers, to consider the importance of individual items within this instrument. Their ratings of essential questions were incorporated into the survey.

Procedures for Data Collection/Analysis

There are a number of data collection methods used to assemble data, analyze data, and provide detailed interpretations of the data. Critical to the research is the selection of a method that accurately portrays the collected data, as it can influence the results.

The initial step in this study was the survey distribution. The population was selected by purposeful sampling. The study participants were recruited through social media platforms, former teachers from across the state of North Carolina, and principal and teacher referrals. All correspondences were conducted virtually by Zoom sessions lasting 30 to 45 minutes or less. No in-person contact was necessary for this study.

The data in this survey were collected in two sections. The first section was a demographic analysis of the pool of participants. Each participant was asked to enter data regarding their years of service in the field of education (1 year or less, nontenured, and tenured) when they left the profession. Then they were asked to identify their method of entry into the teaching profession (traditional university degree route or an alternative licensure route). Additional demographic data were collected based on job assignments and colleagues.

The second step was to administer the open-ended survey and collect and record responses. Upon answering each survey question, participants were asked follow-up questions based on their original responses to gather a more in-depth assessment of their

perceptions.

All participants completed and signed consent forms. Interviews are but one of the many sources used to develop qualitative data. Qualitative researchers rely on in-depth interviews which obtain rich information in 45 minutes with the participants. Interviews were held by Zoom and transcribed. Then they were reviewed and corrected to ensure the audio recordings were collected correctly. The transcripts from the Zoom recordings were reviewed and verified for the accuracy of the detailed responses. I compiled the list of documents for the study and created a spreadsheet to group all the data collected, the participants who provided the information, the data's location, and the secure link to the interview questions. Data from interviews with former African American male teachers were collected and stored. I then compiled the data in a narrative format using software.

Table 2 provides specific information on the evaluation components, data sources, procedures, and presentation mechanisms that relate specifically to each of the three research questions.

Table 2*Research Question Alignment Table*

Research question	Sources of data	Procedures	Presentation of data
What factors contribute to African American male teachers remaining in the field?	Ozuna (2018) Survey.	Survey emailed to participants	Specific quantitative survey data
	Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6	Interviews scheduled with participants following their completion of survey	Transcribed notes
What factors do African American male teachers say would contribute to them staying in the field of education?	Ozuna (2018) Survey.	Survey emailed to participants	Specific quantitative survey data
	Questions 5, 7, and 8	Interviews scheduled with participants following their completion of survey	Transcribed notes
What do African American male teachers say is the greatest benefit for students to have African American male teachers?	Ozuna (2018) Survey.	Survey emailed to participants	Specific quantitative survey data
	Question 4	Interviews scheduled with participants following their completion of survey	Transcribed notes

Summary

This study reviewed and analyzed the perceptions of 11 African American male teachers who left the field of education for various reasons.

This study will benefit school systems by providing information or data that will assist in developing a positive climate that is maximized for retaining African American male teachers upon employment. Various subject perspectives could empower the administration to consider many options when reviewing African American male teacher retention policies. Policy makers at all levels can use the data to draw their own

conclusions on the factors causing African American males to stay in the field and factors that might cause them to leave.

Chapter 4 reports the results of my study and the research addressed in the research questions. Tables and quotes are employed to show common themes that emerged during data analysis. Chapter 5 summarizes the study's findings and offers conclusions drawn from the data. Recommendations for practice and further research end the chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In 2016, the United States had an average of 3.8 million schoolteachers, only 77,900 of whom were African American males working in the classroom. We know that there are far too few African American male educators who can serve as great role models for America's schoolchildren working with those children every day. When evaluating the factors affecting the attrition and retention of African American male teachers, emphasis was placed on understanding what can be done to mitigate and improve attrition and retention rates of teachers of color.

Chapter 4 discusses the study's findings. The organization of this chapter allows for each research question to be answered by sample description, descriptive data, tables, participant narratives, common findings, emergent themes, ancillary findings, and a conclusion.

Participant Descriptions

My study was comprised of 11 African American males who chose to leave the profession as classroom teachers. Participant educational backgrounds range from bachelor's degrees to master's degrees. Three of the participants were master's degree holders, while eight were bachelor's degree holders. Two participants had experience teaching grades below the third grade, while a majority of the participants worked with students in the seventh through 12th grades. Participant average age was 33.5. Participants ranged from 22 years old to 48 years old. The average number of years of experience was 5.6 years. The shortest period of experience was 1 year, and the longest period was 12 years.

Table 3*Participant Descriptions Part 1*

Participant	Grade	Degree	Age	Years of experience
1	6-8	Bachelor's	42	6
2	K-5	Bachelor's	25	1
3	K-5	Bachelor's	29	2
4	6-8	Bachelor's	31	4
5	9-12	Bachelor's	29	5
6	9-12	Bachelor's	39	10
7	K-2	Bachelor's	31	12
8	6-8	Bachelor's	26	4
9	6-8	Master's	48	6
10	9-12	Master's	32	8
11	6-8	Master's	36	4

Additionally, the participants were identified by the content subject taught in their last year on the job, the type of school in which they last worked, the staff and student demographics, administrator demographic information, and their current field of work, as reported in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4*Participant Descriptions Part 2*

Participant	Content area	School	Student population	Staff population
1	EC Math	High	Title I	White
2	Math	Middle	Title I	Minority
3	EC Elementary	Elementary	Rural	White
4	History	High	Title I Inner City	Minority
5	Program Coordinator	High	Title I Rural	Minority
6	Math	Middle	Rural	White
7	Math	Elementary	Title I Rural	Minority
8	PE/Health	Middle	Title I	Minority
9	EC	Middle	Title I Urban	Minority
10	Art	Middle	Rural	White
11	All	Elementary	Title I Inner City	Minority

Table 4 shows that the participants represented all levels of schools and a variety of subject areas. It is noteworthy that the majority of the participants (64%) came from schools with a majority of minority students. Also noteworthy is that 73% served in Title I schools.

Table 5*Participant Descriptions Part 3*

Participant	Administrator	Current employment
1	White	Consultant
2	African American	Finance
3	White	Business
4	Asian	Administration
5	White	Higher education
6	African American	Business
7	White	Higher education
8	African American	Business
9	African American	Real estate
10	White	Business
11	White	Higher education

Table 5 shows that the participants reported working for an administrator who looked like them for only 36% of the participants. Working for a White administrator was reported by 55% of the participants. For one of the participants (9%), their administrator was Asian. This represents a higher-than-average rate of working for non-White administrators than the national average of 2%. Additionally, the participants reported that 64% now hold business-related jobs, 27% reported that they now work in higher education, and one (9%) works in administration.

Research Questions

The study results are presented by research question and emerging themes within each research question. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to African American male teachers remaining in the field?
2. What factors do African American male teachers say would contribute to them staying in the field of education?
3. What do African American male teachers say is the greatest benefit for students to have African American male teachers?

Findings Research Question 1

“What factors contribute to African American male teachers remaining in the field?” Table 6 represents participant responses to Research Question 1.

Table 6*Research Question 1 Statements*

Participants	Statement examples
1	"I believe that young Black males, particularly at a young age, require Black role models."
2	"I believe one of the factors I consider is my passion for teaching."
3	"At my school, our students require a strong support system."
4	"I feel as though you understand that it is my responsibility as a parent and as a member of the community to do everything possible to instill greatness in these children."
5	"As a small child, I desired to be a teacher, and it is something I enjoy doing."
6	"I'm there to serve as a role model for the children as a positive Black man they see on a daily basis."
7	"To be completely candid, I enjoy children and math." "I was at ease in the classroom."
8	"I've discovered that many of the younger minority children require a minority male figure."
9	"I've discovered that many of the younger minority children require a role model in the form of a minority male."
10	"I suppose it's to influence other Black males."
11	"I believe all children should have an African American male teacher at all grade levels."

Emerging Themes Research Question 1

The collected data revealed several themes and subthemes pertinent to the three research questions. The study's three central themes from Research Question 1 were status as a role model, retention efforts, and monetary aspects. The themes had underlying subthemes uncovered and reported upon through the data analysis.

Theme 1: Role Models

Participants identified three major themes from the surveys. The first theme was the importance of African American male teachers as role models. Subthemes from this theme were commitment and representation. All participants stated that the most beneficial component of having African American male teachers is that students of color and especially male students of color need have role models who look like them. Male students of color need to know and see successful African American males in the classroom and school administrative offices. One fourth of the participants recalled their own educational journey devoid of having a single African American male teacher. They lamented that during the critical years of formative development, African American boys must have a personal connection with someone who looks like them. The most fulfilling aspect of the job was serving as a role model for students.

Participants all stated and understood the critical nature of being present for their students and the profound difference their presence made in the classroom. Study participants reinforced this perception. Participants 1, 6, and 8 noted that role models have a limited impact due to their scarcity.

Participants emphasized the importance of serving as involved role models and being there for the students. Literature on the subject indicated an urgency for African

American male teachers to step up and become role models. Many researchers have reported that one of the primary reasons participants began in education was due to their lack of positive role models as they were growing up. Participant 1 asserted that young Black males require Black role models and emphasized the importance of African American males being perceived positively as compared to what is depicted in videos and the media. Participant 2 recognized the importance of serving as a role model for his students as well. Participant 10 discussed his personal story as a role model for the father-absent sons.

Additionally, Participant 1 mentioned the importance of staying in the classroom for that one single purpose since there is a scarcity of African American males in his school district. Participant 1 recalled, "I believe that the overall impact of Black male teachers in the classroom is exponential." Participant 9 shared how his own life experiences are used to assist the children in their development. These former teachers all emphasized the importance of having teachers who identify as African American males. Participant 5 emphasized the importance of African American teachers serving as role models and contributing to the achievement of minority students.

Participant 6 explained his desire to remain in the classroom by referring to him being a role model for the kids. Participant 7 discussed the importance of serving as a role model and projecting a good image. Participant 2 shared that elementary school children require a role model from a minority group. He also discussed the importance of helping to culturally develop them as he was educating them. Participant 2 said he enjoyed serving as a role model for children. Participant 3 described a personal heart-lifting story in which he had an effect on a young man's decision to not drop out of

school.

Theme 2: Recruitment and Retention

Participant 1 expressed concern about the lack of African American males choosing to become teachers. In earlier studies, participants were grilled on their suggestions of needed district recruitment and retention efforts. Often, the range of responses included providing more enticing benefits and better conditions in the workplace, in addition to higher pay. My study corroborates earlier studies that showed this as a major reason African American males leave the profession.

Participant 8 believed that African American males often feel they are sought after for reasons other than academics, such as coaching and other positions. Participant 1 also suggested that school systems could conduct recruitment visits to historically Black Colleges and Universities as a “genuine effort” and not just an item to check off a school’s diversity push of the moment. The importance of programs that prepare minorities for high school and college success is essential; given the trend that fewer and fewer males are choosing the field of education is troubling. Additionally, my participants mentioned the importance of recruiting and retaining these students. They cited family members as the person who most often influenced their decision to pursue education.

Concerns about representation arise when examining the dearth of African American male teachers being sought after for the classroom. One concern was that once hired, African American male teachers were sent to schools where few other teachers wanted to work. I noted the lack of a minority presence in great numbers in the field and how this affects the number of minorities who decide to become teachers. This is a major

hurdle to recruitment efforts and then retention efforts. Participant 10 discussed his youth and the lack of African American male teachers in his school. This, he asserted, is one of the reasons many do not enter the field. My participants cited students of color do not have access to good male models who share their racial background.

My participants noted that in their interactions/conservations with students to see if they were interested in going into the field of education, it was often stated that one common explanation for the lack of African American male students was a lack of visibility of African American males in their school lives. Participant 10 shared that the presence of more African American males in the school provides a more positive view of African American males.

Participant 7 spoke about the positive difference he has made in children. Participant 7 shared having an impact on the lives of children and adolescents (role model). Participant 7 discussed how the lack of African American male K-5 teachers is partly due to their lack of awareness of the value of having an African American role model as a result of single-parent moms. Participant 7 later mentioned in the interview the importance of African American boys having a positive African American role model. According to Participant 1, if schools had a greater diversity of students, African American males would feel more at ease. This would lead to increased payoffs in recruitment and retention efforts.

Participant 9 expressed concern about the school districts recruiting African American males to the classroom due to the scarcity of available candidates. Participant 8 discussed how male teachers are scarce in the lower grades and believed that most recruitment efforts were made for the secondary level. Participant 8 cited his own life

experiences of not having many male teachers in the classroom. He believes that contributes to a large number of African American males choosing non-education fields in which to work. They see the absence of many African American males in the education jobs and thus decide it is not for them either.

Participant 10 believes that doubling the number of African American male teachers in the classroom will increase the number of African American male students choosing the field themselves. Participant 11 brought up the importance of exposure of teachers who look like the students again in a later section of the interview. Participant 8 discussed the benefits of having teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds for students. Participant 3 cited that the increasing numbers of minorities in the United States and the scarcity of minority teachers, implying that minority students will have fewer opportunities to interact with role models who share common interests. All participants noted that more efforts based on a genuine desire to have more diverse classrooms led by a more diverse workforce were essential given every changing demographic of America's future generation of students.

Theme 3: Financial Aspects

The financial aspect of remaining in education was a topic that was frequently discussed throughout the data collection process. According to past and current researchers and affirmed by my research, both teacher attrition and finances have been mentioned concurrently as top reasons why they leave. According to my findings, financial factors are a major factor for why teachers leave the profession. Their discussions revolved around teacher low pay and the responsibilities that come with it. My study corroborates earlier studies that showed this as a major reason African

American males leave the profession.

When discussing reasons for leaving the field of education, Participant 9 stated that the workload continues to become unmanageable, while salary caps have caused a decrease in real earnings. Participant 9 also stated that the acute absence of African American male teachers is due to a lack of a living wage. He believes they are not entering the field due to the low pay. Participant 2 discussed finances and how they are a significant factor for leaving their career completely. Many participants discussed how males left the profession as a result of rising costs of living. Participant 7 stated that he left the profession solely because he was not able to financially support his family. Participant 6 cited compensation as the major incentive for contemplating a career change.

Participant 1 brought up the issue of “underpay” as the sole reason for him leaving. He shared that pay disparity played a role as well. Participant 2 discussed how individuals enter the field for financial gain and eventually leave and how many of the other career options available to him would increase his earnings. According to all the participants, money was the primary consideration, along with other factors, when participants were asked to teach. Participant 7 brought up pay issues several times during the interview. That, he stated, was his sole reason for contemplating a career change. In general, Participant 8 believed that the lack of African American male teachers is due to issues of compensation. Participant 8 discussed how males not in education expressed their concerns about entering the field due to low compensation in a follow-up interview. Nine participants expressed a desire to leave the teaching profession.

When asked if anything could have been done to increase their desire to remain a

teacher, responses varied. Participants 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, and 11 mentioned how coaches and teachers could receive stipends for extra duties to supplement their salaries. Participant 1 stated that he did not believe anything would change his mind when he left. Participant 7 mentioned the benefits of the children's smiles but that smiles did not pay the monthly bills. Participant 2 wished for a more equitable education for the children. Participants 5, 6, 8, and 9 mentioned more positive experiences, including pay and benefits, in the work environment would have helped them stay in the profession.

Money and work-related issues were the most frequently cited reasons or factors for participants to leave. Eight participants mentioned money. Additionally, participants discussed pursuing other objectives because of children's misbehavior, lack of respect, family pressure, and uncooperative faculty as additional reasons for exiting the profession. Furthermore, Participant 10 stated that he was required to commute a long distance to work. Numerous participants stated that incidents involving unhelpful school leadership, bad student behavior, parents, coworkers, mistreatment, and stereotyping discouraged them and contributed to the overall negative view and reflection on their perceptions of teaching.

Findings Research Question 2

“What factors do African American male teachers say would contribute to them staying in the field of education?” This was an important component of this research. Much research has been done on why African American males exit the classroom. Much less research has been done on what works to keep them in the classroom. School leaders can benefit from knowing what specific actions are necessary to influence these African American male teachers before they decide to leave the field. For that reason, this is the

heart of my research paper. I wanted to know what we can do to better retain our African American male teachers before they even begin to consider other options. What can school leaders do to stem the tide of the constant African American male teacher exodus? Participants were very open to these questions. They wanted to be heard and were genuinely concerned that their exit from the classroom was not in the best interest of their students and other students of color, especially males. Three major themes developed for this research question on what would have kept them in the classroom: role models, passion/desire for teaching, and supportive environment, as noted in Table 7.

Table 7

Retention Factors (N=11)

Factor	Number of responses	Frequency
Role models	11	8
Passion/desire for teaching	11	10
Supportive environment	11	6

Emerging Themes Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was designed to solicit from the participants an understanding of what factors, if they had been present, would contribute to them staying in the field of education and the classroom. It was not surprising that role models were again the leading reasons mentioned. This theme took a 2-prong approach in Research Question 2. Participants were eager to be a role model for their students and considered it a top priority for staying. They also lamented the absence of role models for them in the schools where they were assigned to work. Participants were emphatic that if they had more role models who looked like them in their schools, they would have adjusted better

to the work environment. The need to have colleagues who look like you and can form a support network was missing from all 11 participants' experiences.

Theme 1: Role Models

The first theme was the importance of African American male teachers as role models. Subthemes from this theme were commitment and representation. All participants stated that the most beneficial component of having African American male teachers was that students of color, especially male students of color, needed professionals who looked like them. Male students of color need to know and see successful African American males in the classroom and school administrative offices. One fourth of the participants recalled their own educational journey without having a single African American male teacher. They lamented that during the critical years of formative development, it is imperative that African American boys have someone who looks like them. Numerous works of literature have referred to the absence of African American male teachers. Findings provided insight into the unique feelings and opinions of the 11 study participants, which were recruiting, role models, and finances. The most fulfilling aspect of the job was serving as a role model for students.

Participants emphatically stated the importance of being present for students and the positive things their presence in the classroom does for the kids. Participants 1, 6, and 8 noted that role models have a limited impact due to their scarcity.

Participants emphasized the importance of serving as role models and being there for the students. Participants were equally united in stating the lack of role models for them was a factor for their exit. Even if the school was led by an African American, the disconnect was real when the grade level had no minority teachers. The support they

needed was with common concerns of the classroom, such as joint planning, mentoring, and a sounding board for ideas or blowing off steam.

Theme 2: Passion/Desire for Teaching

Table 8 represents participant responses to Research Question 2 related to their desire to teach factors.

Table 8

Desire to Teach Factors (N=11)

Factor	Number of responses	Frequency
Family members	11	5
Mentors	11	11
Myself	11	6

The subsequent themes were derived from the comments of the participants. Three subthemes emerged based on participant responses to how they were inspired to enter the profession. They were either inspired by a family member or former educators or just knew they always wanted to teach. A part of this desire and commitment to being a teacher was the deep respect they felt for being in the teaching profession. Their comments elevated the field of teaching to those of the clergy. Most cited it as a passion and a calling. Most participants reflected on the personal pride they felt as a teacher. Their family members often pointed them out for special recognition because they were teachers and touched the future.

Theme 3: Commitment

When considering all the elements contributing to teachers remaining in the field, one of the most significant is the sense of fulfillment teachers receive. Numerous

participants expressed their gratitude for the uplifting messages and self-gratification they receive from interactions with the kids. Several examples included encountering former students, attending former students' graduations, and simply receiving praise and recognition from students during instruction. Two participants, Participant 7 and Participant 9, provided examples of the power of that recognition and personal success stories of former students.

My research shows that intrinsic rewards are critical for African American male teachers due to their desire to influence students. Participant 1 discussed the uplifting encounter when he had inspired a child to attend university and then witnessed when the child graduated. He discussed guardians and former students showing up in uncommon places to tell him about the impact he made and the effect it had on them.

Participant 3 stated, "It's just something I enjoy doing." Participant 7 made several references throughout the interview to his love for the job and all the people he worked with. Participant 2 indicated that one of the reasons he remained as long as he did in the classroom was that he enjoyed working with kids. He stated that the only things that kept him coming back were the children's smiles and the knowledge that he has made a difference. Throughout the interview, Participant 9 expressed his enthusiasm for teaching.

My data, as gathered from the three research questions, were designed to go into the minds and life experiences of former African American male teachers. One question sought to discern the methods used to recruit individuals into the profession. Two responses included assistance to young people and contributions to humanity. Another question focused on what motivated an individual to remain in the field. Service to

humanity was one of those responses. My data showed that one of the major predictors of African American males being successful was their motivation to teach.

Theme 4: Supportive Environment

Several components could add to teacher turnover, including lack of preparation. As such, I identified several items that can convince teachers at the beginning stages of their careers to exit a particular school or education field; lack of preparation and few mentoring services were two factors. Participants 2 and 8 discussed preparations. In their interviews, Participants 6 and 10 referred to mentoring.

Other themes emerged that related to the negative factors that are in place in schools and school districts that run counter to their motivation to stay. These included financial disincentives, lack of respect of colleagues, racism, lack of career opportunities and development, and career advancement is limited.

Theme 5: Disincentives

Table 9 reflects data related to Theme 5 from the 11 participants. The financial aspect of education was a topic that was frequently discussed throughout the data collection process. According to researchers and corroborated by my research, both teacher attrition and compensation have been mentioned concurrently. Additionally, my findings showed that economic uncertainty may be a factor in teachers leaving the profession. This mirrors what other researchers have found about the effects of teacher low pay and the responsibilities that come with teaching

Table 9*Reasons for Leaving (N=11)*

Factor	Number of responses	Frequency
Financial	11	9
Lack of respect	11	8
Career limitations	11	2

Theme 6: Financial

When discussing reasons for leaving the field, Participant 9 stated that the workload has doubled and compensation has not kept up. Participant 9 also stated that the lack of African American male teachers is due to poor compensation. He believes they are not entering the field due to the low pay. Participant 2 discussed finances and how they are a significant factor in many who exit the field. All participants discussed how males left the profession as a result of the rising costs of living. Participant 7 stated that he left the profession solely because he was not able to financially support his family. Participant 6 cited compensation as a motivator when contemplating a job change.

Participant 1 brought up the issue of “underpay” and how that played a part in the decision for him to leave. He echoed the pay disparity concern. Participant 2 discussed how individuals enter the field for financial gain and eventually leave and how other job possibilities would earn more income. According to my participants, money was the primary consideration, along with other factors, when participants were asked to teach. Participant 7 brought up pay issues several times during the interview. That, he stated, was his sole reason for a career change. In general, Participant 8 believed that the shortage of African American male teachers is because of low pay. Participant 8

discussed how males not in education expressed reservations about entering the field due to the compensation in a follow-up interview. He touched on the issue of pride and the need to stand tall in his community.

Theme 7: Lack of Respect

Frequently cited were the absence of professionalism and mutual respect by coworkers and low prestige as explanations of why some minorities may be discouraged from entering the field. Participant 3 contended that in his experience, children are treated with contempt. Participant 1 discussed how many students lack respect for males and their teachers due to a lack of positive father figures (if any) at home.

Participant 5 referred to this country's lack of professional ethics for teachers and education. Participant 10 alluded to an incident with another coworker as well as “innocent remarks” and bitterness stemming from the situation.

Noted disincentives for African American males entering the teaching profession have included a perceived lack of respect for teachers. This was a major reason why many African American males never considered becoming a teacher and then was a compelling reason for them to leave the field. In my study, males rated other factors more positively than females, including the professional prestige they expected in teaching and the level of education independence they expected to have. This leads to many males pursuing leadership and coaching positions. Also shared by participants was how student behavioral issues contributed to the reluctance of individuals to enter the field. Participant 7 shared his discomfort with child abuse and how it relates to the reason African American males leave the field. Participant 10 discussed behavioral issues of children and how they are being raised differently today. Participant 10 discussed the tension

between his concept of discipline and the school system. Concerns about discipline as a reason for their unwillingness to teach were expressed by the participants.

Participant 7 discussed how things were when he entered the classroom as a teacher; parents were “a little taken aback,” but circumstances have improved over time. Also cited was the belief that discrimination harmed career opportunities. Participant 1 discussed his belief that certain members of families are racist and that he is powerless to change their minds. Participant 9 discussed how he believes race and gender play a role in hiring staff. Participant 2 discussed the apprehension he experienced when he first began teaching and how it eventually evolved.

Theme 8: Lack of Career Opportunities and Development

Participant 1 cited several reasons for why he believed African American males abandon education. The first reason was that individuals fail to see room for advancement and growth. Participants shared that our youth are aware and keenly interested in career advancement opportunities. Participant 1 believes that many African American male teachers enter the classroom to transition to something else and use the classroom as a conduit or steppingstone.

Participant 2, for instance, considered counseling to remain in the education field. Participants often shared their disappointment at the moment when they first considered leaving the classroom that pursuing new careers and job satisfaction was more significant than retirement when it came to teacher turnover. African American students who spoke with the participants expressed concerns about choosing teaching as a career because financial and limited opportunities were front and center to their concerns.

When comparing teaching to other professions, I believe that benefits, work

conditions, and pay could positively affect teacher retention. Participant 6 discussed compensation as compared to other available jobs and their pay levels. In comparison to other careers, teaching has a huge pay disparity. Participant 10 compared education and other fields, highlighting how far behind the educational field is in providing financial security to jobholders.

My participants reported that more than half of the African American teachers they knew discouraged students from pursuing teaching as a career. Participant 7 emphasized the importance of demonstrating the rewarding aspects of the field to attract African American males into the field of education. Participant 6 mentioned that he believed African American teachers should convey to minority children the excitement that comes with being a teacher. Participant 1 stated that African American males should be shown the positive aspects of the field rather than the negative aspects.

As I noted in Chapter 2, there is a small number of minorities who attend college and graduate, and those who do may not pursue careers as teachers due to other opportunities. Participant 9 discussed how residents of the area where he grew up are choosing not to attend college at all. This is a major barrier that directly impacts the level of male teachers coming in the pipeline.

These conclusions are based on responses shared by the participants and support existing research on why African American male teachers leave the profession.

Findings Research Question 3

“What do African American male teachers say is the greatest benefit for students to have African American male teachers?” Not surprising was many of the same responses given in Research Questions 1 and 2 were repeated in this question. All 11

participants had a passion for teaching and loved being a teacher. By self-reporting, each participant indicated they had great professional relationships with their students. They indicated they had made a lasting impression on their students and often other students of color in the building. They reported that they knew they made a difference in the lives of their students and had been a positive force at their school by their interactions, and relationships developed. In leaving the classroom, they expressed remorse and regret. Several indicated they would return to the field of education if their life conditions changed.

Emerging Theme for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was designed for participants to share what they considered the major benefits of students having African American male teachers. There was universal agreement on the major benefit, having role models who look like them. The theme of role models surfaced in each of the three research questions. The results also contribute to the conceptional framework of motivational theory. Reasons for leaving the profession were grouped into three categories: low salary, the profession not being popular, and feeling alone.

Findings and the Conceptional Framework

Herzberg et al. (2011) hypothesized about the various factors that influence an individual's performance. Herzberg et al. (2011) focused on two distinct concepts: motivation and hygiene. Motivating factors are identified as those that add to an individual's satisfaction. While hygiene factors do not always contribute to an individual's satisfaction, their absence can result in dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 2011).

The study was founded upon Herzberg et al.'s (2011) motivation-hygiene theory.

Maslow (1970) studied motivation and job perceptions and discovered that people are motivated on the whole, rather than just a portion of themselves. He also discussed multiple motivations and esteem needs, which are concerned with accomplishments, reputation, and prestige, as well as self-actualization. The most critical of the organizational conditions is the compensation structure for staff, administrative support, particularly new employees. Additionally, the experiences and levels of conflict and strife in the organization impact job satisfaction and motivation. Finally, the extent to which employees participate and influence organizational policies is a condition of job satisfaction and motivation. My research corroborates the findings of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivational theory. What I discovered in my research is that the factors attributing to the large number of African American males leaving teaching are related to all the components of that theory.

Summary

This chapter outlined detailed descriptions of my research findings by research question and categorized them by major themes. Throughout the research, participants were proud to have been teachers and felt a strong connection to the profession. All participants initially felt a calling to become teachers and wanted to give back. Participants consistently cited the need for role models as the overarching reason for going into the field initially, staying in the field as long as they did, and as the greatest benefit to students. This research is consistent with current research on why African American male teachers stay and why they leave the field of education. Most interesting from this research is the body of suggestions they make to current administrators on what is needed to recruit and retain African American male teachers for the classrooms of

today and the future. That is discussed in Chapter 5 along with other avenues for research on this topic.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary and Findings

This study examined African American male teachers in education: which factors contributed to them leaving the field of education, what factors would have led to them staying in the field of education, and what they consider the greatest benefits to students having African American male teachers in their educational experiences. Eleven participants were selected for the study and met the requirement for an adequate sample size. All participants at one point in time had been licensed teachers and employed within the state of North Carolina as classroom teachers.

The current qualitative phenomenological study sought to elicit and document former African American male teacher perceptions and lived experiences regarding why and what motivated them to remain in the classroom. Interviews conducted independently of each other with former African American male teachers who left the profession were essential in understanding the motivational factors impacting African American males in teaching: what attitudes, thoughts, and ideas are they missing and what attitudes, opinions, and perceptions need to change. The data's organization was grouped into categories and themes, which proved helpful as it revealed the general viewpoints, attitudes, and suggestions of participants. Although African American males make up just 1.9% of all public school teachers, they have one of the highest turnover rates (Bristol, 2014). This research summary provides an overview of participant answers to the questions relating to their motivations.

A qualitative analysis was used to code and transcribe interviews for the data analysis. This analysis identified descriptors that emerged and common themes that were

identified. Direct quotes by participants were utilized to classify themes. This exposed the current life experiences and the ideas of African American male teachers. These were developed into emerging themes. This chapter highlights the implications of the findings, limitations of the research, and recommendations for future studies.

The majority of African American male participants expressed a desire to make an impact by giving back to their community, and their words and actions indicated they desired to be that mentor for their students. I found this to be consistent with research that found race and gender have always been critical factors in the education of African American students. Ten participants reported having productive relationships with their former teachers, parents, and coaches. This is consistent with research, where participants often noted that their parents, mentors, and former teachers were those who inspired them to pursue a career in education.

This study discovered that African American male teachers view their experiences positively, despite their decision to leave the profession. The participants perceived themselves as role models, father figures, and an integral part of the school environment. According to Ozuna (2018), African American male teachers are critical to teaching due to their impact on student lives, being role models, and helping to alter student perceptions of the profession to influence them to become future educators. It was evident that financial factors could be a reason teachers leave the profession. Other researchers noted teacher low pay and the responsibilities that come with it. Kunjufu (1990) discussed how males left the profession as a result of the rising costs of living. My study corroborates earlier studies that showed this as a major reason African American males leave the profession. Lewis (2006) posed two research questions, one of which

concerned the methods used to recruit individuals into the profession. Two responses included assistance to our youth and contributing to humankind. Additionally, he focused on what motivated someone to remain in the classroom. Service to humanity was one of those responses.

Brown and Butty (1999) conducted research where they discovered the major significant predictor of African American males becoming an educator was their motivation to teach. According to my research, both teacher attrition and financial security have been mentioned concurrently. Additionally, my research shows that financial considerations are a major factor for why teachers leave the profession. My participants all cited teacher low pay and the responsibilities that come with it. They discussed the many disincentives people of color have for not entering the teaching profession, including an observed lack of respect for teachers. In my study, the male teachers rated other factors more positively than what research says female teachers report, such as the professional status they expected in being a teacher and the amount of local control they expected over their own work, which can explain why males pursue principalships and coaching positions.

Participants also noted that student noncompliant behavior is a major issue that contributed to the resistance of individuals to enter the field. My research found data that indicated that pursuing new careers and job satisfaction was more significant than other factors when it came to teacher turnover. When Kunjufu (1990) spoke with African American students about choosing an occupation, the financial and limited opportunities were front and center to their concerns.

Some participants expressed concern that they lacked the experience necessary to

be an effective mentor in comparison to teachers with a longer tenure. This demonstrated some level of reluctance of African American male teachers when it came to assisting kids. My findings contrast with the research of Peatross (2011), who reported that years of teaching did not affect perceptions of African American interactions based on years of service.

The study discovered that most African American male college graduates are hesitant to enter teaching due to lower compensation and a perception that the field is undervalued. This finding is consistent with other researchers who found that minority teachers are disinclined to enter the profession due to low compensation, a sense of unworthiness, and a lack of patience required to teach. African American male teachers want to see their career choices portrayed positively by colleges and the media. Participants desired an increase in new teacher salaries and increased support from administrators in terms of making sustaining partnerships with parents in the community. Additionally, a participant suggested that a way to increase the field's popularity would be for teachers to have a hand in developing the district's curriculum and accountability systems.

Other findings related to Research Question 2 were that some teachers initially felt uncommitted, lacked confidence, and lacked a personal connection. They expressed self-doubt and unsureness about their teaching styles as well as a lack of early-career connections with colleagues. When teachers receive support, relevant professional development, and mentoring, their work and relationships with their students improve, alleviating feelings of undervaluation.

There was universal agreement on the major benefit to students of having role

models who look like them. The theme of role models surfaced in each of the three research questions.

Herzberg's motivational theory has a 2-factor test (Hertzberg et al., 2011). In summary, it suggests that when seeking or staying in a job, one must look beyond basic hygiene factors and ask if the job meets motivational standards.

Do I find this work meaningful?

Will I be able to learn and grow?

What are the opportunities to achieve and be recognized?

What kind of responsibility will I have?

Herzberg et al. (1959) cautioned against equating hygiene factors notably as pay, power, and prestige as the same as liking a job and being motivated to stay in the job. These factors can make you enjoy your job and show up every day with a sense of excitement. In this study of 11 African American male teachers, they reported what their motivation was and why they would have stayed in the classroom. These factors extended beyond the hygiene factors. One glaring exception was in the area of pay. This is a universal concern of all teachers; however, even this level of personal motivation was not enough to keep them in the field. This study corroborates the work done by Herzberg et al. (1959) and other motivational theory scholars who suggest that people will work toward hygiene needs because they are dissatisfied without them; however, it is noted that once satisfied, these utility needs wane over time.

Badly managed organizations do not realize that people are not motivated solely by addressing hygiene needs. People are motivated when they are able to reach for and satisfy the factors Herzberg identified as real motivators, such as achievement,

advancement, development, etc., which represent a far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment (Hertzberg et al., 2011). All my research participants cited the same needs as identified by Hertzberg et al. My study corroborates the findings of Hertzberg's motivational theory components and those of other motivational theorists.

Participants in this study felt they were denied or could not reach the real motivators. It was for this reason and others that they chose to leave the educational field.

Implications for Practice

The study's findings showed that African American males are exiting the field of education for many reasons. Low starting salaries; a lack of respect; a lack of promotion opportunities within the profession; and unpleasant personal, educational experiences are just a few issues affecting African American male teacher retention. My findings do not imply that African American males cannot and do not succeed within the educational profession given the multiple challenges they face. My research revealed that African American males choosing to pursue the field do so because of an intrinsic desire to assist others and the joy of seeing others become successful. The data were able to demonstrate African American male teacher beliefs in their abilities to improve the academic success of African American male students. What is of great worry to professionals is why so few African American males can overcome the restrictions that prevent them from becoming teachers. More research could be done to eliminate the area of this study's inconclusiveness.

The study's findings revealed a picture of how former African American male teachers have a connection to their careers and the students they serve. The purpose of the study was to examine participant thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and perceptions

from participants of different academic levels (elementary, middle, and high) and to identify common threads using data analysis. All participants, regardless of the level they taught or the content they taught, had the same objectives in mind. However, they chose to leave the field for equally common reasons.

Teaching once was a major career for African American males; it was seen as a vocation of honor, distinction, and grandeur for their generation, according to my older participants. Younger participants remembered teaching as a vocation that was mocked and had a poor social position in their generation. The older participants wanted the profession to revert to its older status, while younger participants wanted financial security and growth opportunities.

Participants were asked in a survey question to reflect on what was needed to recruit and retain African American male teachers. Their responses provide a framework for current administrators and district-level staff recruiters to follow. Several of the common suggestions are shared and discussed below.

Target African American Male High School Students to Enter the Teaching Profession

Leaders interested in growing the pipeline of African American male teachers should be providing opportunities for African American teens and young men to gain teaching experience. Among these opportunities could be identifying and training a select group of African American male high school juniors and seniors interested in entering the education pipeline. Invest in programs that locate and build talent. Look at specific targeting opportunities to engage young African American males into high school teacher cadet programs and university-level programs. Consider tuition waivers and recruitment bonuses. Invest in Grow Your Own Programs and Teacher Assistant to Teacher

Programs.

Plug the Hole of African American Male Teachers Leaving the Profession

If officials wish to expand the number of African American male teachers, they should prioritize retention. Each participant had previously worked in one of the district's lowest-performing schools. The resources and leadership of schools with a high poverty rate and a high minority population must be improved. Opportunities for personal and professional growth must be provided on site. Districts should prioritize the retention of this set of teachers and make it one of the districts' major strategic goals, complete with measurable and attainable progress milestones.

Design Professional Development Targeted for African American Male Teachers

To improve the retention of African American male teachers, district officials should focus on teacher experiences and the schools in which they teach. Districts could research the Male Educators of Color Executive Coaching Seminar Series, which was inspired by the Boston Teacher Residency's Male Educators of Color Networking Group, which provides socio-emotional support and a space for reflection for male educators of color.

Racial and Gender Awareness Training for New and Current Administrators

Officials should provide new administrators with racial and gender awareness training and ongoing training for current administrators. These sessions could be created and led by male educators of color as part of a Male Educator of Color Executive Coaching Seminar Series.

Enlarging Scope of Equity Offices

Extend the scope and responsibilities of the Office of Equity to include all

instances of African American male teachers being overworked or dismissed. Give these offices more authority in the training of African American male teachers.

Limitations of the Study and Findings

During the study, there were limits to the qualitative research study that looked into the views and life experiences and motivations of former African American male teachers. Although the constraints did not distort the results or have a detrimental impact on the study, they must be acknowledged and discussed to ultimately reveal all the study's stages. The research study gave insight and information regarding African American males leaving the teaching profession after rigorous analysis of data and presentation of any findings. Recommendations for future research will be made to offer suggestions and possible actions for expanding on the study's findings.

This phenomenological qualitative research of African American male teacher perspectives and actual experiences in the education profession was not without its limits. The first constraint was that I had trouble finding participants. Since the initial pool of African American male teachers was small, it was even harder to locate and engage with an even smaller number of participants who consented to be interviewed and complete a survey.

The study was limited to one state. Results can only be interpreted by the opinions of the small sample size. Inferences cannot be made to the national stage or any other state. The research findings are only applicable to a specific population of teachers. The outcomes of the study are solely applicable to African American male teachers. The tactics described while recruiting and employing more African American males in education were specifically devised and suited for the target demographic. These

demographic data were useful and supported the conclusions in establishing a more empowered and growing presence in the educational community. Non-African American male teachers were not a part of this study, so the results do not apply to them.

This study assumed that the former African American male teachers selected provided information voluntarily and honestly and offered sincere and honest feedback that caused them to leave the educational setting. All African American male teachers were certified North Carolina educators. Public school, county, and district teachers who have left the profession were purposefully selected for this study.

The study's limitations included the fact that data were gathered from former educators from various counties within the state of North Carolina. More specifically, the study was limited to my interpretation of the data collected, which could be only my interpretation and would not reflect the participants' true opinions in the research. Since the study was qualitative, it was based on interviews and the data of only selected participants. The study's scope was limited to 11 former African American male teachers with a variety and range of classroom experiences. The findings are valid only to teachers in the state who participated.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study sought to add another layer to understand what factors lead to African American male teachers leaving the teaching profession. Unlike most other studies on the reasons African American male educators leave, this study sought to get their perspectives on what would have kept them in the classroom. Honest, frank conversations with these participants may hold some important lessons on how to hold on to this type of teacher. Our students benefit from having a diverse teaching force. So, what would have

enticed them to stay? Finally, the research shared the unique perspective of 11 African American male teachers on what they perceived to be a lasting benefit to students having a teacher who looked like them. There are several recommendations for future research aligned with this topic.

White Male Teachers and Their Reasons for Leaving the Profession

Of interest would be to determine if White male teachers leave for many of the same reasons. Are the reasons more gender specific or race specific? A complete study of the male phenomena in light of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivational theory would be insightful. Do White and African American male teachers share similar gender-related job satisfaction and job dissatisfiers? This would contribute to the body of knowledge relating to gender expectations and gender job motivation.

African American Female Teachers and Their Reasons for Leaving the Profession

Some research has been done on why African American females leave the field of education. This topic needs to be explored more and contrasted to the research on why African Americans male teachers leave. A comprehensive review that compares and contrasts their reasons for leaving and those of their male counterparts would be beneficial for human resource departments. Equally beneficial would be to ask participants what would have kept them in the field. Are the motivational factors different for African American female teachers than those of their African American male peers? Factors such as marital status, dependents, societal pressures, and gender role expectations could be examined to see if they have a more pronounced impact on female teacher decisions to leave.

Research on the Effect of Geography on the Rate of African American Males Leaving the Profession

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory of motivation notes that job satisfaction and motivation arise from different factors for different people. This principle can be tested by comparing differing geographic locales of the African American male teacher and retention rates. Do large urban school districts have a better or worse rate of African American male teacher retention than rural districts? Do regions of the country have differing rates? Of interest would be what additional Herzberg et al. (1959) hygiene factors are at play. This could have implications for regional efforts to retain African American male teachers.

Research and Analyze Existing Successful Programs That Keep African American Males in the Classroom

Some school districts do an outstanding job keeping African American male teachers working in their district. They have developed successful programs. Additional research should be conducted on those districts and those programs. Lessons and practical applications can be gleaned from success stories. Break down those success stories into components. It is that type of research that will be most appreciated and utilized by districts nationwide. Look at successful mentoring programs and how they can be replicated. Review African American male teacher exit interviews for trending data.

Research on effective structured mentoring and different compensation model programs for African American male teacher.

Some school districts have outstanding mentoring programs uniquely geared to the African American male teacher. Additional research can be done to see how to replicate

those programs. The review of different compensation models used to attract and retain African American male teachers needs to be studied for their impact on recruitment and long term retention efforts.

Summary

This study corroborates previous findings on the reasons African American males leave the teaching profession and provides some critical information regarding the educational need for African American male teachers. The selected African American male teachers stated that they left the profession because they desired to be valued and compensated in a way that would allow them to provide for their families.

Reporting by African American male teachers in the study showed a common thread of financial insecurity. The participants expressed that teaching as a male has not been a highly prized or popular job over the years. Also noted was there are many more career choices available for students. Job pay is lagging other jobs. Salaries are on the low end, and the profession is perceived as a field for women.

Finally, while many African American male teachers expressed enthusiasm for being in the profession, the data indicate the overwhelming majority of respondents desire to see school systems and universities take a more proactive stand in recruiting and training African American male teachers. Needed were increasing opportunities for college visits, enlisting preservice teachers into the classroom, selectively recruiting highly qualified teachers who fit into the school's demographics, and engaging in more dialogue with teachers who were made aware of student economic status.

In general, the data indicate a demand for African American male teachers at all levels and for increasing the level of African American male students enrolled in

preservice teacher education programs. When asked for additional information, participants indicated they would like for universities to take an engaged approach in African American males interested in entering the profession. The data analysis revealed several overlying themes and provided recommendations that should be implemented in the field immediately. African American male teachers are willing to address college students to increase the profession's popularity and visibility. Additionally, district administrators should engage with institutions to advocate for African American males interested in entering the teaching profession.

The reasons for African American male teachers leaving the field are clear. Low starting salaries, a scarcity of qualified candidates due to the disappointingly low number of African American male college graduates, the profession's perceived status, and a lack of positive promotion/recruitment all contribute to the underrepresentation of African American males in the educational profession. African American male teachers in this study offered heartfelt suggestions for school districts to take to retain African American males. These suggestions could include monetary/financial incentives, positive exposure to the profession, and promotion of the profession in a positive perspective, as well as community support. Recruiting and keeping more African American male instructors could help to boost African American male pupil academic performance and close the achievement gap.

In terms of relating African American male pupils with African American male professors, participant opinions and impressions coincided directly with those of society. "Students relate better to professors who, in brief, look like them" (Mathus, 2005, p. 1). If more African American role models are not included in public school classes, the public

school system will continue to fail African American males as a learning community. The problem of African American male underrepresentation in education will not be solved overnight; nevertheless, with a consistent and aggressive effort to retain candidates in the profession, the tendency will be reversed.

America must address its growing racial disparity between the students who sit in our classrooms and the teachers who teach them. This disturbing disparity continues to have an impact on how children of color perceive themselves and their experiences. The best way to confront that disparity is to invest in the workforce of today and tomorrow in the classroom. We can start that effort by plugging the hole of African American male teachers leaving the classroom. This can and must be done.

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Appendix
Interview and Survey Form

Study Participant Survey

Demographic Information

1. In your last year of teaching what content area did you teach in? _____
2. In your last year of teaching what grade level did you teach in? _____
3. In your last year of teaching what type of school did you teach in? Check all that apply.
 - a. _____ Title I School
 - b. _____ Rural School
 - c. _____ Urban School
 - d. _____ Inner City School
 - e. _____ A majority of the students were African -American, Hispanic or non-White
 - f. _____ A majority of the students were White
 - g. _____ A majority of the staff were African -American, Hispanic or non-White
 - h. _____ A majority of the staff were White
4. In your last year of teaching what was the race of your principal?
 - a. _____ African -American, Hispanic or non-White
 - b. _____ White
5. What field are you currently employed in? _____

Open Ended Interview questions for former African American male teachers

1. Why did you choose K-12 education as a professional career?
2. What or who inspired you to become a teacher?
3. Please describe what it is like teaching in your school? Do you feel supported? Please Explain.
4. What type of input if any do you think African American male teachers have on students and the overall school setting?
5. What can/should districts do to recruit/retain African American male teachers?
6. What reasons would you attribute to the current representation of African American male teachers in the K-12 schools?
7. Do you believe you have a role in recruiting/retaining African American male teachers?
8. What recommendations would you give to expand the number of pre-service African American male teachers in K-12 schools?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?