

The Lived Experiences of Black Male Principals in Urban Settings

by

Corey D. Grubbs

“Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in the

Educational Leadership Program”

Youngstown State University

May, 2021

The Lived Experiences of Black Male Principals in Urban Settings

Corey D. Grubbs

I hereby release this dissertation to the public. I understand that this dissertation will be made available from the OhioLINK ETD Center and the Maag Library Circulation Desk for public access. I also authorize the University or other individuals to make copies of this thesis as needed for scholarly research.

Signature:

Corey D. Grubbs, Student Date

Approvals:

Dr. Jane Beese, Dissertation Advisor Date

Dr. Charles Vergon, Committee Member Date

Dr. Patrick Spearman, Committee Member Date

Dr. Chris Basich, Committee Member Date

Dr. Salvatore A. Sanders, Dean of Graduate Studies Date

Abstract

Before the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case, Black schools were led by Black principals, who were community leaders and role models held in high regard (Tillman, 2004b). However, this image and perception of the Black male principal began to vanish after the *Brown v. Board of Education* case decision to integrate schools (James, 1970).

This qualitative research study focused on the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. The researcher aimed to hear the voices of Black male principals and learn about leadership from their perspectives, including the context for these principals' challenges, barriers, and supports that contribute to success. This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document reviews with five Black male principals who were randomly sampled from the Ohio Department of Education list of Black male principals in urban Ohio. Critical Race Theory, African American Male Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory were used as frameworks to understand the lived experiences of Black male principals.

The results of the study yielded 10 important findings: (1) Pathways for Success; (2) Challenges Poverty/Support; (3) Instructional Leaders; (4) Challenges leading White Staff; (5) Trust; (6) Mentors; (7) Innovation/Finances; (8) Macroaggression; (9) Code-Switching; and (10) Black Male Identity. The voices of Black male principals are shared throughout the study. Implications from this study will benefit educational leaders, school districts, aspiring Black male principals and graduate programs of study in higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to give honor to God and thank him for leading and guiding me through my doctoral journey. Without him, none of this is possible! Completing this degree was a lifelong goal. I am from the south side of Chicago, Englewood - one of the most challenging cities in America. I made it out and completed this journey. Statistically, I am not supposed to be here. The odds were against me, but by the Grace of God I am a senior administrator in a large urban district; I completed my doctoral degree, and I make a difference in kids' lives. I influence students, staff, and leaders and I shape policy! I inspire future leaders and this degree will show others, they too can accomplish anything they put their mind, energy, and effort to.

To my wife Rica, I am forever grateful to you. You are my rock, my heartbeat, my support from start to finish. I could not have done this without you. I appreciate you for praying for me, encouraging me, and believing in me. I love you.

To my kids, Rhea, Sydnee, Cayhil, Kenny, and Carmyn. Thank you for being patient with me the past three years as I sacrificed to pursue this degree. Carmyn, thank you for the weekly encouragement calls and listening; it mattered. Cayhil, thank you for always inquiring about my progress and encouraging me to stay focused.

To my parents, the late Robert and Hattie Grubbs. I dedicate this dissertation to you and your legacy. You instilled in me the value of an education and always pushed me to be a cut above the rest. I know you are proud of me and both of you will always be a part of my story.

To my best two best friends, Tomier and Adam, and my village of family, friends, and colleagues, I appreciate you for listening and encouraging me to always persevere.

To Lashonda, my YSU cohort accountability partner, thank you for being my study partner and my support throughout this journey.

I am grateful for my dissertation chair, Dr. Jane Beese, for pushing me and challenging me to think differently. Thank you to my committee, Dr. Basich, Dr. Spearman, and Dr. Vergon for providing me with feedback that strengthened my study.

All of you were a part of the village that made this milestone a reality. Thank you for your support, encouragement and guidance. Finally, to all aspiring Black male leaders and educators, your voice matters and your presence is needed!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST O F FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem.....	2
Statement of Purpose	3
Research Questions.....	3
Overview of Methodology.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	5
Role of the Researcher.....	6
Researcher Assumptions.....	7
Definition of Terms	8
Organization of the Dissertation	9
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Historical Overview of Black Male Principals	10
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Critical Race Theory.....	16
African American Male Theory.....	19
Transformational Leadership Theory	21
Review of Literature on Black Male Principals.....	23
Segregated Schools Pre-Brown	24

Brown v. Board of Education and Its Immediate Outcomes	26
Post-Brown Effects on Schools and Principals.....	30
Black Male Principals in Urban Schools Today.....	35
Black Male Principals' Leadership Roles and Responsibilities and Traits	42
Summary.....	45
III. METHODOLOGY	47
Research Questions.....	48
Role of the Researcher.....	49
Research Design	50
Target Population.....	51
Participants and Sampling	52
Procedures.....	53
Interviews.....	53
Direct Observations	57
Document Review.....	59
Data Storage.....	60
Data Analysis.....	61
Validity	62
Evidence of Construct Validity.....	62
Evidence of Internal Validity.....	63
Evidence of Reliability	64
Limitations.....	65
Summary.....	66

IV. RESULTS.....	67
My Data-Collection Experiences.....	68
Interviews.....	68
Direct Observations	69
Document Reviews	69
Triangulation.....	70
Sample	71
Principal Profiles and Lived Experiences	72
Participant 1: Principal Innovator	72
Participant 2: Principal Fair	75
Participant 3: Principal Diligent	77
Participant 4: Principal Persistent	79
Participant 5: Principal Collaborative.....	81
Research Questions.....	82
Research Question 1: How Do African American Principals in Urban Settings Describe Their Roles and Responsibilities?	83
Research Question 2a: How Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Successes?.....	88
Research Question 2b: How Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Challenges and Barriers?	93
Research Question 2c: How Do African American Male Principals Describe the Supports They Perceive as Most Beneficial?	107
Research Question 3: In What Ways Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Leadership Practices as Contributing Towards the Academic Success of Their Students and School?	110
Summary.....	113

V. SUMMARY	117
Summary of Findings.....	118
Important Findings.....	118
Discussion.....	131
Black Male Principals	131
Significance of Study.....	140
Recommendations for Future Research.....	142
Conclusion	143
REFERENCES	145
APPENDICES	153
APPENDIX A. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE	154
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT	156
APPENDIX C. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE	158
APPENDIX D. RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	160
APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW PROCEDURES.....	162
APPENDIX F. FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FROM COMMON THEMES.....	164
APPENDIX G. OBSERVATION PROCEDURES	165
APPENDIX H. DIRECT OBSERVATION FORM	166
APPENDIX I. DOCUMENT REVIEW FORM	167

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Comparison of Number of Black Principals in Four States: 1960s and 1970s	32
2	Triangulation Table Research Questions and Data Collection Sources	70
3	Principal Age, Education Background, and Experience.....	72
4	Triangulation Table of Key Findings and Data Collection Sources.....	130

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Research Question One Concept Map.....	88
2 Research Question Two(a) Concept Map.....	93
3 Research Question Two(b) Concept Map	106
4 Research Question Two(c) Concept Map.....	109
5 Research Three Concept Map.....	113

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Today's youth often take education for granted and may not value it or think that it is important to attend school. Yet just 100 years ago, certain groups of Blacks were not allowed to go to school or only went to school secretly, such that they greatly valued the opportunity to go to school. There have also been many historic changes in the leadership of schools and even in the purpose of schools. In particular, the role of the Black male principal has changed. When Black students did attend school 100 years ago, those schools were led by Black male principals, whereas today's youth often lack Black male role models in school.

Additionally, a debate that often resurfaces around the anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) case centers around progress made in the court's decision (Brown & Henderson, 2017). Have today's students heard of *Brown v. Board of Education*? Do they know the significance of the case? What comes to their minds when the Civil Rights Movement is mentioned? Do we teach students about desegregation and its history? Schools often teach about Dr. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X; but White schools do not give lessons on the impact of the *Brown* court case and its lasting effect on Blacks and education today (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014).

Before the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) case, Black male principals were empowered to lead their schools and had a significant impact on Black communities. Black male principals were dedicated to educating Black children and served in various roles within the Black community (Tillman, 2004b). During the post-*Brown* era, Black male principals played critical roles in the desegregation of schools in

the south, particularly helping Black students navigate new norms of integrated schools (Tillman, 2004b). Today, Black male principals still have an impact on schools, but fewer Black males serve in this role. What happened to the dominant Black male principal following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision? What is his impact on today's urban schools? This study provides context for the circumstances, obstacles, and successes of Black male principals' leadership journey and relates these to leadership effectiveness. A qualitative study was conducted to better understand Black male principals' experiences in urban settings. The results of this study will enhance research on Black male principals and help Black males who aspire to be principals.

Statement of Problem

Before the *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* case, Black children were taught by Black teachers in Black schools led by Black principals (Tillman, 2004b). Black male principals were community leaders and role models held in high regard. However, this image and perception of the Black male principal began to vanish after the *Brown v. Board of Education* case decision to integrate schools (James, 1970). An unintended consequence of this case was the near elimination of Black educators, particularly Black male principals (Tillman, 2004a). For example, North Carolina had 227 Black high school principals in 1963, but only eight in 1970; Arkansas' 134 Black high school principals in 1963 dwindled to only 14 in 1971 (Fultz, 2004).

In this study, the experiences of Black male principals were considered using Critical Race Theory as a framework. Critical Race Theory offers a critique of liberalism, with the claim that race has been left out of educational policy and practice (Ladson-Billings, 1999). For example, a more thoughtful educational policy after the *Brown v.*

Board of Education case would have protected the jobs of thousands of Black educators, including Black male principals.

The literature regarding Black male principals today is limited; little is known about the challenges or barriers Black male principals face and their impact on the success of urban schools. Tillman (2008) pushed for research that “presents detailed portraits of the lives, work, vision, and impact of African American principals on the school community and student achievement, and the discriminatory practices that affect their work” (p. 92). The goal of the present study was to highlight views and voices of Black male principals and close the research gap in regards to their lived experiences in the context of an urban setting.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings: to hear the voices of Black male principals and learn about leadership from their perspectives as well as through writing about their experiences. This study sought to understand challenges and barriers of Black male principals in urban settings as well as the types of supports that contribute to their success. School districts and principal-preparation programs can use these data to help African American male educators who seek to be principals, and to guide their recruitment by search-firms, human-resources departments, and senior-level administrators.

Research Questions

For this phenomenological study, three research questions were written to investigate the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. Based on a

careful review of the literature, the questions aligned with the statement of purpose and guided the study. The research questions were:

1. How do African American male principals in urban districts describe their roles and responsibilities?
2. How do African American male principals in urban settings describe their lived experiences?
 - a. How do African American principals describe their successes?
 - b. How do African American male principals describe their challenges and barriers?
 - c. How do African American male principals describe the supports they perceived as most beneficial?
3. In what ways do African American male principals describe their leadership practices as contributing towards the academic success of their students and school?
 - a. How do African American principals describe their involvement and service to the community?

Overview of Methodology

Qualitative research is most effective when participants share information in their own words from in-depth interviews that explore research questions (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers seek to understand the perspectives and views of those participating in a study (Merriam, 2009). This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Black male principals. The Ohio Department of Education provided a list of 29 Black male principals in urban school districts in Ohio, and five were randomly

selected and sent an invitation to agree to participate in the study; principals were asked to respond within one week. This process continued until five principals agreed to participate.

The researcher used interviews, observations, and document review to collect study data. A second round of interviews using a causal-comparative analysis approach was also done to deepen understanding of the findings and to increase the validity of the study. For the direct observations, the researcher observed each participant during a staff meeting and did not interfere with the activity observed. The final data collection method utilized for the study was document review. The researcher asked each participant to bring three documents that showcased his communication with and leadership of his staff. Examples of documents included opening staff letters, staff-meeting agendas, professional-development presentations, meeting notes, newsletters or any other artifacts. A document review form and direct observation form were used respectively to record and code document data and observational data. During the data-analysis phase, the qualitative data were organized and condensed into themes through a coding process (Creswell, 2007), and data from each of the three data-collection methods were compared. The researcher also included member checking as a procedure to ensure that the study was valid and reliable.

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological study brought a greater sense of context to study of the lived experiences of African American male principals in urban settings. The study offered insight regarding the principals' perceived challenges and barriers, how they describe their leadership roles, and the strategies they use to enhance the success of urban

schools. Insight gleaned from the study should benefit Black males who desire to become principals; graduate programs in education; and central office administrators, including human-resource directors who participate in recruitment and internal placement of Black male principals. Finally, this study was timely and beneficial to school districts by helping sustain and retain current Black male principals. Black male principals are typically employed in urban schools (Brown, 2005), and their successful leadership practices that enhance student achievement should be duplicated across other urban districts or may help in meeting the complex needs of specific communities.

The data from the study also provides other principals (e.g., female principals, principals of different races) with a different lens when dealing with challenges in an urban district. This study gives insight about the role Black male principals play in their dual roles of influencing their communities and the culture of their schools, which can have a positive impact on students and staff in his building, as well as on the global community.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher observed all ethics guidelines set by the Youngstown State University Institutional Review Board. The researcher used random sampling and sent invitations to participate in the research. Those who agreed to participate read and signed consent forms before engaging in the study. The researcher reviewed documents provided by the participants and conducted interviews and observations following strict protocols as outlined in the appendices. Analyzing data from three sources made it possible to identify and categorize themes with as little subjectivity as possible while comparing data from three contexts.

I am committed to studying the work of Black male principals. As an elementary-school student in Chicago, I was fortunate to have a Black male teacher and a Black male principal. Their influence and impact on my life was immeasurable. Reflecting on my personal experiences as a student was one factor that inspired me to study education and ultimately become a principal. I served as an urban high school principal for 16 years, and coach, lead, and supervise principals today. Early in my journey as a high-school principal, I realized that my challenges and barriers were often unique and different from the challenges that White peers faced. Different socioeconomic and cultural challenges shaped our experiences as educators.

As a former Black male principal, it was important that I maintain my role as a researcher by not allowing my personal biases to unconsciously interfere with any aspect of the study. I have experienced and understand the barriers and challenges faced by Black male principals in urban settings, which strengthens my credibility as a researcher. To make sure that I did not misquote or add to responses, I sent the interview transcripts and notes to each participant to check for accuracy. This procedure is known as member checking (Creswell, 2007).

Researcher Assumptions

Of two assumptions I made as the researcher in this study, the first centered on the participants' being honest and truthful in answering questions during interviews. Before starting, I engaged each person in small talk about their day and other topics that may have interested them. This was done to help establish trustworthiness and build a relationship with the participant and to help them feel comfortable freely sharing their experiences in their own voices. Often the credibility of findings and their interpretation

are connected to the sense of trustworthiness between the participant and the researcher (Walters, 2001). I also assumed that the principals' experiences would be similar to mine. Although there were some similarities, there were several differences as well. It is important for the researcher to keep personal biases and subjectivity in check and monitor these during data collection and analysis (Walters, 2001).

Definition of Terms

African American or Black: are terms used interchangeably throughout the document; “they refer to an American of African and especially of Black African descent” (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

Lived experience: as it is explored and understood in qualitative research, refers to a representation and understanding of a research subject's human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge (Givens, 2008).

Post Brown: refers to the experiences of Black educators subsequent to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. “Post Brown principals helped to implement desegregation and educate African American children in the face of resistance” (Tillman, 2004b, p. 101).

Pre Brown: refers to the experiences of Black educators before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. “Pre Brown principals were committed to the education of Black children, worked with other Black leaders to establish schools for these children, and worked in all-Black schools usually in substandard conditions” (Tillman, 2004b, p. 101).

Segregated: “the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means” (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

Urban: mean “related to city. In that sense, the term may refer to urban culture. The culture of towns and cities, sometimes used as a euphemism for African-American culture” (“Urban,” 2020, para. 1).

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 introduced the study, the problem, the study’s purpose and research questions, the methodology, the significance of the study, the researcher’s role and assumptions, and key terms. A literature review for the study is given in Chapter II. Chapter III states the research purpose and questions, the study design, the researcher’s role, the target population, sampling and participants, research procedures, data collection methods, data analysis, evidence of validity and reliability, and study limitations. Results and analysis are given in Chapter IV. Chapter V summarizes the results and discusses implications, future research, and the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today. –Malcolm X

Black principals, particularly Black male principals, have made significant contributions to the lives of Black children over the years (Tillman, 2004b). Black male principals in the 19th and 20th centuries led Black children with limited resources, and Black male principals in low socioeconomic urban districts are still leading Black children today with limited resources (Dolph, 2017; Tillman, 2004b). The voices and work of Black male principals today are necessary and valuable as the achievement gap between Black and White students continues to close. In this introduction to the literature review, I first provide a historical overview of Black male principals' contributions to education, their communities, and society in the decades before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (henceforth called pre-Brown). Understanding African American male principals' challenges pre-Brown and post-Brown can help in understanding how the African American leader today is most effective in urban school districts.

Historical Overview of Black Male Principals

Although it was illegal for slaves to be educated, enslaved Blacks took the risk of educating each other through secretly led schools that taught reading, writing, and self-resiliency (Rousmaniere, 2013). Blacks taught each other at night for many years until the end of the Civil War when several Blacks began to open small schools to educate Black children. According to Rousmaniere (2013), “Across the South, these schools were

truly community ventures as ex-slaves collectively purchased and built school facilities and created independent boards of directors for their goal of universal self-improvement and citizenship” (p. 14). Blacks worked hard to maintain the independence of these schools with the hope of maintaining control of who was teaching and what was being taught to Black children.

During the mid to late 1800s, Blacks built and operated their own schools to provide a place to nurture and teach Black children (Walker, 2000). These segregated schools in the South had limited resources and support from the broader community but were valued by the Black community (Walker, 2000). From the 1860s, Black men played a key role in providing leadership in education and in the community (Tillman, 2004b). Blacks understood that education would enhance their lives and was truly their passport to the future, and they worked collectively to meet the needs of their communities (Savage, 2001).

During the Reconstruction Era, Blacks were given more opportunities to create segregated schools, and they did not have to hide that they were educating themselves and each other. In Georgia, the Reconstruction Era required segregated schools; some believed that preparing teachers for Black students would ensure the future of Southern Blacks’ education (Butchart, 2020). Despite many obstacles from racism, discrimination, and poverty, segregated schools were created for Blacks, and laws that had made it illegal for Blacks to receive an education were taken off the books (Tillman, 2004b). Although the Reconstruction Era opened educational doors that would lead to better quality of life for many Blacks in the South, education remained segregated because of systemic racism that was blatant in the late 1800s. This systemic racism was reinforced by the 1896 *Plessy*

v Ferguson decision whereby the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of “separate but equal” public accommodations, including schools, thereby permitting racial segregation laws.

During the pre-Brown era, as a result of racism and the effect of *Plessy v Ferguson*, segregated schools continued to be developed and were the norm in the South. Black schools were led by Black principals and Black children were taught by Black teachers (Tillman, 2004b). These principals and teachers were the community leaders, role models and were well respected (Walker, 2000). Savage (2001) stated, “Black principals demonstrated an ethos of service which obligated those who acquired literacy to transfer this knowledge to others in the Black community” (p. 173.) In today's terms, this is a description of a servant leader, a leader committed to serving others first (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leaders consider the needs of their staff and teams first, are committed to enhancing the performance of their teams, and make positive contributions to society (Blanchard, 2010). Servant leaders must be willing to invest in the pain and frustration of their followers, empower their followers, and not use power or influence to control them (Yukl, 2013). Nelson Mandela, Dr. Martin Luther King, and Gandhi are great examples of famous servant leaders.

From the end of slavery to the 1950s, several Black male educators served as principals or heads of schools who took on leadership roles to educate Black children (Tillman, 2004b). One of the first Black male principals was Solomon Coles who worked in Texas (Rousmaniere, 2013). Prior to his work, Coles learned Latin and Greek at the Guilford Institute Preparatory Academy, then attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and later became the first student of color to attend Divinity School at Yale

University (Rousmaniere, 2013). While in Texas, Coles was a pastor; however, he left the church to open a school for Black children in 1878 and serve as its principal (Rousmaniere, 2013). Coles also became president of the Colored Teachers State Association in 1883 and helped found the Texas Colored State Normal School (Rousmaniere, 2013).

Thomas Jefferson Ferguson was another educational leader, a principal who helped found the Ohio Colored Teachers Association and published an 1866 pamphlet, *Negro Education: The Hope for Race* (Rousmaniere, 2013). Ferguson was very active in the community, serving on the city council and the Athens County Convention of Colored Voters (Rousmaniere, 2013), as well as serving as the principal of the Albany Enterprise Academy, a school founded by African Americans in Southeast Ohio. However, the local White community opposed a school led by Blacks, leading to its closure in 1886 (Rousmaniere, 2013).

These two Black male principals made significant contributions to Black education but are not as well-known as the next two principals, Booker T. Washington and Daniel Payne. Booker T. Washington was one of the earliest known Black principals, although his role as principal was not widely accepted by all Blacks. He served as principal at the Hampton Institute from 1879 to 1881 (Tillman, 2004b) and founded the Tuskegee Institute in 1881. Industrialists were concerned with the economic development of the South, so they advocated for training Blacks rather than educating them (Tillman, 2004b). Washington gained much support among Whites by following this model. Instead of focusing on teaching basic reading and writing skills, Washington believed that Black people should be learning domestic skills (Tillman, 2004b). The Tuskegee

Institute was also known for its engineering and veterinary colleges. Tillman (2004b) wrote of Washington, “His willingness to compromise the rights and future of Blacks make him one of the most controversial figures in the struggle to educate Blacks” (p. 175).

Daniel Payne, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal church is another well-known Black male principal who founded Wilberforce College in Xenia, Ohio (Tillman, 2004b). From 1826 to 1834, his school in Charleston, South Carolina taught adult slaves and free Black children (Tillman, 2004b). However, the school was closed by Whites who feared Blacks would learn how to read and write and develop forward thinking about the abolitionist movement to end slavery (Tillman, 2004b). Payne eventually moved north to work as a minister and educator.

There were also some amazing Black women who challenged the paradigms of some Black male principals and made significant contributions to educating Black children during the pre-Brown era. According to Tillman (2004b), “Among the most famous African American female principals who worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were Sarah Smith, Mary Shadd Cary, Fannie Jackson Coppin, Anna Julia Cooper, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Mary MacLeod Bethune” (p. 176). Leaders of schools in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC, these women trained many Black students.

At the M Street High School in Washington DC, Anna Julia Cooper became principal in 1902 and introduced a curriculum that prepared students for college (Tillman, 2004b). This was controversial as it did not follow the mainstream agenda for Blacks set out by Booker T. Washington: that schools should prepare Blacks for skilled jobs in the

workforce. Despite opposition, Cooper fought to prepare students for college and beyond and several of her students attended well-known universities such as Harvard, Oberlin, Brown, and Dartmouth (Tillman, 2004b). Not only did she and other female principals face race discrimination, they dealt with gender discrimination; yet this did not keep them from making a huge impact on the lives of Black students. However, Cooper's beliefs and fight for Black students ultimately led to her dismissal as principal of the M Street High School (Tillman, 2004b).

The common theme with all of the aforementioned principals is that while they did not have the appropriate amount of resources, they were each committed to educating Black children even and especially during challenging times. Savage (2001) wrote, "African American principals did more with less with respect to providing an education for Black students. That is, even without money or resources, Black principals operated and maintained schools for Black children" (p. 171). Black principals persevered to provide an education to Black children during times when Whites believed they should not be educated. According to Walker and Archung (2003), "Principals in segregated schools provided counter education to Whites' expectations" (p. 22). Black principals were resourceful, persistent, and focused on providing Black children with their ticket for the future.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and African American Male Theory (Bush & Bush, 2013) both provide theoretical frameworks to explore the experiences of African American male leaders in urban settings. Critical Race Theory discusses the way that people frame past experiences and the impact of race and racism

on those experiences. The African American Male Theory frames experiences moving forward from a non-deficit model and shares strengths and promises from the storyteller's viewpoint. Each theory will help close the research gap related to the need for a strengths-based perspective on African American males and remove the proverbial "elephant in the room" of a race-based deficit model by citing existing research and stories. Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Bernard, 2006) will also be used to ask how leaders succeed.

Critical Race Theory

Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman are credited with formulating Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the mid-1970s (Ladson-Billings, 1999). According to Delgado (1995), Bell and Freeman were "deeply distressed with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States" (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 11). CRT originated from the Critical Legal Studies movement which challenged the failure to include an emphasis on race and racism in the U.S. legal system (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and the notion that "the civil rights struggle represents a long, steady march towards social transformation" (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1334). In education, it is often through the lens of CRT that we view the impact of racism on school systems (Lynn & Parker, 2006). The *Brown v. Board of Education* case was intended to bring about social transformation and reform in schools; however, through the lens of CRT, stories of the experiences of pre-Brown and post-Brown Black principals can be analyzed for the challenges and barriers these principals faced as educational leaders.

The framework for CRT consists of five tenets: the permanence of racism; storytelling; critique of liberalism; Whites benefiting from civil-rights legislation; and

interest conversion (Ladson-Billings, 1999). CRT begins with the notion that racism is a part of our everyday lives, a part of our history, and the present culture. To answer the question “Why does racism exist?” CRT suggests that ethnological inferior groups will always be affected by racism (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Although overt racism has decreased, CRT scholars argue that basic everyday racism has increased (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Delgado wrote, “CRT begins with the notion that racism is ‘normal,’ not aberrant, in American society and because it is so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture” (Delgado, 1995, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 2).

African American males certainly have been on the receiving end of racism. Whether as a student or as a leader in an educational setting, African American males have felt the negative impact of racism, where children are blamed for lack of achievement in schools with poor teachers and lack of resources. CRT suggests that current instructional strategies presume that African American students are deficient. Consequently, classroom teachers are engaged in a never-ending quest for “*the* right strategy or technique to deal with ‘at-risk’ students.’ When these strategies or skills fail to achieve desired results, the students, not the techniques, are found to be lacking” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 2). Ladson-Billings (1999) also noted issues in “the distortions, omissions, and stereotypes of school curriculum and access to what is deemed *enriched* curriculum via courses and classes for the gifted and talented” (p. 2). This is precisely why African American leaders, particularly males, must be heavily involved in keeping a finger on the pulse of the African American student.

The critique of liberalism involves the fact that race has been left out of educational policy and practice. For example, more thoughtful educational policy after the *Brown v. Board of Education* case could have protected the jobs of thousands of Black educators. Also, although we celebrate Black History Month and recognize Dr. Martin Luther King's Day, that only scratches the surface of culturally relevant pedagogy which should be embedded in all school curricula.

From the lens of CRT, interest conversion occurs when those in power benefit from the advancement of the interests of people of color or those who are not in power (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Ladson-Billings shares an example involving the state of Arizona's not recognizing the Dr. Martin Luther King holiday, a decision which was reversed when the National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) refused to hold all-star games and Super Bowl games in the state in 1999. Illustrating the concept of Whites benefiting most from civil-rights laws, Ladson-Billings (1999) also observed that changes in hiring practices have benefited White women more than anyone else. In another example of interest conversion, although segregation ended, the decision may have benefited White administrators leading larger schools, but many Black educators, especially principals, lost jobs.

Considering Black male principals' stories in terms of a CRT framework will add to research on the barriers and challenges these urban principals face and emphasize the principals' own views of challenges they face in educating students. "The use of voice or naming your reality is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 15).

African American Male Theory

African American Male Theory (AAMT) is a new theory introduced in the *Journal of African American Males in Education* in Spring 2013 by Lawson Bush and Edward C. Bush. “It is used to articulate the position and trajectory of African American boys and men in society by drawing on and accounting for pre- and post-enslavement experiences while capturing their spiritual psychological, social, and educational development and station” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 10). Typically, literature on African American males tells stories of challenges and negative experiences, or cites statistics that detail the plight of African American boys and men. AAMT explores success stories and invites positive contributions to the lives of African American boys and men. It is framed from a non-deficit-based model.

AAMT is the only theory that has a specific focus on African American males and is based on the following six tenets:

1. “The individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American boys and men’s lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 7).
2. “The uniqueness about being male and of African descent” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 10).
3. “The continuity and continuation of African culture, consciousness, and biology that influence the experiences of African American boys and men” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 10).
4. “African American boys and men are resilient and resistant” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 10).

5. “Race and racism coupled with classism and sexism have a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of African American boys and men” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 11).
6. “The focus and purpose of study and programs concerning African American boys and men should be the pursuit of social justice” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 12).

These tenets cover a multitude of experiences that African American boys and men encounter, and the theory is unique in that it accounts for spiritual matters (Bush & Bush, 2018). Spirituality plays a significant role in the life and decision-making process of the African American male leader and he attributes a large part of his success as a leader to his religious values (Bush & Bush, 2018). African American males in leadership roles in urban settings have unique experiences relevant to the theory’s tenets. Such leaders must be resilient and withstand rejection and disappointment, and they must resist acting on society’s stereotypes, expectations, and norms. AAMT sees racism as a part of our society and the everyday lives of African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). Therefore, this study significantly contributes to the research by exploring the impact of racism and how African American male leaders respond to it.

AAMT is inviting scholars to shift focus from a deficit model to a non-deficit model when examining the experiences, behaviors, and outcomes of African American boys and men. Historically, the literature surrounding African American males has been framed from a deficit-based model focusing on the societal challenges African American males face (e.g., incarceration statistics, homicide, lower life expectancy), with African American males even being considered an endangered species (Bush & Bush, 2018).

Recently, scholars have begun to call for a halt to a negative, deficit-based approach to research and writing about African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2018). This shift is important because it encourages researchers to write about the strengths, promises, and potential of African American males, changing the narrative on how African American boys and men will be viewed in the future. AAMT supports creating frames for individuals to tell their own stories, which is the goal of this study. Exploring the stories of African American male leaders in urban settings will help change how they are viewed and open doors of opportunity for the future.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership focuses on inspiration, motivation, vision, growth, change, and reform (Okcu, 2014). Black male principals have long had a clear vision and that was to provide an excellent education to Black children no matter the circumstances. To do this, their work has always centered around change and reform as they sought to overcome obstacles of race and to adapt to new desegregation laws or other circumstances.

Initial research around transformational leadership was conducted by James McGregor Burns in the late 1970s, as a contrast to transactional leadership (Yukl, 2013). Transformational leadership theory emphasizes being in tune with the needs of followers and issues affecting them (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Yukl (2013) wrote, “Transactional leadership motivates followers by appealing to their self-interest and exchanging benefits” (p. 321). This type of leadership often results in compliance from followers with low commitment or enthusiasm for the task or objective (Yukl, 2013).

According to Okcu (2014), transformational leaders are visionary and have the capacity to lead change and inspire their employees to follow. They are able to convince followers to put their own agendas to the side and do what is in the best interest of the organization and team (Yukl, 2013). At the same time, leaders must pay attention in order to understand the needs and potential of their employees. These leaders create a safe space that develops and respects individual differences. These leaders inspire followers to persevere and achieve results that benefit the organization and look at old problems in new ways (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Followers of transformational leaders are usually motivated to do more than required and have high levels of trust, respect, and loyalty for the leader (Yukl, 2013).

Transformational leadership is comprised of four main components: inspirational motivation; individualized consideration; idealized influence; and intellectual stimulation (Aydin et al., 2013). Inspirational motivation involves the leader's ability to have followers rally behind the vision of the organization and carry out current and future tasks (Money, 2017; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Individualized consideration involves coaching, encouraging and providing support to followers (Yukl, 2013).

Transformational leaders work to empower their individual followers, which in turn provides self-fulfillment and self-worth (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Intellectual stimulation involves the leader's encouraging followers to be creative and innovative and to look at problems through a different lens and find new solutions (Money, 2017; Yukl, 2013). Idealized influence involves the transformational leader making sacrifices within their own behavior, ultimately serving as a role model to their followers (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013; Yukl, 2013).

Idealized influence may also take the form of servant leadership: Yukl (2013) wrote, “A servant leader must attend to the needs of followers and help them become healthier, wiser, and more willing to accept responsibilities” (p. 349). Schroeder (2016) wrote,

In order for the principal to operate as a servant leader and increase teacher effectiveness, he or she must not only personify the characteristics of servant leaders, but also model the way, enable teachers to act, encourage teachers’ hearts, and communicate a larger vision to pursue. (p. 15)

Trust among followers is high when leaders possess high levels of integrity (Yukl, 2013). Trust requires servant leaders to be open and honest and make sure their actions are aligned with the mission, vision, values, and beliefs of the organization (Blanchard, 2010). This can have a positive effect on the culture of an organization (Black, 2010) and on job satisfaction (Cerit, 2009), and inspire others in the organization to be servant leaders as well. Servant leadership in schools creates a culture that values teacher learning, which in turn increases student learning (Terosky & Reitano, 2016).

Review of Literature on Black Male Principals

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a historical overview of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Black male principals, their presence before the *Brown vs Board of Education* Era, and the impact on Black male principals after *Brown v. Board of Education*. Black male principals, their innate characteristics, transformational leadership roles and responsibilities and their contributions to education are highlighted throughout this review.

Segregated Schools Pre-Brown

Before the implementation of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Black children mostly attended segregated Black schools. Scholars and researchers differ as to the effectiveness of these segregated schools pre-Brown. Many of the schools were one-room structures, often in homes and churches owned by Blacks in the community (Walker, 2000). Yet all-Black segregated schools were staffed by caring principals and teachers who had high expectations for students and had the support of parents (Walker, 2000). These schools were often revered and held in high regard by the Black community and parents (Marcucci, 2017). Although segregated schools did not have the same curriculum materials, financial support, or resources as White schools, Black segregated schools pre-Brown were very effective and met the needs of the Black community.

The segregated school was a safe place for Black students. They were sheltered from racism, discrimination, and oppressive situations. Segregated schools provided Black students the opportunity to be in a caring environment filled with efficacy and hope (Marcucci, 2017; Tillman, 2004b), where educators understood and could relate to the challenges and struggles Black children faced.

Although Black students learned in these supportive environments, resources were not equal. The facilities were often in poor conditions and not conducive to learning (Walker, 2000). Black students wanted the same resources and funding that White students had (Carson, 2004). However, pushing for more funding for all-Black schools was often a moot point as school board members were all White. Teachers, principals, and families worked to increase funding but were consistently denied because Whites believed that Blacks did not pay enough taxes and therefore did not deserve additional

funding (Walker, 2000) The unequal allocation of resources was a problem and one of the driving forces to end segregation. This also became a focal point for the Civil Rights Movement.

However, some segregated schools in the pre-Brown era were quality schools with high expectations and standards. Although these schools lacked funding and resources, educating students was their top priority and they pushed students to be great (Patton, 2011). For example, in a Black community in North Carolina, the Caswell County Training School was an all-Black segregated school that started during the 1924-1925 school year with four rooms and four teachers who educated nearly 80 students from first to seventh grade (Walker, 1996). Over the next 20 years, the school became the first accredited African American high school in the area, with 26 teachers and an enrollment of over 900 students (Walker, 1996). Led by Nicholas Longworth Dillard, a Black male principal at the school for 37 years, the school graduated hundreds of Black students over the years and inspired further study (Walker, 1996).

The Dunbar High School of Washington DC established in 1870 also had an excellent tradition of educating Black youth at high levels while creating opportunities for them to develop their talents and learn from good teachers (Walker, 2000). High percentages of Dunbar's graduates attended college and many attended Ivy League schools (Walker, 2000). Another successful segregated school— Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky—opened in 1873 and also graduated thousands of students, and they loved and respected the school community (Walker, 2000). Central had a strong curriculum, extracurricular activities, an active principal, and involved parents (Walker, 2000). In the 1950s, Halifax County Training School was the largest Black high school in

Virginia and was rated higher than White schools in the county; its students attended college and graduated (Walker, 2000). All of these schools had a rich history, great traditions, and high standards. Overall, segregated schools were known for having exemplary teachers, strong curricula, extracurricular activities, parental support, and strong principals (Walker, 2000).

Brown v. Board of Education and Its Immediate Outcomes

The historic 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* was a major milestone in American history. This famous case determined that state-sanctioned racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, and it strove for equality for all under the U.S. Constitution (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014; McCray et al., 2007). As a result, Black children could integrate schools and attend school with White children and would be afforded equal access to the same curriculum, resources, and facilities (Carson, 2004). This landmark case was also one of the events that sparked the civil rights movement. Very shortly after the court decision, Dr. Martin Luther King organized and led several demonstrations and sit-ins, in which Rosa Parks also participated. Parks would not give up her seat in a bus, which led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. After the *Brown* decision, nine students (the Little Rock Nine) also received a great deal of public attention as they integrated a school in Arkansas (Carson, 2004; Lopez & Burciaga, 2014).

Although the *Brown v. Board of Education* case aimed to change the lives of Black children, its immediate impact was compromised due to the court's failure to establish specific timelines to desegregate schools (Carson, 2004) or to create or identify a process to eliminate segregation (Brown & Henderson, 2017; Carson, 2004). The

decision was law; however, it was not accepted or enforced in several states and caused racial tension in several communities. Whites who did not support the *Brown* decision saw it as a key disruptor to generations of White privilege and power (Marcucci, 2017). Whites in the South were resistant to change.

Equal opportunities for quality education was the goal, regardless of race. Equal access to the same resources, curriculum, and facilities was the law (McBride, 2006). The new law had given many Blacks hope, however, it was years before that hope would become a reality for the majority of Blacks, particularly in the South (Carson, 2004). Several years afterwards, Black youth in the South were still attending predominately Black schools (Carson, 2004), which meant they were still attending schools with limited resources in inadequate facilities.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision did benefit a small number of Black students but not the majority (Carson, 2004). For example, in Arkansas, the Little Rock Nine case opened the door for nine Black students to integrate a White high school in 1957, while other Black students remained at the Black high school.

Over the next two decades, schools became more diverse, particularly in the South (McCray et al., 2007). The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision created opportunities for Black students to cross color lines and attend school with White students (Tillman, 2004a); yet it could not force the interaction or integration of Blacks and Whites nor ensure a welcoming environment for Black students (Marcucci, 2017). Black students entered schools where they were not welcomed and/or were viewed as inferior to their White classmates. White teachers often refused to teach Black students. Black students had to be resilient; they had to have a certain level of mental toughness to

persevere through extreme levels of racism and discrimination (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014). The overt racism and implicit biases that Black students endured had long-lasting effects on their self-esteem, which was certainly not what they had encountered in their previous Black schools (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014). Although many Blacks fought for desegregation and the integration of schools, some Blacks came to believe that desegregation would be oppressive (Marcucci, 2017).

The *Brown v. Board of Education* court decision was historic and would affect the lives of Black children for decades, as well as changing the dialogue about equality and race in the U.S. (Brown & Henderson, 2017). Although the impact of the decision was not felt immediately by large numbers of Black families, the foundational work for desegregating schools had been done (Carson, 2004). However, only a small number of Black students went to integrated schools: for example, in North Carolina, in 1959, only 40 of 300,000 Black students and in Nashville, only 42 out of 12,000 Black students had the privilege of attending integrated schools (Brown & Henderson, 2017). In large part, the courts were responsible for the slow outcomes of *Brown*. Brown and Henderson (2017) wrote, “And to make matters worse, the Court left local federal district judges, many of whom had been selected by segregationist senators, to supervise the implementation of *Brown*” (p. 245). Not only did the courts control the implementation of *Brown*, they played a role in the progress of *Brown* as well (Carson, 2004; Lopez & Burciaga, 2014). Had the courts provided guidance on timelines for schools to integrate, more students would have attended integrated schools sooner. Without a court order, states could take their time desegregating their schools (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014).

As Southern states began to integrate schools at a more rapid rate as a result of court rulings, Northern states had not made much progress with desegregating schools. For instance, in 1968, 60% of Black students in Northern states were attending racially segregated schools (Vergon, 1990). There was resistance to desegregation in Northern states as Whites did not want to admit Black students into their schools. In the North, particularly in New York, Black families participated in open-enrollment programs where they could transfer from segregated packed Black schools to mainly White schools; however, this still left Black schools segregated (Shagaloff, 1963).

Things began to change for Northern states in 1973, as courts began to challenge school-district barriers to ending segregation and instituted system-wide desegregation plans (Vergon, 1990). Yet several of these plans were still met with resistance. With regard to Detroit, the Supreme Court reversed the lower-court decision in the 1974 *Miliken v Bradley* case, which had claimed that school districts did not have to desegregate unless they could prove that lines drawn within the city were drawn with racial intent. The reversal of the lower-court decision caused White flight to suburbs, increasing segregation of Detroit schools as the district became disproportionately Black.

In Dayton Ohio, segregated schools existed as a result of racially segregated residential neighborhoods (Watras, 2010). School officials assigned students to neighborhood schools, which resulted in separate schools for Black students and White students. Dayton had a history of segregated schools since the late 1800s and despite previous court rulings, the 1977 appeal *Dayton v Brinkman* challenged-system wide desegregation plans recommended by the courts (Vergon, 1990, Watras,

2010). Eventually, bussing of students to integrate schools began to eliminate segregated schools and unfair educational opportunities for Black students.

Columbus City Schools is another school district in the North where segregated neighborhoods resulted in segregated schools. In 1977, *Penick v Columbus Board of Education* ruled that the district promoted segregation by sending Black students to Black schools and White students to White schools (Columbus Ohio, 2020). The court enforced bussing to desegregate all schools in the district. The district resisted and appealed the federal district courts' decision; however, the Supreme Court eventually upheld the initial decision to bus students (Columbus Ohio, 2020). This decision resulted in many White families moving to the suburbs to avoid having their White students attend schools with Black students, resulting in a significant decline in enrollment in Columbus schools.

Post-Brown Effects on Schools and Principals

Desegregation changed the faces of classrooms, as it integrated Black and White students. However, Black students were in new unfamiliar settings that often were not supportive of desegregation. Their new teachers were also not ready to meet the needs of Black students and those teachers needed support (Orfield, 1975). According to Orfield (1975), principals played an important role in Black students' transition into desegregated schools. Principals were tasked with managing discord, providing support to teachers, influencing school-community relationships, and uplifting spirits. One report Orfield cited suggested that in schools with Black principals were especially effective in implementing integration, with teachers being more supportive of integration and less prejudiced. Schools with Black principals also had lesser challenges in part because they had a hand in the recruitment and selection of their faculty. Although Black principals

were key to desegregation, they were often shifted into roles outside that of principal. The absence of the Black principal often lengthened the challenges of school integration, which ultimately brought more harm to Black students.

Black educators worked in all-Black schools serving Black students for decades and after the *Brown* case, this educational structure was eliminated in several communities (Marcucci, 2017). The school was often seen as the cornerstone of the community (Marcucci, 2017; Tillman, 2004a), so the elimination of Black schools created chaos in many African American communities (Tillman, 2004a).

One of the unintended consequences of the *Brown* decision was the loss of employment for Black teachers and principals (Tillman, 2004a). Black teachers and principals for years had been the source of knowledge, the voice of reason, and the model of self-empowerment for Black children. One would assume that with the influx of Black students in the newly formed desegregated schools, this would also call for an influx of Black teachers and principals. This certainly did not happen in the segregated South.

Even though enrollment of Black students in desegregated schools was on the rise, the number of Black teachers and principals was decreasing. White educators believed that Black principals were ineffective in educating Black students (Tillman, 2004a). According to Tillman (2004b), “Demotions and firings of Black principals reflected the deep-seated segregationist ideology of the South, and White Southerners with the turn-of-the-century attitudes about Black inferiority would not tolerate Black principals supervising students and teachers in integrated schools” (p. 179). White privilege, as it is known today, was rampant during this time, and occurred at the expense

of Black students, teachers and principals. The Black community had lost its voice and presence in the communities and in the education of Black children.

The reality of *Brown* triggered the displacement of thousands of Black educators (Will, 2019). Although accurate records were not kept about the displacement of Black principals (Tillman, 2004b), it appears that Black principals felt the effects of the Brown decision the most from 1954-1965 (Ethridge, 1979). For example, in Kentucky in 1954, there were roughly 200 Black principals whereas in the 1969/1970 school year, 36 Black principals remained (James, 1970). Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, West Virginia, and Delaware also closed nearly all of the all-Black schools which resulted in more job loss for Black principals (Tillman 2004b). Florida also was not exempt in its treatment of Black principals after the *Brown* decision. In 1964-1965, all 67 districts in Florida employed Black principals. Ten years later, only 40 districts had Black principals though the number of students had increased (Abney, 1980). Table 1 shows marked decreases in Black principals in four Southern states from the 1960s to the 1970s (Fultz, 2004).

Table 1

Comparison of Number of Black Principals in Four States: 1960s and 1970s

State	Year in 1960s	Black principals <i>N</i>	Year in 1970s	Black principals <i>N</i>
North Carolina	1963	227	1970	8
Arkansas	1963	134	1971	14
South Carolina	1965	144	1970	33
Tennessee	1968	73	1970	17

Note: Data from Fultz (2004).

Black principals were affected in numerous states, almost eliminating Black leadership that once empathized with and supported Black students and encouraged education. Certainly, there were some Black principals who retained their jobs and they were typically in urban areas with large populations of Black students. According to Tillman (2004b), “While some Black principals retained their positions after the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, desegregation had a devastating impact on the closed structure of Black education and thus the professional lives of thousands of Black principals” (p. 177). The Black teacher-to-principal pipeline was destroyed, and the integration of faculty and leadership has never recovered (Tillman 2004a, 2004b).

With Black schools being eliminated, Black educators, principals, and teachers alike found themselves looking for employment in unwelcoming environments (Marcucci, 2017). Some Black teachers joined predominately White schools and as a result were forced to suppress their identities and adapt to the White culture of their buildings (Marcucci, 2017). Black teachers were not alone; Black students also had similar experiences in suppressing their identities and culture.

Similar to Black students who had to adjust to their new environments and quickly learn resiliency, Black principals had to be resilient as well. They had been viewed as educational experts and leaders in the Black community and now many of them were demoted or out of work (Tillman, 2004a, 2004b). This impact was felt in the teaching ranks for Blacks as well. James (1970) wrote:

But the principal is the key figure. For instance, the practice in most Southern communities is to leave the recruiting and hiring of Black teachers to the

principal, but with the elimination of the Black principals, active recruitment of Black teachers ceases. (p. 19)

Even when they kept jobs, many Black principals experienced diminished influence in making decisions for teachers and students. James (1970) also shared:

In many instances, Black principals were transferred to central office positions such as coordinators of federal programs or were given some other title completely foreign to all known educational terminology, a desk, a secretary, more specified responsibilities or authority and all this with a quiet prayer that they would somehow just go away. (p. 20)

Fultz (2004) also wrote:

The process of reducing the standing and authority of African American principals and supervisors followed four major practices: (a) demotion to teaching and nonteaching positions; (b) downgrading the Black principal's school to a lower grade level (from high school to junior high school); (c) retention of title but with reduced authority; as an assistant or co-principal, sometimes as principal in title but with the authority obviously residing with a White assistant; and, (d) "paper promotions" to central system positions with limited influence, which removed Black authority figures from the onsite school scene. (p. 29)

Imagine the effect and impact these decisions had on the Black principal's self-esteem.

The dismantling of Black educators was quite disturbing, but the federal government moved slowly in stopping the displacement of Black educators in the post-Brown era (Fultz, 2004). This issue was not a priority until the mid-1960s when African Americans began to experience significant legal breakthroughs: for example, the 1966

Johnson v. Branch decision victory for a Black teacher in Halifax County, North Carolina who was fired in retaliation for her civil rights activities (Fultz, 2004). Also, the 1970 *Singleton* decision dealt with the defense against large displacements of Black educators and ultimately provided these educators with the right to fill vacancies before any future hires of a different race (Fultz, 2004).

By the mid-1970s, displacements were winding down for Black educators as more legal battles had been won. It was time to move forward, fill vacancies, and level the playing field for Black educators; it was time for Black educators to gain back some of the income they had lost. Fultz (2004) wrote, “The estimated loss in salary income to the African American communities in the 17 Southern states for 1970-71 alone was \$240 million” (p. 37). The loss of income and influence devastated the Black community. The Black male principal continued to face challenges in the 1980s and 1990s as he led schools in urban areas in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods (Fultz, 2004): a challenge that Black male principals still face today in 2020.

Black Male Principals in Urban Schools Today

Socioeconomic Challenges

In the early years after *Brown*, there was steady, slow progress in desegregating schools in the South and in states in other regions of the country as well (Brown & Henderson, 2017). The most progress with desegregation occurred in the South between the 1960s and 1980s (Brown & Henderson, 2017). However, the trend has shifted back to segregated schools (Walker & Archung, 2003). Black students are attending predominantly Black schools in urban areas; but unlike pre-Brown, their teachers and principals are not all Black. These schools in urban districts are often in poverty-stricken

areas with poor facilities, limited resources, limited technology resources, and inadequate staffing (Brown, 2005; Brown & Henderson, 2017; Tillman 2004b): circumstances that mirror the conditions of the segregation era.

Many urban school districts are led by African American principals. Black male principals are typically employed in large urban districts, in schools with inadequate funding, outdated curriculum materials, subpar facilities, and teachers who often lack the proper certification in high-stakes testing areas (Brown, 2005). Urban school districts face many challenges that affect teaching and learning, student achievement, and the culture and climate of the districts (Acton, 2018). This is a concern because urban districts have larger student populations than non-urban districts.

A serious urban district challenge is the high percentage of children living in poverty (Acton, 2018). These students often have less access to medical care which results in health issues and poor eating habits. When students are hungry, they are also unable to focus in the classroom (Dolph, 2017). Quoting percentages of students entitled to free or reduced lunch, the yearly report of the Council of Great City Schools (2018) indicated that 71% of the 7.8 million students the schools served were eligible, and in several urban districts in Ohio, all students were eligible. Additionally, 15% of 7.8 million students served were English Language Learners, consistent with urban districts that often have high numbers of English Language Learners.

Staffing is another challenge in urban districts. Undesirable working conditions make attracting and retaining high-quality teachers difficult. According to White-Smith (2012), “It is clear that students of color, as compared to their Caucasian peers, are more likely to be in schools in which teachers have less preparation and are less likely to be

credentialed” (p. 8). For example, urban districts lack instructors with proper credentials in mathematics or science (Dolph, 2017). Not having the best teachers puts urban students at a significant disadvantage.

African American school leaders also find themselves helping students overcome social, emotional, and behavioral obstacles that often take principals from the core business of education (Henderson, 2015). Henderson (2015) wrote,

African American male urban school leaders would be best served by an increase in staff dedicated to social services, counseling support, behavioral health, and parent outreach, which would then allow them to concentrate more on the primary mission of instructional leadership. (p. 50)

Funding is also a problem. In Ohio and other states, school funding is based on property values or resident income (Dolph, 2017). This penalizes urban areas with low property values and resident incomes, thus limiting resources available for urban schools. Limited resources mean fewer opportunities for students and staff and creates significant disadvantages (Acton, 2018; Dolph, 2017).

There are many factors that have contributed to urban areas becoming high-poverty areas. Over the years, the job outlook has changed and certain industries that required skilled labor have been replaced by technology and computers (Wilson & Freedman, 2001). Technology has lowered transportation and communication costs which also created opportunities for companies to shift jobs to other countries with cheaper unskilled labor costs (Wilson & Freedman, 2001). Many of these jobs were in the apparel industry which heavily employed African Americans. As the technology shift

began, many Blacks in urban areas were vulnerable because of limited education beyond high school, which often left them out of work. Wilson and Freedman (2001) wrote:

The unemployment rates of central-city Black males with only a high school diploma climbed from 11% in the late 1960s to 41% in the early 1990s in Midwestern cities, from 10 to 31% in northeastern cities, and from 10 to 22% in southern cities. (p. 44)

Despite the increase in Black professionals in the United States, more Blacks than Whites remain unskilled, causing the impact of poverty to be greater in Black communities. Blacks are disproportionately concentrated in extreme-poverty neighborhoods, neighborhoods that typically have a lack of resources, steady job opportunities, and community support (Wilson, 1992). Oftentimes, people in these high-poverty areas have jobs that help make ends meet rather than steady jobs that pay a fair wage (Wilson, 1992). Challenging times often lead to increased illegal practices and activities which further perpetuates the cycle of poverty. All of this is felt in high-poverty urban schools today. Long term exposure to disadvantaged neighborhoods in high poverty areas has an impact on high school graduation rates (Wilson, 2013).

Urban areas have also become high-poverty areas as a result of redlining. Redlining is a system that denied certain communities funding and resources. For example, the average house price in urban areas would be significantly lower than in suburban areas, resulting in low property taxes. Property taxes are a large part of the formula for how school districts are funded; therefore, schools in urban districts would receive less funding than schools in suburban districts.

The last and most prevalent challenge in urban schools is student discipline. Teachers tend to spend more time dealing with student behaviors and discipline issues than in non-urban schools (Dolph, 2017). Urban schools are faced with attendance problems, multiple forms of abuse issues, and violent behaviors (Dolph, 2017). Dealing with discipline issues and student behaviors often creates a loss of instructional time and increased stress on teachers (Dolph, 2017).

All of these challenges have an impact on student success as measured by academic achievement. Many urban districts do not have financial resources or staff to support these students, and their lopsided performance data are counted on the state report card. Also, Black principals are often offered positions in schools with poor test scores, low graduation rates, high dropout rates and high staff turnover (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). Strong leadership that seeks to address these challenges is necessary and critical. It is for those reasons, that urban education challenges require leaders to be skillful in instructional leadership and culture building (Dolph, 2017). Yet even in the midst of challenges, Black principals have a positive impact on the lives and academic performance of Black students (Lomotely, 1987, 1989).

Cultural Challenges

Today's schools are also becoming increasingly diverse, with students from different racial and ethnic minority groups. Educators are challenged to serve this diverse population and address its broader needs and families (Henderson, 2015), and diversity of leadership in urban settings must increase. Brown (2005) wrote, "Schools in a racially diverse society will require leaders and models of leadership that will address the racial, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the school community" (p. 585). The leadership of

successful principals who are unafraid of addressing the “elephant” of race in the room will have an impact on student achievement (Henderson, 2015). Often the product of an urban environment themselves, Black principals can relate to the African American students in their schools. Compared to White principals, Black principals view Black students differently because they can relate to and better understand how Black students learn (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007; Henderson, 2015).

However, Black principals today also face challenges and barriers that involve negative societal and community perceptions or that even occur among their own staff. Often, teachers' perceptions and treatment of the principal differs depending on the race of the principal (Lomotely, 1987). A study of African American principals (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002) found there was conflict between White teachers' *color blind* stance and African American principals' *color consciousness* approach with African American students. White teachers operated under the color blind umbrella; however, racial impartiality could be seen as counterproductive in appreciating diversity. One White teacher in the study resented the African American principal's authority, his support for African American students, and his efforts to recruit and hire more non-White teachers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). With their credibility as leaders often questioned by resistant White teachers, these Black principals often found themselves defending their color consciousness and affirmation of African American students (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

Also, many times, African American principals must code-switch: taking the color-blind approach when dealing with White staff members, and code-switching back to a color-consciousness approach when dealing with and meeting the needs of African

American students and families. When Black principals don't code-switch and instead speak up for their race, they are often viewed as exclusionary (Khan, 2016).

Conversations about race, implicit biases and discrimination are often uncomfortable and how Black principals engage in these conversations is key (Khan, 2016). Another challenge for Black principals involves managing who they spend their time with and at what length: if you spend too much time with White employees, you're viewed as being not Black enough and if you spend too much time with Black, you're viewed as showing favoritism (Khan, 2016).

In Henderson's (2015) study, African American principals also revealed myths and misconceptions; for example, that African American male principals show favoritism and are more lenient when it comes to disciplining African American students who are often supposedly given special privileges. One of the study participants noted the importance of always being consistent and fair in dealing with situations, yet not ignoring individual student circumstances and making decisions accordingly (Henderson, 2015). Another myth involves African American principals' not being qualified for their positions or only being concerned about the well-being of African American students. However, principals are also concerned with students' academic achievement (Henderson, 2015). Another participant in Henderson's (2015) study noted that White parents often desire to deal with someone else other than the African American principal. In the midst of these barriers, African American male principals are still tasked with being role models, father figures, and professionals at all times (Henderson, 2015).

Black Male Principals' Leadership Roles and Responsibilities and Traits

African American male principals have been successful in dealing with urban challenges for several reasons. Much of the research around Black male principals centers on their leadership, and especially their transformational leadership. Used effectively by the right leader, the four components of transformational leadership can change the culture of a school. First, transformational leaders can be found in urban schools despite the aforementioned challenges because they have the capacity to motivate and inspire staff and students. According to Aydin et al. (2013), "Transformational leaders identify high goals, create a team spirit, enthusiasm, and constantly motivate their followers. They motivate their followers to be innovative, analytic, and creative" (p. 807). A study of six African American male principals in urban settings said "responses from participants reflected elements of transformational leadership, particularly those of enlisting support for a unified organizational mission or vision and nurturing a positive organizational culture" (Henderson, 2015, p. 48). Transformational leaders have a strong sense of purpose and are not afraid to think outside the box. It is this kind of leadership that will help redirect the leadership pipeline for African American males.

African American principals also value intellectual stimulation and are committed to helping African American students succeed educationally (Henderson, 2015). Gooden (2005) shared:

African American principals demonstrated a commitment to the education of African American children, a compassion for an understanding of their students and of the communities in which they worked, and a confidence in the ability of all African American children to learn. (p. 632)

Gooden's (2005) study of an African American male principal in an urban setting found that principals who focused on developing goals, energy-harnessing, communication, instructional management, commitment, and compassion were able to turn a school around and increase student achievement. Being visible in classrooms and hallways and interacting with teachers and students also made principals more accessible and accountable. Gooden (2005) quoted an African American male principal speaking about one of the most difficult aspects of his job: balancing setting high goals and building relationship:

People don't want to frustrate children and move them to a higher educational level because they have so many other issues. When they achieve, they want to congratulate them and that's fine. They want it to be comfortable because our students are dealing with so many issues and they don't want to turn them off, but if we don't do something bigger then we are not preparing them to be a better student. (p. 644)

The real work of African American male principals in urban settings is getting staff to push students to excel to greatness rather than making excuses for them.

Other research also shows that Black male principals have been known for their high expectations for student achievement and commitment to excellence. Sara L. Lightfoot (1983), who studied schools and principal leaders, highlighted Norris Hogan, a Black principal at George Washington Carver High School in Atlanta. Hogan had high expectations and believed in providing students with a comprehensive and technical education in disciplined and safe environments (Lightfoot). Describing Hogan as an authoritarian leader, Lightfoot (1983) wrote, "His decisions are ultimate and non-

negotiable, and his commands are sometimes delivered with a callous disregard for the feelings of the person who is talking” (p. 34). He was feared by students, teachers, and staff, and yet was committed to the social and academic success of his students and believed schools must provide discipline and safety.

With regard to principals’ use of individualized consideration, research has also focused on African American principals as caring individuals. Kofi Lomotely (1989) studied the leadership of Black principals and their influence on Black students. He conducted studies in three different schools with Black principals and found that principals in his study possessed bureaucratic and ethno-humanist styles of leadership. The principals were dedicated to educating Black students, were confident in all Black children’s ability to learn, were compassionate, and cared about improving the quality of life of students and communities.

In the book *How Do They Know You Care?* Lyman (2000) also wrote about Kenneth Hinton, a Black male principal of an early childhood education center in a low-income, racially and ethnically diverse city. Hinton is described as a compassionate leader with strong spiritual values that supported caring for and developing children to their fullest potential. Hinton was also a relationship-builder who built bridges among all stakeholders regardless of color (Lyman, 2000). This type of leadership coupled with strong instructional leadership is what makes principals successful today. Nicholas Longworth Dillard, the long-time principal of Caswell County Training School has also been described as being caring, a great listener, very motivational, an encouraging spirit and well respected by his students (Walker, 1996).

Black male principals have also exerted idealized influence: they have been deeply invested in their communities, serving with various community organizations and the church. Writing about Nicholas Longworth Dillard, Walker (2000) shared, “His interactions happened in community space, such as gas stations, homes, and churches, where African American etiquette would always have him recognized to speak” (p. 274). Black male principals provided leadership in the community and wore several hats. They were fund-raisers, financial advisors, marital counselors, and anything else the community needed (Walker, 2000). Common themes from Henderson’s (2015) study of Black principals also included strength, paternalism, consistency, and fairness as experiences contributing to success. Participants in his study found themselves heavily relied upon as role models and father figures while expressing the importance of being fair and consistent in daily interactions with students.

One aspect of this study explored if these characteristics and traits are similar to those of Black male principals today. Do Black male principals wear various hats and are they still an integral part of the community? Are Black male principals still caring and are they still invested in African American students and families outside of school?

Summary

African American male leaders have faced many barriers, including socio-economic situations that hinder progress. The cultural limitations and biases that African American male leaders face also shape their perceptions of leadership. It is important to understand principals’ shared experiences with the community to see how they are best suited to serve it. This context serves as a backdrop to the stories told by African American male leaders participating in this qualitative study, while the stories will also

highlight these leaders' traits and strengths and the ways they adapt to their communities that make them successful leaders.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study aimed to deepen understanding of and contribute to the somewhat-scant research on African American male high school principals in urban settings. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) wrote that researchers typically conduct a qualitative study when understanding about an area is limited. In general, “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). This type of research calls for questions that let participants exercise their voices in conversations and storytelling.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences of five African American male high school principals in a large urban district. Because a phenomenological study is designed to report the lived experiences of participants (Merriam, 2009), I believed this was the best approach for this study. Participants were selected using random sampling of Black urban Ohio principals. Interviews, document review, and observations were the data collection methods used. The study’s findings may be used to help African American male educators who wish to be principals, and help search-firms, human-resources departments, and senior-level administrators who recruit African American male principals. This methodology chapter explains the research questions, study design, researcher’s role, sampling and participants, instrumentation, procedures, analysis, evidence of validity, and limitations.

Research Questions

My research questions were formulated based on research about African American male principals and their experiences leading schools. As described in Chapter II, the main theoretical frameworks were Critical Race Theory, African American Male Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory. The research questions were written to illuminate African American male principals' lived experiences and impact on urban schools. I addressed the following questions.

1. How do African American male principals in urban districts describe their leadership roles and responsibilities?
2. How do African American male principals in urban settings describe their lived experiences?
 - a. How do African American principals describe their successes?
 - b. How do African American male principals describe their challenges and barriers?
 - c. How do African American male principals describe the supports they perceived as most beneficial?
3. In what ways do African American male principals describe their leadership practices as contributing towards the academic success of their students and school?
 - a. How do African American principals describe their involvement and service to the community?

Role of the Researcher

My research interest in African American male principals in urban schools is one that I am very passionate about and committed to professionally. I am an educator with more than 20 years of experience serving students in K-12 and higher education. I have also been a professional and student in urban settings. As a student, I attended Chicago public schools and I have worked professionally in two large urban districts in Ohio.

I am also personally interested in studying the lived experiences of African American male principals in urban settings. I served as an African American male principal for 16 years, and currently supervise, lead, coach, and support principals. I also had a role model and mentor in another African American male principal outside of my district and was able to lean on him for advice and guidance. When I was a principal, I often found myself serving as one of very few African American males in the role, whether in the district or the county's 17 other school districts. At our yearly county meetings, which involved 18 school districts hosting over 400 administrators, fewer than 10 of those administrators were African American males. Unfortunately, this trend existed not only within the county I worked in but was also a trend I witnessed at state meetings and conferences.

Being a former African American male principal has both pros and cons in terms of research. I have served in the role and clearly understand the barriers and challenges; this should provide me with more credibility as a researcher and help me understand the data and easily identify themes. Recognizing my own personal biases, I also recognize that I may unconsciously discredit certain aspects of lived experiences different from my experiences in that role.

As the researcher in this study, my role was to conduct interviews and observations with my five participants. I then analyzed data gathered from the interviews, observations, and document review in order to identify themes within the data that were common among all the participants, as well as themes that were unique to subsets of participants. While acknowledging my own personal biases, my goal as researcher was to gather, analyze, and interpret the data with as little subjectivity as possible. Despite the limitations identified, the findings of this study will contribute to research on African American male principals in urban school districts and will help future African American men who wish to lead in those settings.

Research Design

Research design provides structure for the research and is the epoxy that holds the research project together while addressing the research questions (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods may be used to conduct a study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), “Qualitative methods are usually linked to a constructivist theory of knowledge because qualitative methods tend to focus on understanding experiences from the point of view of those who live them” (p. 38). Creswell (2007) also shared that qualitative research is most effective when research questions require participants to share information through in-depth interviews in the participants’ own words. Creswell described five types of inquiry within qualitative research: phenomenological study, biography/narrative, ethnography, case study, and grounded theory.

Based on the research questions posed, this qualitative study used a phenomenological research design to gather in-depth perspectives on the research

subject. This type of study asks how people interpret and make sense of experiences (Merriam, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). “A phenomenological study seeks understanding about the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon” (p. 23). Prior biases and beliefs about the phenomenon are ultimately set aside (Merriam, 2009). This study collected narratives as a way to examine the human experiences, feelings, and responses of African American male principals in urban schools. The results of this study were not measured or analyzed in numbers; rather, results were measured from interview responses, observations, and written documents.

This phenomenological study dove into the lives and experiences of African American male leaders and told the story of how they developed their leadership styles and thought about their impact on urban education. The study also explored experiences that have influenced these principals’ thinking and decision-making. The principals’ detailed, enriched viewpoints provided deeper understanding that helped fill voids in the literature and gave significant insight for future research on African American male leaders. Ultimately, a phenomenological approach enabled investigation of and insight into the lived experiences of African American male principals.

Target Population

The target population for this study was African American male principals in urban high schools in the Midwest, as well as administrators and professional programs that recruit or train these principals. I targeted this population because the story of African American male principals is underrepresented in the scholarly literature. I am also convinced that Black male leaders can help Black students achieve at levels comparable to White students in urban schools.

Participants and Sampling

This study was designed to investigate the lived experiences of African American male principals in an urban setting in the Midwest. Purposeful sampling was used for this research study. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants who can contribute to information that is relevant to the research study (Creswell, 2007; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Participant selection criteria included male African American high-school principals in the Midwest with at least two years' principal experience, currently working in an urban district; and evidence of proven leadership abilities that lead to student academic success as measured by the performance index scores detailed in the state report card. The performance index measures each student's achievement on state tests and gives schools points based on how well students perform. My hope is that principals with more years of experience will step forward for the interviews as they will have richer stories to add to the research study.

I obtained a list of 29 Black male high-school principals from Ohio school districts from the Ohio Department of Education. From that list, five Black male principals were randomly selected to participate in the study and sent a letter with an invitation to participate (Appendix A). Each had seven days to respond as to whether or not they wished to participate. This process continued until five principals agreed to participate and signed the consent form. Emails and phone calls were then made to schedule interviews and observations. All five principals who agreed to participate met inclusion criteria and completed all stages of the research, including both interviews, direct observations, and submitting three items for document review.

All five participants in the study were current principals with a minimum of 2 years of experience. On average, participants had been educators 25.2 years (range = 19 - 30 years) and high-school principals 7.2 years (range = 2-10 years). One of the participants was in his 40s, and the other four were in their 50s. All of the participants had master's degrees and two participants had doctorate degrees. Enrollments in their buildings ranged from 500 to 1,300 students. Two out of five participants had served all their years as principals in the same urban district, while the other three had served as principals in other urban districts. Three out of five of the participants had aspirations beyond the role of high-school principal.

Procedures

After participants completed informed-consent forms (Appendix B), interviews, observations, and document review were used to collect data for this study. Due to the COVID-19 national pandemic, all participants maintained recommended safety precautions during interviews and observations by practicing social distancing and wearing a face mask. The study protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Youngstown State University Beeghly College of Education.

Interviews

Qualitative research typically uses some form of interviewing to collect data. Interviews are defined as dialogues between participant and researcher around the research questions (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). In semi-structured interviews, flexible open-ended questions let participants share experiences so the researcher can gather a picture of these experiences and can probe with additional questions to gain greater insight and in-depth answers (Merriam, 2009).

After collecting demographic information from the principals (Appendix C), I used semi-structured interview questions (Appendix D) to ask African American male principals about their lived experiences in an urban setting. To address research question 1, I asked about participants' greatest achievement as an African American male principal; their greatest challenges or barriers; socioeconomic barriers, cultural or racial barriers; supports or activities that have been most influential; and how, if at all, they believed their experiences as an African American male principal differed from that of a White male principal. To address research question 2, I asked about the principals' vision and how they inspire others to follow their vision and carry it out; how they influence the community; how they provide support and encouragement to those they serve; how they stimulate innovation and creativity; and what sacrifices they have made as a leader for the good of others. To address research question 3, I asked about principals' leadership practices or strategies that have had the most impact on the academic success and culture of the school; their leadership practices or strategies that they have used that have not worked; what life experiences have helped them succeed as principal; and what advice they would give other aspiring African American male principals.

Each participant was contacted by email or phone to arrange the interview. Interviews were held before or after school. Due to the COVID-19 national pandemic, I had to conduct the interviews and observations using an online collaboration platform, instead of in person. Each interview was electronically recorded to ensure accuracy of responses provided. The interview participants read and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix B) beforehand, including giving permission to have the interview recorded and the following:

“I understand that I will be involved in an interview that will last between 60-90 minutes and I will participate in a follow-up interview for 30 minutes. I understand that I will be involved in a direct observation that will last 30 minutes of the participant’s engaging in his role as a principal. I understand that I will submit a demographic questionnaire to be reviewed by the researcher. I understand that I will submit three documents to be reviewed by the researcher that showcase my communication and leadership to my staff.”

The consent form also gives participants the right to opt out of the study at any point in time.

I offered to answer any questions the participant had regarding my study and then collected the signed copy and gave each person an additional copy of the informed consent form for his records. I also told the participant that I would be taking notes while he was answering questions.

I interviewed each person for 40 to 60 minutes on one day and 10 to 20 minutes on another day, before or after school. After each first-round interview, I reflected, documented my thoughts and questions and began transcription; the same process was repeated after each second-round interview.

The following protocol was adhered to while conducting interviews (Appendix E). I thanked the interview participant for participating and engaged him in small conversation regarding how his day was and how his school year was going. I used this opportunity to build a relationship with the participant with hopes of him being more open and transparent when the actual interview began. I also assured the interview

participant that I would be using his pseudonym during transcription to ensure his anonymity. This information was not used in the data collection for my study.

I then turned on the recording device and asked the demographic questions (Appendix C) and the interview questions (Appendix D), as well as probing questions in-between interview questions if I deemed it necessary. At the end of each question, I paused and asked if there was anything else the interviewee wanted to add to his response. Throughout the interview I stayed engaged with the interviewee through my encouraging nonverbal behavior and limited verbal responses. Wrapping up the interview, I reviewed my notes and asked any additional follow-up questions needed before turning the recording equipment off. I then thanked the interviewee for making contributions to my research study by sharing his experiences as an African American male principal. The same process was repeated for all interviews to ensure reliability in the study. I then told each interview participant that I would send his interview transcripts via regular mail and asked him to provide editing or additions after all the data had been collected.

Soon after each interview, I used a transcription service to transcribe each interview. Once the transcription was received, I checked it for accuracy against my digital recording. Each transcription was then reviewed to look for common and unique themes from each participant, with the goal of conducting a causal-comparative analysis across interview participants. Salkind (2010) wrote, “A causal-comparative design is a research design that seeks to find relationships between independent and dependent variables after an action or event has already occurred” (p. 124). The researcher investigates the effect of the dependent and independent variable by comparing two or

more groups of individuals (Salkind, 2010). My interviews identified important variability among the participants (e.g., did or did not have experience as a principal outside the current school system) which was also used as a basis for causal comparison. After transcribing and analyzing all five interviews, I identified new themes from the responses. A second set of interview questions (Appendix F) emerged from my analysis, and I conducted a new 10- to 20-minute second interview with each participant to further clarify material from the original interviews. This research methodology increased the internal validity of my study, helping to ensure that my research accurately represented the phenomenon of interest. The procedures outlined above were also repeated for the second-round interviews with each participant. Each second-round interview was then transcribed and analyzed to identify additional themes within the study.

Direct Observations

During qualitative research, observation is another data collection method that can help produce valid results (Merriam, 2009). Direct observation is the process of observing a phenomenon in unobtrusive ways and gathering information about it without adding bias to the observation (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Direct observations provide the researcher with another opportunity to gain insight into the phenomenon that might not have been discussed during the interview. Data from direct interviews can be recorded in multiple ways, such as data collection sheets, pictures, audio, and video (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

Direct observations were completed at each principal's school during the school day or right after school during the staff meeting. Every attempt was made to work around the principal's schedule to find a time that was convenient for him, without

interfering with or disrupting the education environment or the principal's work day. The principal told staff members who the researcher was and the purpose of my presence at their staff meetings.

The participant direct observations took place after the first-round interviews. Due to the COVID-19 national pandemic, direct observations were not allowed to take place in person and were conducted using an online collaboration platform.

Every direct observation followed the same procedures (Appendix G). After the principal briefly introduced me by name, I observed the principal leading the staff meeting, sharing updates and other important details with teachers. I did not participate in the meeting or interfere with any activity. During the observation, I listened for and observed behaviors that seemed to reflect the principal's roles and responsibilities, as well as speech and behavior that seemed aligned with the four main components of transformational leadership: inspiration and motivation; empowerment and support; innovation and creativity; and idealized influence, including sacrifices and serving others. If the principal delegated certain parts of the meeting to his assistant principal or other teacher leaders, I coded this as an example of shared leadership. Other behaviors I coded included the following: the principal opened the meeting up with an inspirational or motivational video that expressed a vision for education and encouraged the staff to keep persevering with the student body (coded as inspiration and motivation); the principal was very supportive as he listened to the concerns of teachers (coded as empowerment and support); the principal divided the staff in small groups by department areas as they brainstormed new ideas to solve problems (coded as innovation and creativity); the

principal tried to serve as a role-model and gave examples from his own experience (idealized experience).

Data from the observations were gathered on the data collection sheet (Appendix H). I recorded key words heard during the observations into each category and kept a tally of how many times I heard those words during the observation.

I also recorded nonverbal behaviors observed and listed those into the categories on the direct observation form. Field notes on the observed behaviors of the principal were also taken and categorized. The 30-minute observations were not video- or audio-recorded. After I observed the participant interacting and leading during his staff meeting, the data collection process was complete. I thanked the participant for allowing me to observe him and left the school to begin data analysis.

Document Review

Document review refers to collecting data by reviewing existing documents that are separate from the interviews and direct observation (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). These documents could include hard copy or digital reports, newsletters, memos, or any artifact that represents some form of communication (Merriam, 2009). Because these documents are not produced for research purposes and are not a part of the interview or direct observation, they provide a good source of unobtrusive data to strengthen the validity of a study (Merriam, 2009).

In the letter with the invitation to participate (Appendix A), each participant was asked to bring three documents to the interview that would showcase the way they communicate with and lead staff. The three documents included their beginning-of-the-year staff letter, a staff-meeting agenda, and a document of their choice. Examples of the

third document could include professional development presentations, meeting notes, newsletters, or any other artifacts to showcase their communication and leadership. A list of possible examples was included in the invitation to participate. The documents provided the researcher with a different lens outside of the observation and interview and was the final evidence gathered to triangulate data for the study. The documents were analyzed using a document-review form (Appendix I). The documents were categorized using the same four main constructs for the observations: inspiration and motivation; empowerment and support; innovation and creativity; and idealized influence, including making sacrifices and serving others. For each principal and across the five principals, I then considered similarities and differences in the coding across the three methods for principals' roles and responsibilities and transformational leadership. These comparisons helped provide context for considering the complexity of principals' leadership experiences.

Data Storage

Digital recordings, field notes, written interview notes, written observation notes, and document review data were stored in a storage room in a locked file cabinet at Youngstown State University Beeghly College of Education for a minimum of three years. After three years, the documents would be discarded and shredded per YSU policy. Any personal notes or digital files were destroyed after the data were analyzed. These procedures comply with guidelines established by both the American Psychological Association and Youngstown State University.

Data Analysis

The goal of qualitative data analysis is to find patterns in the data by reducing, organizing, and interpreting statements from interviews or behaviors witnessed during observations (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) noted that qualitative data analysis uses coding and condensing to organize the data and reduce it into themes. The phenomenological data analysis in this research study allowed the researcher to study the experiences of the participants and their perspectives in relation to the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). During this process, themes are gathered from the interviews that pertain to the research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). As a result, patterns of themes began to emerge as the data are coded and synthesized. According to Merriam (2009), the coder makes notes next to the data that can help answer the research question.

After interviews were conducted, documents reviewed, and observations noted, I coded the data to look for recurring themes. Because I was open to anything possible in the beginning, I used a form of coding called open coding (Merriam, 2009), which involves the initial stage of labeling and organizing qualitative data. I also used the axial method, which involves the process of grouping open codes (Merriam, 2009). For axial coding, multiple colors were used to signify each theme. From this process of categorizing participants' responses and observations, I was able to narrow down my themes to those pertinent to my research questions and study. Common themes were those that all participants shared; themes that appeared in at least three out of five interviews were also noted.

Validity

In qualitative research, one shows that one has executed the research study in an honest way by documenting validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). Writing about and establishing validity in a qualitative study can be difficult (Creswell & Miller, 2000). There are many diverse perspectives on validity as several researchers have often referred to validity as trustworthiness, goodness, credibility, and authenticity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, qualitative researchers typically include triangulation, member-checking, and external audits as a part of their study to ensure validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For this research study, I used triangulation and member checking as procedures to help ensure validity and reliability.

Evidence of Construct Validity

“Construct validity refers to the degree in which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalization in your study to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalizations are based” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. 56). First, one considers theory: all the ideas, hypotheses, thoughts and hunches you have about your research topic. You also consider aspects of observation: your actual measures, instrument and observational procedures (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Throughout history and as reflected in the previous chapter, several factors have affected the experiences of African American male principals. I believe the instrument designed for the study, as well as the observations and member checking procedure will limit threats to the validity of the findings and will permit application of the study’s theoretical constructs. The causal-comparative analysis will also improve the ability to make appropriate inferences and thus will improve the construct validity too.

Evidence of Internal Validity

Internal validity involves the relevance of the findings to reality (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative research, one can ask about the validity of data collected about peoples' constructions of reality, how they understand the world (Merriam, 2009). In my research study, African American males were the primary instrument of data collection and their reality was assessed through the interviews and observations. The causal-comparative analysis procedure increased the internal validity of the study because it added a level of rigor to the study and data analysis identifying common themes. Conducting the causal-comparative analysis also added to the credibility of my findings.

Triangulation. One of the most well-known strategies to solidify the internal validity of a study is triangulation (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation involves the merging of multiple measurement points to form themes in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Denzin (1978) listed four types of triangulation: the use of multiple methods or several data sources or use of more than one investigator or theory. Triangulation was reflected in studying the lived experiences of African American male principals by using several methods: interviews, observations, and document review. The interview questions written for the study were also written to reflect three different theories. Questions about perceptions of barriers and challenges were likely to elicit perspectives that could be analyzed using Critical Race Theory; questions about leadership roles and responsibilities could be analyzed using Transformational Leadership Theory; and questions about perceptions of success and impact could be analyzed using African American Male Theory, as well as the other two theories.

Member Checking. Member checking is a process used to gather input on the findings from the study participants (Merriam, 2009) and is the single most important way to establish a study's credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In this case, the action of ensuring validity shifts from the researcher to the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Member checking allows interview participants to review the data and eliminate misinterpretations of the meaning of what they said or did during the observation (Merriam, 2009). This process is typically done by convening a focus group or having participants review the raw data from field notes and transcriptions (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Member checking took place in person, by phone or by email after each interview. Interview participants also reviewed the summary of findings so they could offer feedback on the accuracy of the final narrative.

Audit Trail. An audit trail also involves bringing in another external individual to examine and attest to the credibility of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). All research decisions and activities related to the study are given to the auditor who can thoroughly examine the study and processes used in the study (e.g., data analysis, strategies to increase credibility) to determine trustworthiness of the findings. In this research study, an audit trail was used to give a clear description of the research path and to document the detailed step-by-step process from the beginning of the study to data collection to the reporting of findings.

Evidence of Reliability

According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), reliability means replicability, consistency, steadiness. Reliability is the replicability of a study under the same circumstances as the original study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Evidence of reliability

can involve consistency in coding raw data, where another researcher would come up with the same themes, similar understandings and conclusions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Merriam (2009) shares that reliability in qualitative research is challenging because human behavior is never the same. According to Merriam (2009), because of the human factor, a qualitative study cannot be replicated to produce the same outcomes; yet, that should not diminish the results of that study as there could be numerous explanations of the same data.

Trustworthiness within a study is another example of evidence of reliability (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Within my research study, each participant was encouraged to be open and honest in his responses to the interview questions. Questions were repeated and rephrased for clarification if needed. Each participant could also withdraw from the study if the questions or content caused discomfort or anxiety. Finally, participants were ensured that whatever they shared would be held in strict confidence.

Limitations

There are limitations to this research study. The small number of participants was also purposely selected to include only African American male high-school principals in urban settings. Other geographic areas were not considered. African American female principals, male principals who were not African American and other administrators in education were excluded from this study.

Another limitation involves the researcher's personal biases. As a researcher, I understand my personal biases and my role in the research process. As an African American male administrator, I have lived the challenges African American males face in urban settings. I have experienced not having mentors and role models within my district

and have been passed over for promotions. I have dealt with the implicit biases of staff members, parents, and the community. My experiences as an African American male may also affect how I interpret the data. To protect against this, I used member checking with the interview participants to check for accuracy and ensure credibility and trustworthiness in the study. Despite the limitations identified here, this study will contribute to research on African American male principals in urban school districts and Guba and Lincoln (1985), help future African American men who wish to lead in those settings.

Summary

This chapter described the study's purpose and research questions centering on the experiences of African American male principals. A phenomenological study was the best approach to a study investigating participants' lived experiences. The chapter described the researcher's role, the sample (setting and participants), and the procedures that were used to collect and analyze data for this study and make sure it was valid and reliable. Triangulation and member checking were used to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The chapter concluded with the limitations of the study and ways to decrease the personal biases of the researcher and increase the credibility of the researcher and study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The aim of this research study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings, to hear the voices of Black male principals in urban settings, and to learn about leadership from their perspective. How do African American male principals in urban settings describe their lived experiences? How do African American male principals describe their roles and responsibilities? In what ways do African American male principals describe their leadership practices as contributing towards the academic success of their students and school? To answer these questions, a phenomenological qualitative study was conducted. Data were gathered from five Black male principals through interviews, direct observations, and document reviews.

In the first section of this chapter, I review my data collection experiences. I describe my experiences engaging with the principals during the interviews, direct observations, and document review process. In the next section I describe the sample. The following section provides a description of the five Black male participants and I analyze each of their roles and responsibilities, their lived experiences, and how they describe their leadership practices that contribute to academic success. I also analyze each participant's interview, observation, and documents and triangulate the data for each participant. Lastly, I answer the research questions, triangulate the data together, and describe emerging themes developed through an analysis of the interview data, direct observations, and document reviews.

My Data-Collection Experiences

The data collection included two rounds of interviews, direct observations, and document reviews. Data were collected using these three methods to answer the three research questions in the study. While analyzing the data, the order of the research questions one and two were switched. The participant's roles and responsibilities were reported first and the participants lived experiences were reported second. Describing the reported roles and responsibilities of the principals first provides context for the rest of the chapter. All three data methods are triangulated and reported in response to each research question.

Interviews

The participants for this research study participated in two rounds of interviews, participated in direct observations, and submitted documents to be reviewed. The five principals were engaged in the interviews and shared information about their lived experiences. Before starting, I engaged each person in small talk about their day and other topics that may have interested them to help establish trustworthiness and build a relationship with the participants. During both rounds of interviews, the principals did not hesitate to answer the questions and spoke freely and candidly about their lives. They also provided examples that added depth to their responses. During each interview I also followed up on the original question to probe more deeply into participants' responses or to ask for clarification if their answers were vague or unclear. I thanked the participants and they thanked me for including them in the study and expressed interest in reviewing the final product and findings. Upon completing the data collection process, the interviews provided the most insight into each participant's lived

experiences. Completing two rounds of interviews increased the study's internal validity, helping to ensure the research accurately represented the phenomenon of interest.

Direct Observations

The observations took place after the first-round of interviews. Due to the COVID-19 national pandemic, observations were conducted using a secure online platform, Blackboard Collaborate. I scheduled observations of principals leading staff meetings. Online observations were limited. I could not see all of the teachers' faces at the same time as some staff meetings had over 75 participants. However, I was able to observe each principal's interactions with his staff members, as a leader serving and supporting staff.

Because of the COVID pandemic, each principal appeared in crisis mode as they responded to urgent needs of the staff regarding the pandemic, thereby limiting the observation. Pressing needs presented in each staff meeting included student attendance, student behavior online, and meeting technological needs such as providing chrome books and hotspots for internet connectivity. Because the principals were preoccupied with these tasks, I was not able to see the depth of their leadership style. However, the observations did help support or challenge accounts given during interviews.

Document Reviews

Each principal submitted three documents to showcase their communication and leadership with their staff. The three documents submitted included a copy of their beginning-of-the-year letter to staff, a copy of a staff meeting agenda, and another document of their choice. These other documents include professional development PowerPoint presentations ($n = 3$), meeting notes ($n = 1$), and weekly update emails to

staff ($n = 1$). All documents were created by the principal and highlighted elements of their leadership. By comparing the document reviews to the interview and observation data, the documents reviewed provided more understanding to the principals' roles and responsibilities.

Triangulation

Using the three data sources of interviews, direct observations, and document reviews permitted triangulation of data. Due to the large amount of data collected, I analyzed the data as they were collected during the study for each participant, often comparing the observation data and document review data to the interview data. Triangulation is important because it enhances the validity of the study. Overall, the interviews provided the most evidence to address the research questions; the observations and document reviews added to the analysis and clarified some of the interview responses. Triangulating the data to merge multiple measurement points helped in establishing themes of the study from the research questions. Table 2 shows the relationship between the three data sources collected and the research questions.

Table 2

Triangulation Table Research Questions and Data Collection Sources

Research Questions	Interview 1	Interview 2	Direct Observations	Document Reviews
Research Question 1 Roles	x	x	x	x
Research Questions 2A Accomplishments	x		x	x

Research Questions	Interview 1	Interview 2	Direct Observations	Document Reviews
Research Question 2B Barriers	x	x	x	
Research Question 2C Supports most Beneficial	x			
Theme 6 Leadership practices Contributing to Success	x	x	x	x

Note: The triangulation table shows the research questions and their correlation with data-collection sources.

Sample

All five participants in the study were current principals with a minimum of two years of experience. On average, participants had been educators 25.2 years (range = 19 - 30 years) and high-school principals 7.2 years (range = 2-10 years). One of the participants was in his 40s, and the other four were in their 50s which is normal because 48.3 is the average age of a principal in the state of Ohio. All of the participants had master's degrees and two participants had doctorate degrees. Enrollment in their buildings ranged from 500 to 1,300 students. Two out of five participants had served all their years as principals in the same urban district, while the other three had served as principals in other urban districts. Three out of five of the participants had aspirations beyond the role of high-school principal.

Table 3 shows demographical data, educational background data, and educational experience data.

Table 3*Principal Age, Education Background, and Experience*

Pseudonym	Age Range	Highest Degree	Years in Education	Years as Principal
Principal Innovator	40-49	M. Ed.	22	8
Principal Fair	50-59	Ed. D.	30	10
Principal Diligent	50-59	Ed. D.	19	8
Principal Persistent	50-59	M. Ed.	25	8
Principal Collaborative	50-59	M. Ed.	30	2

Principal Profiles and Lived Experiences

In this section, I describe the five Black male high school principals who agreed to participate in this research study on the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. I will tell the story about each participant's roles and responsibilities, their lived experiences, and their contributions to academic success through the analysis of interviews, observations, and documents. Each principal in the study leads a high school in an urban setting in Ohio and had previously been a teacher. One has an Ohio Superintendent's License. Each participant has been a high school principal for a minimum of two years. Each principal selected a pseudonym based on a word describing him as a leader. Descriptions of participants follow.

Participant 1: Principal Innovator

Principal Innovator comes from a family of educators. He often feels pressure from others to live up to the success of his father, who was a well-respected principal and

influential in the community. Principal Innovator is a husband and father and is very active in his community, in which he both works and lives.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Innovator believes, “the role of a principal in multifaceted and centers around four things: management, instructional leadership, coaching, and innovation.” His primary role involves instructional leadership. He believes it is his responsibility to make sure all students can access high quality curriculum offerings. He coaches teachers around their instructional design of lessons, and he is competent at helping teachers identify the gaps within their design. His role as instructional leader was evidenced by the documents he submitted for review.

Principal Innovator works to provide support and encouragement to those he serves. Principal Innovator shares a time when his supervisor was in his office and a teacher walked in as says, “I lost my brother” and he had to stop with his supervisor and deal with what was in front of him. It is within those moments that he realized what was important at the moment and created a space where that teacher felt seen and heard. During the pandemic, Principal Innovator has also paid close attention to the well-being of his students, families, and staff. He shared:

Once a month, there’s a video that goes out of some kind of inspirational message to the parents, students, and just being real, like, I tell them I miss them, and I get vulnerable and share with them what’s going on with my family.

Lived Experiences

Principal Innovator’s lived experiences have included successes and challenges. His successes include transforming policies to open doors for more minority students to

take advanced placement and honors courses. Principal Innovator shares, “We put some policies in place to ensure that AP and honors were achievable and accessible to African Americans and provided some intentional supports.” His successes also include student achievement gains on the report card. One of his biggest challenges involved navigating the role of being a middle manager and navigating his own vision while negotiating the message from downtown. This was obvious during the observation. While his agenda had an instructional focus, the district updates that had to be communicated in response to the pandemic took precedence.

Contributions to Academic Success

Principal Innovator believes the most impactful leadership strategy that has contributed to academic success in his school centers around empowering others around him. He says, “My administrators that are on my team, they have to think they have the same cognitive load, so empowering others to make decisions and then holding them accountable for those decisions.” It takes a team to move the organization and Principal Innovator is the leader of the team. Principal Innovator creates an environment of efficacy within his building and empowers teachers to believe what they do for kids matters.

Overall, as a leader, Principal Innovator spends much of his time advocating for equitable learning experiences for his students. He is the instructional leader in his building. This was evident during the observation and with the documents he submitted for review. For example, he posed the following question to his staff, “Based on your reflection, what is the one idea that caused you to critically examine your practice?”

Principal Innovator also describes himself as cavalier and says, “I’m just not going to follow the rules, I’m going to lead my building and do what’s best for my kids.”

Participant 2: Principal Fair

Principal Fair is a father and cherishes spending time with his daughter. Principal Fair was a nontraditional student and did not matriculate to college right after high school. Once he started college, he never stopped until he earned his doctorate degree. Principal Fair lives in the community where his school is located and utilizes several community organizations, churches, and city council to provide resources for his students. He believes in surrounding himself with smart people to help do the work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Fair in his role as principal wears many hats. Principal Fair is a team player and has a *whatever it takes* type of attitude. He is not afraid to step in the role and support the secretaries, custodians, school nurse, counselors or teachers when needed. Principal Fair believes in being visible in classrooms and monitoring the work teachers design for students. He says, “it’s about the kids and community first.” Principal Fair is very active in the community and spends time finding ways to impact the community in a positive way.

Principal Fair is a former graduate of the school he serves as principal. The house he grew up in, his mother’s house, is also in the community. Principal Fair shares, “I visit all the stores, all the restaurants, and see alumni, my current students, former students and families and I get to have conversations and interact with them.” His role in the community plays a critical role with his success as a principal. He is respected in the community and viewed as a strong leader.

Lived Experiences

Principal Fair's lived experiences have included successes and challenges. His proudest moments as principal include making gains on the state report card and decreasing violence in his school. His school had several gangs and violent-related offenses that have decreased over time. He reported meeting with groups of young men and connecting them with community resources to help change the behaviors. His accomplishments required a dual focus on instruction and managing the building. He reflects on his time hosting weekend Ohio proficiency testing boot camps where kids would spend the night studying for the state test. Both accomplishments were obtained with the support of the community.

His greatest challenge comes from within the school system, not the community. Principal Fair shares, "My greatest challenge is being typecast as a disciplinary principal." His staff looks to him for solutions with behavior problems. He also reported that his instructional knowledge has been questioned by his staff. Principal Fair's submitted documents support instructional leadership along with several of the responses during his interviews.

Contributions to Academic Success

Principal Fair believes the most impactful leadership strategy that has contributed to the academic success in his schools has been academic tutoring for his students. He shares, "being able to pay teachers for extra time to tutor kids and bring other agencies in to help and mentor kids has been beneficial." Principal Fair reported, "We had about 30 different agencies, business owners and general managers of companies come in and mentor our kids." He also believes building relationships with students and staff has been

a key factor. Principal Fair says, “We work in the human service profession, and you have to make sure you take care of humans, our teachers, kids, and families.” He believes family comes first. He says, “Take care of yourself, take care of your family, and then come to us.” When people believe Principal Fair genuinely cares for them, they come and knock it out of the park for him.

Overall, Principal Fair advocates for his students and views his work as missionary work. His advocacy for special education students was evident in one of the documents submitted for review. He strives to eliminate barriers and open doors that have traditionally been shut for the underserved in his community, including his students. Principal Fair leads by example and also describes himself as compassionate.

Participant 3: Principal Diligent

Principal Diligent is a husband and father. Principal Diligent did not enter the field of education immediately after college. Education is a third career for Principal Diligent; he served in the United States Army and then as a recruiter in corporate America. Principal Diligent is a problem solver and enjoys leading teams.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Diligent believes his role is to make sure scholars are safe and that they graduate and get a quality education. He shared, “My goal is to get students to ultimately graduate from high school prepared to deal with what comes to them for the 21st century.” Principal Diligent’s documents that were submitted for review reflected elements of instructional leadership. For example, one of the documents submitted shared achievement data and instructional guidance for teacher-based teams.

Principal Diligent is currently principal at the high school his entire family graduated from in the community where he grew up. Because of this experience, he has very strong relationships within the community and utilizes his community resources to support students and families. He says, “So my role in the community is to build relationships and then bring resources back to the building to help scholars.” Principal Diligent believes in helping others. He has consistently sacrificed his time and money to support the advancement of his scholars.

Lived Experiences

Principal Diligent’s lived experiences have included successes and challenges. His greatest accomplishment is the culminating experience of high school students graduating. It is seeing his vision of his students graduating come to life. Principal Diligent says, “Because I care so much about my scholars, I am diligent in my pursuit to make changes in the building because I want the best for them.” He is passionate about his scholars and their success.

Principal Diligent’s greatest challenge is being viewed as a disciplinary principal and not an instructional leader. He shares, “They expect you to handle the discipline in the building, at the same time not giving you the respect you deserve as an educational leader.” He is challenged by the way he is seen as a principal. Another challenge involves his ability to build strong relationships with his staff because of the transition and turnover that occurs in his school.

Contributions to Academic Success

Principal Diligent believes the most impactful leadership strategy that has contributed to the academic success in his school centers around professional

development for his teachers. He has been able to provide instructional coaches for his teachers to assist and coach them around best instructional practices for the curriculum they are teaching. Principal Diligent works with a coach to assist him with understanding the curriculum as well. This allows him to monitor the goals and the instruction in his building.

Overall, Principal Diligent leads with a “I know it can be done” attitude; he perseveres through change and challenges and models what he expects from students and staff. He pushes his scholars towards excellence and does not accept excuses. His motto, evidenced in a document submitted for review, is “Every Minute. Every Scholar. Whatever it takes.” He also describes himself as adaptable.

Participant 4: Principal Persistent

Principal Persistent is a husband and father. Principal Persistent was a gifted student but had several challenges as a youth going in and out of the foster care system. He found ways to persevere, matriculated to the military and was persistent in his quest to be successful and break the cycle of poverty. He served his country in the United States Army and National Guard before studying to become an educator.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Persistent believes his primary role centers around instructional leadership. He is visible in classrooms always monitoring the content being taught by teachers. He holds his students and teachers accountable and doesn’t accept failure. He expects all of his students to matriculate to the college of their choice. He wants his students to be self-sufficient learners, problem solvers and forward thinkers. His focus on instructional leadership was evidenced in the documents submitted for review.

Lived Experiences

Principal Persistent's lived experiences included successes and challenges. Principal Persistent reports his greatest accomplishment as, "Living, living like a black male, going through the system, and now being a principal and an example to other folks who look like me." Principal Persistent grew up in a poor environment with little guidance and matriculated through school and the military to become a teacher and now a principal.

On the other hand, Principal Persistent reports his biggest challenge is walking around in his Black skin. He shares, "Being second-guessed, always having to be twice as good to get half the recognition." Not believing what the media says about Black males and believing in yourself has been the key to overcoming this barrier.

Contributions to Academic Success

Principal Persistent believes the most impactful leadership strategy that has contributed to the academic success in his school centers around embracing a collaborative leadership style where all stakeholders have a voice in making decisions. He says, "It's like I have a board that works with me. I have a good ratio mix of teachers, parents, students, and community members, and we make the machine effective."

Overall, Principal Persistent spends his time as a leader discovering new things and solving problems. He also believes in shared leadership and growing leaders. This was clear during direct observation as some teachers shared during the staff meeting. Principal Persistent also describes himself as dedicated.

Participant 5: Principal Collaborative

Principal Collaborative is a husband and father. His leadership style is heavily influenced by experiences with sports and coaching. He played college football and has coached high school football most of his career. Principal Collaborative's mother, grandmother, and two sisters were teachers. Raised by his single teen mom, he watched her go to college and get her bachelor and master degrees. He says he got his work ethic from her. He worked hard and earned a full athletic scholarship to continue his education.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Collaborative says, "my first role is being an academic leader and instructional leader." Principal Collaborative served as an assistant principal for several years and has served as a building principal for two years. He believes his role is to make sure that everyone is doing the best they can to provide students with the best instruction on a daily basis. Principal Collaborative shared, "I make sure everyone in the organization understands the vision and mission, and that their safety and well-being is just as important as well."

Lived Experiences

Principal Collaborative's lived experiences have included successes and challenges. His greatest accomplishments are seeing the fruits of his labor transpire into student successes after graduation and later in life. Seeing his former students become successful adults is an extrinsic reward that he cherishes. His greatest challenge is being placed in low-performing schools and being overlooked for career advancement opportunities. Principal Collaborative also discussed racist behaviors that his students encounter in athletic competitions with different leagues. He says, "Some of the comments that are made to

my students during athletic events are discouraging to our students, but we work to overcome them.”

Contributions to Academic Success

Principal Collaborative believes the most impactful leadership strategy that has contributed to academic success in his schools is consistent leadership and successfully implementing academic improvement plans. He shares, “I believe that inconsistency is one of the things that can hurt us, so it’s important for district leadership and staff to stay together to move forward.” He believes change takes time and doesn’t happen overnight. Principal Collaborative also believes he has built a sense of community with his staff and that has an impact on the success of his school.

Overall, Principal Collaborative spends his time as a leader building teams and building capacity in others, as witnessed during the direct observation and documents submitted for review. Principal Collaborative also describes himself as caring.

Research Questions

In this section, I report the findings from all five participants to each research questions based on all the data collected. The findings are triangulated across all principals. Through their voices, five Black male principals provided answers that contribute to the limited scholarly literature. Themes for each research question emerged from the data and are reported below.

Research Question 1: How Do African American Principals in Urban Settings Describe Their Roles and Responsibilities?

Instructional Leadership

All five Black male principals in the study reported instructional leadership as an important and valued role for the building principal, although they also all reported being managers. Principal Fair said, “I enjoy going in classrooms and having the opportunity to talk to students and even help teach the lesson where I can.” In addition to being visible in classrooms, he leads meetings to build a leadership team and plan professional development. His role as instructional leader was also evidenced by documents submitted for review, such as one on building writing capacity and increasing rigor.

Principal Diligent also said his primary role is to ensure that all of his scholars receive a quality education. He is proud of his increasing graduation rate and continues to make sure that more scholars matriculate from high school to the workforce or post-secondary education.

Principal Persistent shared, “My biggest responsibility is to make sure when students exit high school, they are college ready and prepared to excel at whatever college or university they plan to attend.” He is persistent in making sure his teachers are teaching on grade level and that students are growing academically. Principal Persistent facilitates meetings for building a leadership team and is visible in classrooms to monitor instruction.

As an instructional principal, Principal Innovator also values instructional leadership and is very familiar with the curriculum and making sure the right teachers are

teaching the right courses to drive the work. He coaches teachers to be better so they can improve so the organization will improve. To this point, Principal Innovator shares:

If we can move the teachers in the middle, because they make up the biggest part of the organization, those teachers who are good but not great, struggle, are passionate but don't have a lot of technical skill. Those bubble teachers make up more than half of my staff, coaching requires me to improve them. If I can improve them, then I move the organization.

Principal Collaborative, the least experienced principal, indicated making a shift from focus on management to instructional leadership. For years, his role was to make sure the building ran smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Now, he understands the importance of students' learning on grade level and mastering the content standards as that will translate to success on college entrance exams.

Management

The second theme in this section centered on management. All five principals reported managerial duties in their interviews, and most of the direct observations captured principals' leading with a focus on management. Although the documents reviewed (e.g., a staff meeting agenda) reflected topics on instruction, the management of the building was the topic that often monopolized meetings. Management issues including personnel and instructional leadership appeared to be competing priorities in the principal's role. Principal Innovator indicated that managing people, systems, and data are part of the role of the principal and what improves the organization. Principals Fair and Collaborative shared that it was paramount to manage day-to-day tasks in the building and ensure students are safe. Principal Persistent described himself as a "middle

manager,” whereas Principal Fair valued having the ability to make decisions for his building. “We do have the autonomy in my district to run our buildings. I’m able to reach out and make connections without having to get the okay from everybody.” Principals Fair, Diligent, and Collaborative also noted that they were expected to be disciplinarians; this will be discussed further below.

It should also be noted that each direct observation and interview took place during the COVID 19 national pandemic, which required principals to focus on management issues such as online learning platforms, student attendance, vaccines, and return-to-work schedules. The principals indicated that during regular school days they worked hard to be visible in classrooms and saved managerial tasks for the end of the day.

Community Relations

Another theme identified within the section centered around community. All five participants in the study live within their school communities. During the interviews, four made reference to relationships they have with families, community members, and other stakeholders in the community.

Three principals said that their relationships with the community help them bring resources to their schools. Principal Fair shared that not only does he enjoy living in the community where he works, but he attends council meetings, talks to residents at grocery stores, and works with local churches to provide resources for students.

Principal Diligent has also built strong relationships with local businesses, faith-based organizations, and the police department, and that brings resources back to his building to help his students. He added that he goes to students’ school activities and

community activities, such as church and community leagues, and he is called when young people get in trouble:

A lot of times I receive calls in the middle of the night in regards to something that may have happened in the neighborhood that may or may not have involved my students, because of the relationships that I have with you know the police department the community centers, things of that nature.

Principal Persistent reported that partnerships he has developed with two community groups have brought direct access to life advisors who are committed to student success. "Introducing the camp and cast program, these mentorship programs where we have folks that are in the twilight of the years, wanting to reach and give back have been impactful to me and my students." He also noted that it was a risk to reveal school issues in the community but that it brought valuable expertise and answers.

I remember a time where we had one of our leaders that did not want things that were happening inside the house, like inside of the school district, to be told or opened up to people on the outside because they felt they were like an open wound, like they were being exposed or something, and it was totally the opposite. it wasn't even a case, you know, there are people that's better on the outside, that can help move you further along you just gotta go ahead and want the help and seek it.

Principal Collaborative, the least experienced principal, said that he still needed to find ways to get involved with the community, other than parent-teacher conferences.

You know, parents are all right, eager to do elementary type activity, but high school is kind of different. So I think right now that's one area that I need to

improve on to find ways to get that community base a little bit more in tune to what's going on and how can we work together and to make sure we give our students the best opportunities.

Servant Leadership

All five participants also reported going beyond the traditional role of principal and sacrificing money out of their pockets to support students and families. Principal Diligent shared how he has served as a parent to his students by giving money out of his pocket for college and helping students with their basic needs. Principal Fair shared the following:

I'm a social worker, the secretary, the janitor at times and even the certified STNA if you will when called upon to assist with some of my special education students. I've given kids money to go to college, taken kids to college, paid for plane tickets for kids to go to college and have taken food baskets to parents. This body of work is missionary work and goes beyond the 9 to 5 workday.

Principal Innovator also shared that he works to be as authentic as possible in everything he does. If he's a father at home to his own children, then he's a father to the students at his school.

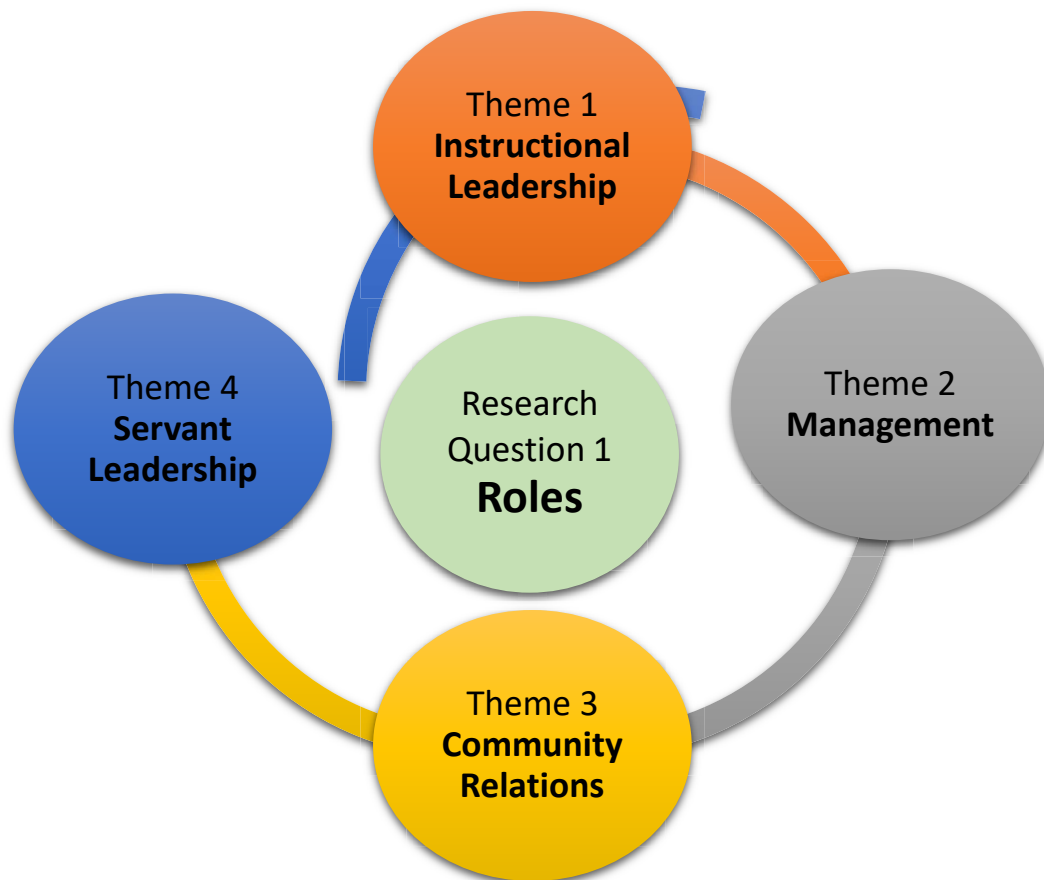
Three out of five principals also said they have sacrificed time with family, particularly spouses and children. One principal indicated he is divorced because early in his career he didn't understand how to balance the role of being a principal and nurturing his marriage.

In analyzing the results from interview responses, direct observations, and document reviews from this theme, it is clear that Black male principals value the role of

instructional leadership and understand the importance of innovation in education for their students. At the same time, they wear different hats and deal with management and community engagement.

Figure 1

Research Question One Concept Map



Research Question 2a: How Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Successes?

All five Black male principals who participated in this study reported accomplishments and success as principals during the interview. Their pride was apparent

during the interviews, and accomplishments were also evidenced in some of the documents reviewed. For example, in different professional-development PowerPoint slides, school gains in academic achievement were highlighted and different departments were praised for their efforts. The accomplishments reported by the participants centered around academic gains on the state report card, increased academic opportunities for African American students, decreasing the levels of violence, and seeing students mature and be successful in life.

Student Achievement Gains

Three out of five of the participants listed accomplishments centered around academic achievement gains on the report card, and each participant seemed passionate about the gains their students and schools made. “My greatest achievement has been taking my all-boys school to the next level and scoring in the top six percentile in the entire state of Ohio with respect to reading” (Principal Fair). Principal Diligent focused on his graduation rate on the report card: “My greatest achievement is seeing the number of African American male students walk across the stage. When I first got there, the graduation rate was 52% and now it’s 82%.” Principal Innovator focused on closing the gap on the report card. “We were battling with grades of Fs when I got here, and two years ago, we got a B in closing the gap, which brought our overall grade to a C.” Principal Persistent also said that he makes sure his teachers are teaching on grade level and that students are growing academically. Achieving report card gains was important for each principal and represented success for them, their students, and school. Their successes were not the work of their own, it was a collaborative approach with their school teams.

Principal Innovator went on to talk about leveling the playing field for his African American students. He leads an urban school with diverse course options and a strong academic reputation within the school district and community. As he analyzed his school data and school culture, he quickly began to identify inherent inequities within the school. Principal Innovator described an experience below that led to one of his greatest accomplishments and successes.

There were three schools when I started, there was the IB school, the Engineering School, and the School of Performing Arts. And then there was the rest of the school: that rest of the school equated to about 900 students. There are 1,300 students in the school; those 900 students seem to be getting what was left and no intentionally designed instructions for them. So we quickly went into putting some policies in place to ensure that AP and honors classes were achievable and accessible to African Americans by creating some policy changes and some intentional supports.

The changes led to 300% more African American students taking AP classes and two new female African American AP teachers which is a first for the school. This was also an accomplishment for Principal Innovator.

Innovative Instruction

As they spoke about instructional leadership, all of the principals also mentioned encouraging their faculty to try new teaching strategies. Principal Collaborative encourages new ideas as long as it is organized. He tells his staff yes more times than he tells his staff no. Principal Persistent says he expects staff to come with two or three solutions to a problem that he can consider, which encourages forward thinking.

Two of the principals also said they reward innovation. Principal Fair encourages teachers to take creative risks and supports their innovative ideas: “I insist that teachers show me a lesson design that’s out-of-the-box thinking and good for kids;” when they pull it off, he gives the teachers accolades at a staff meeting and in the weekly bulletin. Principal Innovator also creates spaces for teachers to be creative and think outside the box. “You don’t get to innovation without being people-focused and focusing on the process that gets you there. You can’t create something that’s not centered around the user.” Principal Innovator recognizes and rewards his staff for innovation, as well as modeling innovation. He created innovation coins, and shared, “So I would give this coin every time a teacher did something that was creative or innovative with a card, and I just hid it somewhere on their desk. It was just something that said, ‘I saw it.’”

Principal Diligent also spoke about an innovation which solved a problem that his staff was experiencing. Before the COVID pandemic, his teachers were not as proficient with technology as he would have liked, so the innovation occurred when teachers transitioned to remote learning. “Several of my teachers were having difficulties with navigating the online learning management system, so I provided professional development sessions for them so they can learn the system and feel more comfortable.”

It was clear from the interview responses that challenges faced as Black male principals caused these principals to approach their roles and responsibilities in innovative ways. Principal Diligent shared, “Problem solving, striving for excellence, and attempting to learn new things comes naturally for me, it’s just something that I do. I’ve done those things the majority of my life.” Although innovation comes naturally for Principal Diligent, others have to be intentional in their innovative efforts to survive the

everyday challenges of being in the role. Principal Innovator discussed the concepts of living in the gaps and wrinkles. He said, “Innovation is living in the gap, living in the wrinkles, and if you’re not looking for them, you will miss them. If you’re not examining the gaps, you’ll run right past them and you’ll miss the innovation.”

School Culture and Student Lives

Two of the participants reported their greatest achievements respectively around school climate and students’ having successful lives. For Principal Fair, improving the culture and climate of school was an accomplishment. It was evident from the interview that his school is located in an impoverished community, with high crime rates and violence. He noted, “turning the level of violence that was happening in the school from 68 to 70% down to near zero was an accomplishment.” There were eight different gangs within his high school, and it took the work of everyone, including the community, to change the environment. “We brought a lot of people in from the community, ex-felons, police officers, pastors, etc., brought those folks in and we helped curb some of the violence.”

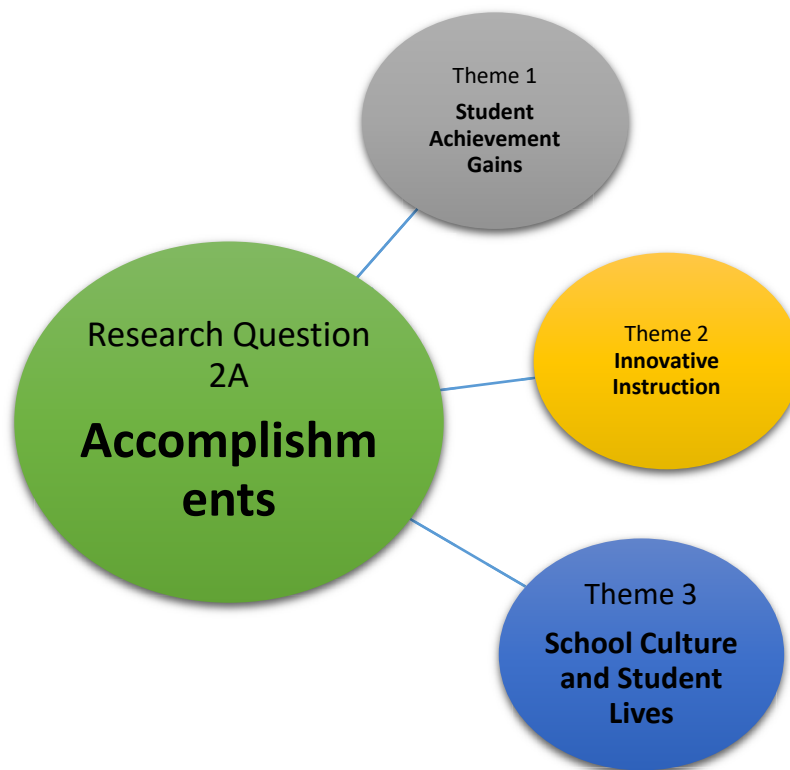
For Principal Collaborative, it was not only important that his students succeed in the classroom and graduate, but that they succeed down the road. “My biggest accomplishment is seeing young African American, or non-African American students who I had, be successful in life, seeing them as fathers, mothers, wives and husbands, and knowing they’re doing well.” He also talked about the joy of coaching with one of his former students from 20 years ago.

The participants’ greatest accomplishments not only affected their professional careers but had an impact on student lives, African American students in particular. In

analyzing the results from interview responses, direct observations, and document reviews, it is clear that Black male principals take pride in creating pathways for African American students that result in positive achievement gains on the state report card. This theme is connected to African American Male Theory. Principals pushed past deficit-based thinking about students to a non-deficit-based model and helped African American students succeed and reach new heights.

Figure 2

Research Question Two(a) Concept Map



Research Question 2b: How Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Challenges and Barriers?

Themes identified for barriers and challenges that Black male principals encounter in urban settings included poverty, being placed in low-achieving schools, lack

of support systems, being labeled as disciplinarians, race-related challenges, code switching, performance of Black educators and White educators, and experiences of mistrust in leading a predominately White staff.

Poverty and Trauma of Students

Four of the five principals said that having poor students affected their work as principals. According to Principals Diligent and Fair, their schools are in high-poverty and economically distressed communities that have the most difficulties with behavior and achievement. Principal Diligent said:

I think the reason why the graduation rate was so low was because of the demographics of that area. Again, I am a product of that community, so I know personally what the students go through. So the poverty, the drug usage in the area, the lack of mental health facilities or support, just all of it pretty much puts a strain on the students, the teachers, and myself.

Principal Persistent also said he had to learn to translate information in a way that poor parents and youth can understand.

It can be our Black or White students because they're in an urban area and it's an impoverished sort of area where 80% of our population . . . as far as the adults that are with them, don't have access to a living wage. You know you're living paycheck to paycheck and stuff. So, when I present information or present things I have to dig into my own personal history to understand my audience, and sometimes feel like I have to go backward and break it down so that you can gradually get people to move on step by step to see it. When you're living paycheck to paycheck, you're living in the now. You can't even fathom or think

about what 5 to 10 years or whatever down the road is and that's your parents. I can't even imagine what a child is thinking, and that it's an immediate, here, there, you know, do this, get that. And I can't even compete against that. How can I tell you that education is investment—to get you money and to make so you have a living wage and you're meant to have a home that you own, a property owner, and you need to start looking at these things—when you're struggling with providing the best basic necessities?

Principal Fair described his biggest barrier as a war on poverty: “So we deal with, you know, kids being hungry, kids being neglected in a lot of cases, kids living in homes with no running water or lights.” Trying to get a student to focus on learning content with these types of challenges is certainly a barrier and can be overwhelming when these characteristics affect a large percentage of the school population. Several of his students also deal with post-traumatic stress disorder as they have witnessed lots of violence in their communities and even at home.

As a principal, you're dealing with a lot with the social emotional pieces, that goes beyond the walls of the school. You're dealing with internal issues that they deal with once they get inside, you know, things that you got to uncover and unmask to kind of get to the core before you can educate them. And so, I tell people that this work is missionary work, and that, you know, you really got to have tough skin because they're going to call you everything under the sun. But you gotta understand that it's not necessarily personal, those kids are expressing themselves way that, . . . the only way that they know how, it is up to us to listen be empathetic and began to kind of teach them the right ways to respond and give

them the resources that they need to help deal with their problems. So we can educate them and get them to the next level of success. (Principal Fair)

Principal Persistent said:

It's like if you don't know what your problem is, you don't know what the student problem is, and you're not going to progress and move anybody along. You're only going to do it halfway, which is academics, and the social emotional learning plays a big part. I mean we spoke about it being the foundational piece, relationship building, but that's just a surface thing. People don't realize that relationship building is based upon what you know about the person, and that's why I think social emotional learning is totally absent, not only in our school district, our state, and our nation. Nobody really has a . . . like a depth of knowledge there to really find a tool that works for social emotional learning.

Principal Innovator also described one of his most significant barriers as leading a school with significant poverty and creating equal academic experiences for all students.

He compared his most significant barrier to the layers in a marble cake, mentioning:

he student who's struggling, whose parents are struggling just to keep the lights on and feed their students. Then you have a family who is affluent but struggling to maintain a real relationship behind closed doors. They have the face of a family, but they just have the bones, everything else is crumbling.

The challenge Principal Innovator said he faced was taking the layers of the marble cake and mixing them together in classes so all students, particularly poor students, would gain access to the same dynamic curriculum as affluent students.

Scheduling students was not the difficult part; the difficult task was challenging the status

quo in how students gained access to certain classes and in creating new policies for equitable access. In his interview, Principal Innovator reflected on his own high school experiences and how they were shaped by what classes he took, who he sat next to, and the rich discussions he engaged in. As a result of tackling this barrier to access head-on, “the school has quadrupled their AP offerings and are now offering AP classes to 300% more African American students and they now have two African American female AP teachers.”

Disciplinarians

A second theme identified within this section involved principals being viewed as disciplinarians. Principal Diligent and Principal Fair both reported a barrier of being perceived as a disciplinarian and not as an instructional leader. This was also observed during direct observations as several staff shared concerns about student behavior problems in the virtual environment and looked to the principal for solutions. These conversations could have easily monopolized the meetings if allowed by the principals. As noted by Principal Diligent, “School districts see most African American males as disciplinarians, rather than someone who understands the content.” Principal Diligent was also one of the principals with a military background and his approach to leadership could have been a contributing factor into why he was viewed as a disciplinarian.

Principal Fair also disliked “being pigeonholed into being a disciplinarian, and not necessarily being known for academic achievement.” Although the image of a strong Black male leading Black children was satisfying to many in the community, this image came with expectations; for example, that discipline levels need to be low and academic performance needs to be high. Principal Fair shared, “If I’m having behavioral issues

with students at my building, the expectation is that I handle them, where if it was a White male or female, they would be offered support.” During the direct observation, teachers also looked to him to solve the student behavior problems that teachers reported. Principal Fair shared, “I believe there is more turnover with Black males in a school district because again the expectation is higher, but the support is lower, and if your school doesn't perform at a high level, you will be moved out.”

Both Principals Diligent and Fair described themselves as instructional leaders during the interview and provided professional-development materials for document review. Yet they are viewed and categorized as the opposite, disciplinarians.

Low-Achieving Schools

Three principals (Diligent, Fair, and Collaborative) also shared frustration at being placed in challenging schools with historically lower school report card data than the schools of White principals. Principal Fair shared, “I'm on the front lines at a war going in, doing all the battle work. While my White counterpart, he gets the stuff after it's cleared, all the brush cleared out, and he goes in and sets up shop.” Principal Collaborative also said, “Because we are placed in schools that are low performing, and test scores are low, we're looked at as not doing our job as building leaders,” which could prevent career advancement.

Lack of Support

Another theme identified within the section centered around the lack of support systems within the school district. Both Principal Fair and Principal Persistent reported a lack of socio-emotional learning supports within the school system for students and staff as a significant challenge and barrier. Several school districts work to recruit and retain

African American principals as the district wants leadership to mirror and reflect the student population being served. However, when it comes to retention, do they understand what supports African American male principals need to be successful? Principal Fair shared the following:

Most school systems say they want African American males, but when we get there, they don't understand us. They don't understand the problems we go through, there's not a support mechanism. There is not anyone we can kind of talk to, to help us sort through some of the issues.

Race-Related Challenges in the Curriculum

The fifth theme identified within the section involved race-related challenges in the curriculum. Principal Persistent reported challenges of teaching the status quo and not making learning relevant to students. "The lack of a culturally relevant curriculum for my scholars and teachers and having a better understanding of my scholars' culture." He and Principal Fair also said it was important to help students deal with emotional challenges, but that often was not addressed at school.

Principal Innovator also reported race-related challenges in how teachers view students at his school, whether they are in general education (gen. ed.) or other school tracks, but he also tried to change those views.

The way I see it, the teachers are my students. It is changing the language that teachers use. So gen. ed. at my school means African American students, honors and AP at my school means White, and IB means elite. So when you're talking about education, those are codes. Teachers feel safe using those codes, that culture of the status quo. They feel safe in saying, 'Okay, well these gen. ed. kids

aren't going to get this because they can't do this.' Well, who sits in gen. ed.? Mostly African Americans. Those barriers of coding that racist language is significant. And it's when I call it out, I have to be very, very strategic because I don't want to look like Malcolm X. I don't want to. I don't want to be brushed off as militant, but I can't pass it by because then I look like I'm okay with it. What and how I addressed those things and how I keep those things in front of them, and changes and change the language to adjust the culture is everything. How can we sit in a room and look at kids' profiles, and then look at kids' race and say, they both, they both deserve the exact same thing. Just because he can't synthesize this information yet, doesn't mean that he doesn't deserve the opportunity to synthesize information, as an example.

In analyzing the results from interview responses, direct observations, and document reviews from this theme, it is clear that Black male principals don't feel supported as they deal with the challenges of leading schools with significant poverty issues. It is also evident that Black male principals may be viewed as disciplinarians rather than instructional leaders.

The results of this section are consistent with Critical Race Theory, particularly the critique of liberalism (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Principal Innovator seemed to use a Critical Race lens as he challenged existing policies and created new policies for the benefit of all students, including African American students.

Code-Switching

Code-switching is adjusting behavior, the use of multiple verbal and nonverbal languages, or changing a style to fit into the dominant culture. "The behavior is necessary

for advancement but takes a great psychological toll” (McCluney et al., 2019). It is a natural process for African American males to code-switch as they constantly consider the comfort of their White counterparts over their own. “Downplaying membership in a stigmatized racial group helps increase perceptions of professionalism” (McCluney et al., 2019). Code-switching is a way of communicating value of non-Whites to Whites; however, its effectiveness is subjective. The acceptance and consideration for promotion for Blacks who conform or ‘switch’ to White culture is primarily at the discretion of Whites because they are the standard.

It was evident during direct observations that the Black male principals were proficient at code-switching. During the interview, they were able to relax and use culturally relevant Black language, while their language shifted to more standard English during direct observations. Remarking on White colleagues’ not code-switching, Principal Innovator said:

They don't have to code-switch. They don't have to understand the coded language. The majority is what they're fighting for, that is the status quo. They don't have to negotiate that space of compromising this or that to get what you really want. They can stand in front of the staff and say that we're going to do this because this is what's best. That is the status quo. That code is what they live by. They don't have to think about or understand the code and how the code switches. They can be who they are, wherever they are, because they are the status quo. They can live in their own White male privilege space and not have to worry about what happens. I don't have that option.

Principals Collaborative and Persistent also said that a Black principal could say the same thing as a White principal but be judged differently. Principal Collaborative's predecessor was a White male. Principal Collaborative was an assistant principal on his team. Principal Collaborative shared, "I can't say the same things he would say. He gets a pass for saying some things and if I said some of those things in the same way that he said them, I would get judged totally different." He feels he would be viewed as an angry African American male who doesn't know how to communicate and believes he can't make the same mistakes that White principals can make; also, when White principals make mistakes, they are coached and not judged. Principal Persistent also reported, "I can't react like others do. I must keep my emotions in check and held back. I can't come across as forceful, because then I'm an angry Black man. You know, I can't be determined, it's like he's scary."

Both Principals Diligent and Collaborative also shared that their size affects the way they are viewed, Principal Collaborative said, "I'm a nice-size man, I'm 6'2", 300 lbs. and when I'm direct with people, I'm seen as an angry Black man, not as a leader who is disappointed in something that happened." Principal Diligent shared, "I'm seen differently as a darker-skinned man and because of my stature. I'm 6' 1', 240 lbs. So, I'm, I feel sometimes I'm looked upon as a disciplinarian because of my stature, complexion, and my tone of voice." Both of these principals reported a desire to be viewed as instructional leaders instead.

Different Standards for Performance

Both Principal Collaborative and Principal Persistent also shared views on having to be twice as good as White male principals. Principal Collaborative commented on

“Knowing that all opportunities in most districts are not open to me. Some districts would not look at me as a candidate because of the color of my skin.” He added, “They don’t have to be twice as good or three times better to get a position or get another position somewhere else in another district.” In addition, Principal Persistent reported, “Being second-guessed, always having to be twice as good to get half the recognition as if I’m in this leadership position because I have this skin.” This sentiment was also shared by Principal Fair, as he shared, “He may get an opportunity to get a look, with respect to moving up the career ladder faster than me.”

Principal Innovator shared a different perspective of how he’s viewed:

It’s also the stigma of being viewed as an Uncle Tom. One of the biggest challenges is to still be viewed and seen as an African American, but not one who's shucking and jiving to be respected in both worlds, to be able to stand at a dinner with all White families, but also maintain my Blackness without, without compromising that. And that I'm not willing to be anything other than who I am, it is being the face of this work, is one of the most difficult things and sometimes, you know, you're respected on one side, you're not respected on the other. And it's hard to dance that dance if you really want to get some work done if you really want to change things for kids.

Trust and Mistrust in Leading Predominately White Staff

The third code identified within this section centered around Black male experiences leading a predominately White staff. All five participants in the study had more non-Black teachers than Black teachers. Principal Persistent was the only participant who didn’t have any Black teachers. In interviews, principals shared

experiences ranging from lack of understanding of African American culture, to staff members' questioning their instructional knowledge, to making tough decisions for all students with a predominately White staff.

Principals Persistent and Diligent both mentioned concerns about lack of cultural understanding. Principal Persistent does not have any Black teachers on his staff. He shared, "I didn't get too close in the beginning. Trust got in the way. I couldn't trust them with saying things openly because I felt like it would come back to bite me or be twisted in a way." Principal Persistent believed his experiences would have been different with an all-Black staff because they would have had more common experiences to draw upon. During his observation, though, he appeared comfortable and to have good relationships with his entire team. His teachers appeared friendly and joked with him at the beginning of the staff meeting. The researcher did not notice anything unusual or awkward during the observation.

Principal Diligent shared, "The barrier that I encounter with a predominantly White staff is them not truly understanding my culture and the culture of the students we serve." He believes teachers come to the table with a lot of preconceived notions about his scholars, which can be detrimental to both teachers and students. This was also evident during the direct observation when staff discussed why so many students were not attending during the pandemic.

Two principals also reported that their intellectual ability was questioned. Principal Collaborative believes that because he comes from a sports background he's viewed as a dumb jock. "I have to make sure that anytime I present my ideas or my plan, I have to make sure that I'm thorough. I know I got to be on point, because if I don't

some biases might come out.” Principal Fair also indicated that his intelligence and competence as the instructional leader of the building is often questioned. He shared that often he finds himself involved in conversations and debates around the curriculum as some staff members try to expose any instructional deficits. Principal Fair went on to share an additional experience with a White teacher on his staff:

I also feel like sometimes my accomplishments are questioned. For instance, I had a teacher who refused, and he’s White, he refused to use the title Doctor. And I’m not the guy who goes around saying, “You’d better call me Dr. this or Dr. that.” It’s fine, whatever, let’s move on. You know it’s not about me, it’s about the business of the school. Everyone else in the room referred to me as Dr. Fair, and he continues to use Mr. I didn’t have to say anything because his peers corrected him after the meeting, not in the presence of everyone.

This is a clear example of microaggression. It is subtle, verbal or nonverbal, direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional acts of discrimination against marginalized groups (Smith, 2020). It is being culturally insensitive towards a racial and ethnic minority group where negative perceptions and stereotypes are hidden behind prejudice and bias. Microaggression resulted when it was no longer acceptable to openly belittle a minority group. Black male principals have the unfortunate challenge of facing resistance, abuse, disrespect, and discrimination from White staff because of their implicit biases.

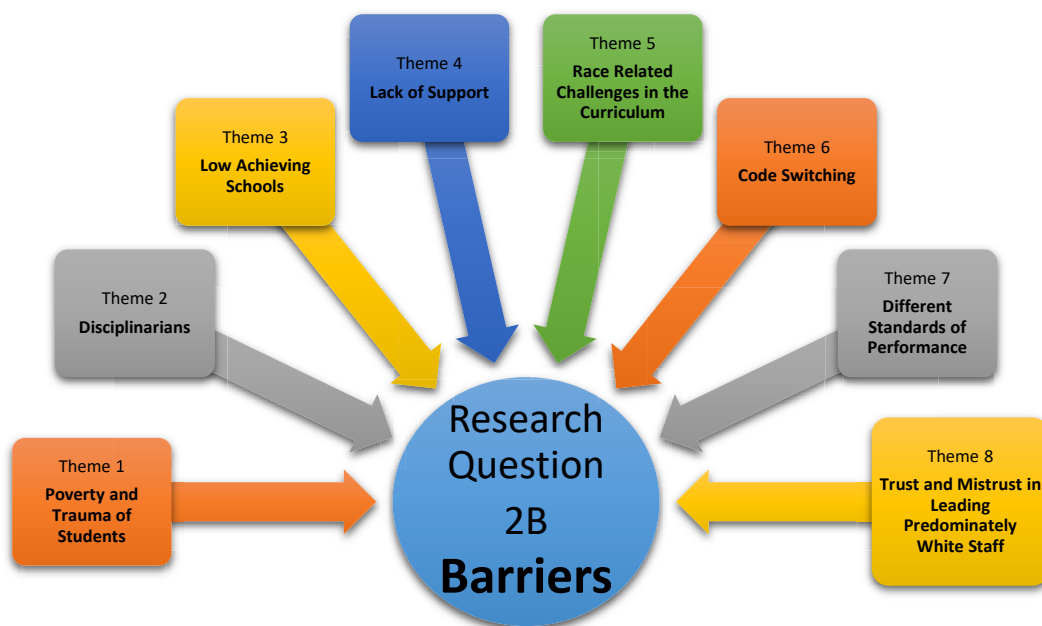
In his interview, Principal Innovator said it took time for his White colleagues to make the transformational shift needed to meet the needs of his minority students. The shift was difficult because he removed traditional policies that eliminated access to certain curricula for minority children in his school. He changed the image of AP and

honors classes to mirror the demographics of the building and that shift was uncomfortable because it went against the status quo. Principal Innovator shared, “It took some time to be able to explain to the staff that this is why we’re doing this and this is the motivation behind it.

In analyzing the results from interview responses, direct observations, and document reviews from this theme, it is clear that Black male principals feel they are seen differently and have different experiences than White male principals. It is also evident that Black male principals’ experiences barriers when leading predominately White staff. The results of this section are also consistent with Critical Race Theory. Past biases, although less overt today than before, still create barriers for Black male principals.

Figure 3

Research Question Two(b) Concept Map



Research Question 2c: How Do African American Male Principals Describe the Supports They Perceive as Most Beneficial?

Professional Development

In response to Research Question 2c, principals also described the supports they perceive as most beneficial for growth in the profession, including professional development, mentors, and time for collaboration with colleagues. Evidence for the first theme, valuing professional development, could be seen in most of the direct observations. Principals were working with their staff to develop solutions to the task on the agenda. Three principals (Diligent, Fair, and Persistent) also mentioned valuing opportunities for their own professional development. Principal Fair said, “I’ve had the opportunity to travel around the country to attend professional development and learn the different nuances in education.” Principal Diligent similarly reported, “I have attended different professional developments, different conferences, and I had the opportunity to complete coursework at Harvard.”

Black Mentors and Colleagues

The second theme identified within this section centered around mentors. In interviews, three out of five of the participants (Principals Collaborative, Diligent, and Persistent) reported on the importance of mentors and leaning on the support of other Black male principals. Having a colleague to call for support and someone to confide in during difficult times seemed invaluable. Principal Diligent said mentors had the most impact on his professional growth.

So I came into education a little different from most because my undergraduate degree is not in Education. It’s actually in Communication and I did several other

careers before I came into education. When I transitioned, there was a cohort of African American males who assisted me with that transition from the workforce into education. Having several mentors that groomed me, assisted me with, you know, becoming a strong teacher, becoming the strongest assistant principal, then in turn becoming a strong principal, in addition to that, inside of that, that cohort of men and building relationships and having conversations in regards to what I could do to strengthen my skill set.

Principal Collaborative also reported on the impact that mentors have had on his professional growth. “My superintendent trained me very well and that put me in a good position to understand what an administrator's role should be. He also took the initiative to build a relationship and mentor me to help me grow professionally.” Principal Persistent reported on the impact that community mentors have had on the students he serves which, in turn, has aided his professional growth. His students are exposed to life advisors that help prepare his students for college and careers.

Collaboration

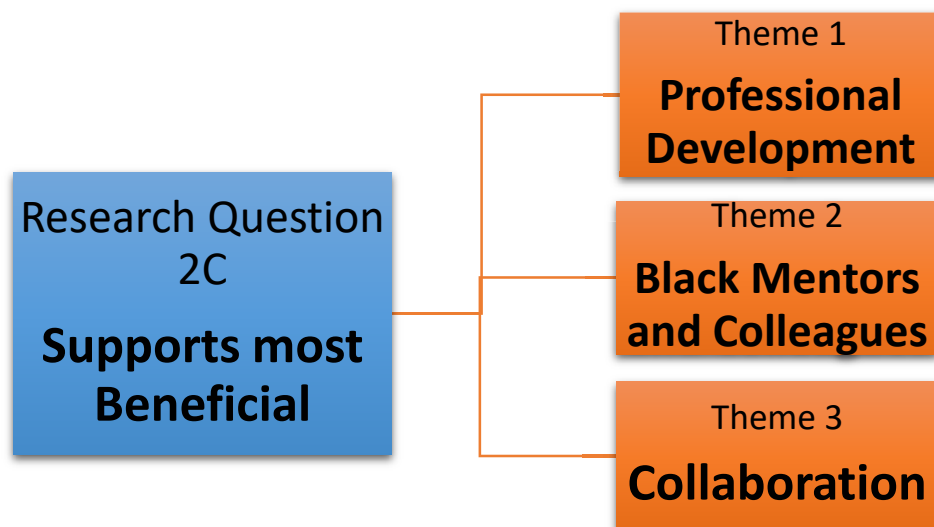
The third theme centered around time to collaborate with colleagues and was mentioned by three of the five participants (Principals Diligent, Fair, and Innovator). Principal Diligent and Principal Fair both have intentionally established relationships with other Black male principals inside and outside their respective school districts and have designated time for collaboration. In his interview, Principal Innovator also reported the ability to collaborate with others as having the most influence on his professional growth, but his time was not as structured as that reported by Principal Diligent or Principal Fair. Principal Innovator shared the following:

Time. It's me time. It's time, when I get to eliminate all, all of the thought processes you experience as, you know, as a principal. This job doesn't stop at 4:30. So when I walk out, close the doors and go home, the job is continuing, the work is still continuing in my mind. So it's the times where I can shut my mind down and figure out exactly how I want to design the next step. And I would say it's probably in that design space for me again from there to the collaboration with my colleagues. Those are two things that has been the most critical for me, it's how do I design the next steps and then how to collaborate with someone with the same trusted critical frame for kids.

Taking the data together, it is clear that Black male principals value mentors and colleagues with whom they collaborate, and believe they have a significant impact on their professional growth.

Figure 4

Research Question Two(c) Concept Map



Research Question 3: In What Ways Do African American Male Principals Describe Their Leadership Practices as Contributing Towards the Academic Success of Their Students and School?

Leadership practices of Black male principals in urban settings were coded for vision, life experiences, and effective and ineffective strategies.

Vision

The first theme identified within the section centered around vision. It was evident during the interview that each participant had a vision for their school; most often, they said they inspired others to follow the vision by listening and offering opportunities for buy-in. Principal Innovator said he inspires others to follow his vision by creating staff buy-in through allowing staff to take risks and fail. He believes in delegating tasks and encourages others to own the work. Principal Persistent indicated that growing leaders and developing self-sufficient learners are the main ingredients of his vision. He inspires others to follow his vision by modeling what he expects from others by being a forward thinker and a problem solver. Principal Diligent indicated that people want to be heard and because of that he believes in always having an open ear and practicing active listening. Giving stakeholders a voice and listening creates space for others to be open to following your vision. Principal Fair also indicated that he strives to do what is best for kids and the community. Principal Collaborative said that he inspires others to follow his vision by making them a part of the decision-making process. This was evident during the direct observation as he sought input from teachers on how to improve student engagement and attendance.

Life Experiences

The second theme identified within the theme centered around life experiences. All five principals said these had influenced their leadership and role as a principal. The participants have a wide range of life experiences that have helped them be successful as a principal. All of the participants are fathers, and all are married except Principal Fair.

Principal Innovator shared that he has become very reflective as a husband and father and that has carried over into his work as a principal. He works hard to be the same person he is at home that he is at work. He says, “The experience of being a father and husband is never far away from me. It’s not a compartment for me, it’s who I am.” It is easier for him when he doesn’t have to be two different people. He can be consistent with who he is in both places, and in turn his students and school get the best of him and his leadership. Principal Collaborative also said his family experience growing up served as extra motivation for success. He was raised by a teenage mom and watched her earn her master's degree and raise five children.

Additionally, Principal Collaborative and Principal Fair both indicated that playing college athletics influenced their value of teamwork in leadership. Principal Fair also said the streets and his spiritual experiences have influenced him in his role as a principal.

Principal Diligent and Principal Persistent indicated they both served in the military. Principal Persistent shared, “My time in the military was huge, that’s the backbone of my knowledge and leadership.” He learned a lot about collaboration and how to work together as a group. Principal Diligent spent several years in the military as an officer. “My experiences leading soldiers that were younger and older than me in

battle really assisted me in understanding myself as a man, understanding the system, and understanding what I wanted out of life.” Being in his fraternity and reflecting on cardinal principles of the fraternity has also helped him persevere through many leadership challenges. All five participants' life experiences have played a role in the way they approach leadership as a Black male principal.

Effective Leadership Strategies

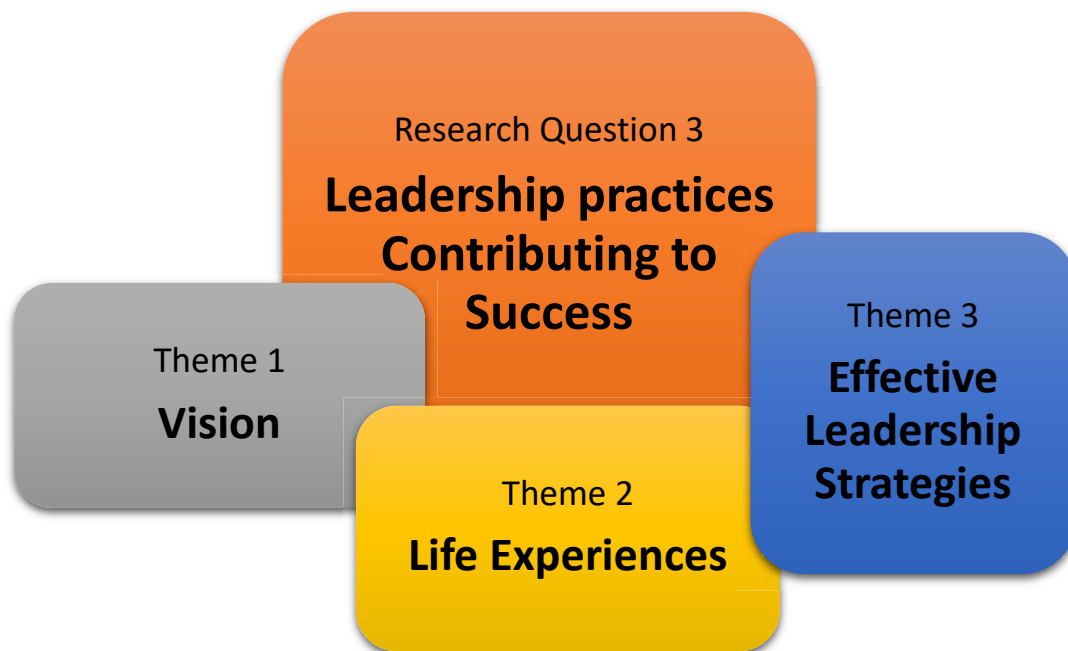
The third theme identified within the theme centered around effective and ineffective strategies. Three out of five participants (Principals Diligent, Fair, and Persistent) indicated the importance of financial resources to provide professional development for staff and tutoring resources for students; these resources had the greatest impact on their leadership and school. Principal Fair also thought that it was most important to have the autonomy to use those resources the way he and his staff saw fit to use them. Principal Collaborative attributed success to building relationships, consistency in leadership and having a 3- to 5-year plan and working that plan. Principal Innovator also indicated the importance of empowering everyone in the organization to make decisions, take risks and be accountable for decisions and risks. “If I can empower teachers to make decisions, and own those decisions, they can then own the successes as long as the successes are the outcomes of student learning.”

As well as mentioning effective strategies for school success, some mentioned ineffective strategies that did not promote academic success. Both Principals Diligent and Persistent come from military backgrounds and made similar discoveries. When Principal Diligent first made the transition to education, he had to adjust his approach to leadership. “In the military, it’s my way or the highway, and that’s just not effective in education.”

Principal Persistent also said having an authoritarian, directive leadership style has not been effective. Principals Innovator and Diligent also both described micromanaging as an ineffective strategy. Principal Innovator shared that, “micromanaging robs people of the opportunity to think, problem-solve, take risks, synthesize information, research, and learn.”

Figure 5

Research Question Three Concept Map



Summary

The collection and analysis of data from interviews, observations, and documents of five Black male principals in this study provided a rich, detailed description of their lived experiences. The voices of Black male principals were shared. They described their roles and responsibilities, successes and barriers, and how their leadership contributes to academic success. The five Black principals selected for this study all lead urban high

schools in the state of Ohio. All of them served as classroom teacher prior to becoming principal and have an average of 25.2 years in education and 7.2 years as high school principals.

Below are the important findings from the triangulated analysis of the interviews, observations, and document reviews. Each finding is supported with a quote from a participant reported in the data.

- Pathways for Success. As stated by Principal Innovator, “So we quickly went into putting some policies in place to ensure that AP and honor classes were achievable and accessible to African American by creating some policy changes with some intentional supports.”
- Challenges Poverty/Support. Principal Fair stated, “It’s a war on poverty, so, we deal with kids being hungry, kids being neglected in a lot of cases, kids living with no running water or lights.”

This is corroborated by Principal Fair, “Most school systems say they want African American males, but when we get there, they don’t understand us. They don’t understand the problems we go through, there’s not a support mechanism.”

- Instructional Leaders. Principal Diligent said, “They expect you to handle the discipline in the building, at the same time not giving you the respect you deserve as an educational leader.”
- Challenges leading White staff. Principal Diligent stated, “The barrier that I encounter with a predominately White staff is them not truly understanding my culture and the culture of the students we serve.”

- Trust. Principal Persistent stated, “Trust got in the way. I couldn’t trust them with saying things openly because I felt like it would come back to bite me or be twisted in a way.”
- Mentors. Principal Collaborative stated, “My superintendent trained me very well and that put me in a good position to understand what an administrator’s role should be. He also took the initiative to build a relationship and mentor me to help me grow professionally.”
- Innovation/Finances. Principal Innovator stated, “Innovation is living in the gap, living in the wrinkles, and if you’re not looking for them, you’ll miss them. If you’re not examining the gaps, you’ll run right past them and you’ll miss the innovation.”
- Microaggressions. Principal Fair stated, “I had a teacher who refused, and he’s white, he refused to use the title Doctor. Everyone else in the room refers to me as Dr. Fair, and he continues to use Mr.”
- Code-Switching. Principal Collaborative stated, “I can’t say the same things he would say. He gets a pass for saying some things and if I said some of those things in the same way that he said them, I would get judged totally different.”
- Black Male Identity. Principal Innovator stated, “The experience of being a father and husband is never far away from me. It’s not a compartment for me, it’s who I am.”

In conclusions, based on their lived experiences, each participant shared advice for future aspiring Black male principals. Four principals (Collaborative, Persistent,

Diligent, and Fair) indicated the importance of finding a mentor, especially another Black principal as mentor (Diligent and Fair). Principals Diligent and Fair also stressed the importance of networking with other Black male principals, and Principals Diligent, Collaboration, and Fair urged joining associations and attending professional-development workshops. Both Principals Innovator and Persistent also indicated the importance of focusing on students and being yourself. Principal Fair went on to say he would tell an aspiring Black principal to “have tough skin, ask questions, and never blow your top.” Principal Innovator added, “You’re going to get hit, and hit hard, hit hard in every direction. You have to realize what shots you are willing to take and keep moving forward.” Last, all participants reported the importance of finding balance between work and home and taking time for themselves. In the following chapter, I discuss the findings and implications, relate them to the research in chapter II, and make recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This study examined the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. The study provided insight into their roles and responsibilities, successes and challenges, and leadership practices that contribute to the success of their students. Data were collected and analyzed from interviews, direct observations, and document reviews. The sample included five Black male principals that lead high schools in urban settings. The participants were randomly selected from a list provided by the Ohio Department of Education.

The study allowed the researcher to hear the voices of each participant and tell their stories in response to the research questions asked: How do African American male principals describe their roles and responsibilities? How do African American male principals in urban settings describe their lived experiences? In what ways do African American male principals describe their leadership practices as contributing towards the academic success of their students and school? This study supports the existing literature that Black male principals have made significant contributions to the lives of all children, and additionally serve as role models to Black children (Tillman, 2004b).

This chapter is organized as follows: summary of findings (including important findings), discussion, significance of study, recommendations for future research, and conclusion. The important findings are thoroughly analyzed and connected to previous research in the literature review. This lays the framework for the study's significance for education, leaders, and society. Recommendations for future research follow, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the study.

Summary of Findings

Several findings emerged from the analysis of the data from the five Black male principals (Innovator, Diligent, Fair, Persistent, and Collaborative). In this section, I discuss the important findings of the study and their connection to the literature and theoretical frameworks.

Important Findings

After analyzing the interviews, observations, and documents, discovering themes and comparing the results to the research, I was able to narrow the data down to 10 important findings. Eight of the findings are explored and connected to the research and literature to confirm findings and determine new findings from the research. Two of the findings explored are new and emerged from the data and were not previously connected to the literature.

Important Finding One: Pathways for Success

Analysis of the data showed that Black principals' lived experiences include successes and challenges. One of the successes evidenced by three out of five participants was achievement gains on state report cards. Although achievement gains on state report cards are significant, the real reward seemed to be creating equitable and safe learning environments where students could focus on academics, improve reading skills, and ultimately graduate. Principals Fair and Diligent worked hard to create safe environments for their students by drawing on community resources to decrease violence and promote conducive learning environments. For both principals, a key pathway was to eliminate outside distractions so students could focus on learning. Principal Innovator also created academic pathways for students: "So we quickly went into putting some policies in place

to ensure that AP and honor classes were achievable and accessible to African Americans by creating some policy changes with some intentional supports.” Although Principal Persistent did not report gains in student achievement, he created pathways for students by connecting them to community agencies and life advisors.

Gains in academic achievement promote job security and career advancement; however, the real work of creating safe and equitable learning environments is what changes and enhances the lives of students, including African American students. This finding is connected to African American Male Theory (Bush & Bush, 2013) as principals in the study pushed past deficit-based thinking about students to a non-deficit-based model and helped African American students succeed and reach new heights, which was the great accomplishment, as reported by Principal Collaborative.

Important Finding Two: Challenges Poverty/Support

Black male principals often lead low performing poverty-stricken schools. This study also shows that Black male principals deal with many challenges yet persevere beyond barriers and find ways to meet the needs of their students and to lead their teams. Barriers are often compounded. The principals said that not only do Black principals lead schools with poverty issues and low achievement, but they also do not believe they get support from the school-system to help deal with discipline issues and student behaviors. Black male principals are expected to decrease violence, provide resources for students, and raise student achievement, but often without additional resources. This finding is confirmed and supported by the research reported earlier in the study. Describing historical findings, Savage (2001) wrote, “African American principals did more with less with respect to providing an education for Black students. That is, even without

money or resources, Black principals operated and maintained schools for Black children” (p. 171).

Important Finding Three: Instructional Leaders

There has been a shift in the role of the principal. Years ago, principals focused on day-to-day managerial tasks of running the building and daily operations. Now, principal leadership has shifted its focus to instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is now a component of the state evaluation system, state standards, and state assessments, and it requires principals to prioritize their focus to the classrooms versus the hallways. Principal Innovator was an instructional principal in a school with strong curriculum offerings (Honor, AP, IB), which let him focus on creating equitable learning experiences for all students, including African American students. Principals Persistent and Fair focused on ensuring teachers taught grade-level content, and Principal Fair was proud of improving scores in reading. Principal Diligent was also proud of the rising graduation rate.

As school districts continue to shift their focus to teaching and learning, they also need to shift additional resources to support Black male principals, so they can shift their day-to-day focus to teaching and learning. Henderson (2015) wrote,

African American male urban school leaders would be best served by an increase in staff dedicated to social services, counseling support, behavioral health, and parent outreach, which would then allow them to concentrate more on the primary mission of instructional leadership. (p. 50)

Important Finding Four: Challenges Leading White Staff

Race mattered after the historic 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision. Black male principals were stripped of their leadership roles because of racism. According to Tillman (2004b), “Demotions and firings of Black principals reflected the deep-seated segregationist ideology of the South, and White Southerners with the turn-of-the-century attitudes about Black inferiority would not tolerate Black principals supervising students and teachers in integrated schools” (p. 179). Today, we would refer to this as an example of White privilege.

Although schools today are integrated, Black male principals still report challenges leading predominately White staff. Principal Diligent shared, “The barrier I encounter with a predominately white staff is them not truly understanding my culture and the culture of the students we serve.” Principals Collaborative, Diligent, and Fair believed their intelligence and instructional knowledge was questioned by their staff and Principal Fair shared how his accomplishments were questioned and not respected. The race of the principal still matters in 2021. Often, teachers’ perceptions and treatment of the principal differs depending on the race of the principal (Khan, 2016; Lemotely, 1987).

The task moving forward is for Black male leaders to continue to lead through the challenges and encourage White colleagues to make the transformational shift to look beyond biases and stay focused on the vision of the organization, which is the essence of transformational leadership theory (Okcu, 2014; Yukl, 2013). This finding is also connected to Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Past biases, although less overt today than before, still create barriers for Black male principals.

School districts might be well served by offering diversity, equity, and professional development regarding implicit bias.

Black male principals in the present study also reported that when they have significant challenges in their buildings and central office visits, they feel as if they are being judged and questioned, whereas when their White counterparts have similar challenges, they are coached and offered support. Principal Fair shared, “If I’m having behavioral issues with students at my building, the expectation is that I handle them, where if it was a White male or female, they would be offered support.” Black male principals want to experience the same expectations, resources, and support as their White counterparts. Principal Fair shared, “Most school systems say they want African American males, but when we get there, they don’t understand us. They don’t understand the problems we go through, there’s not a support mechanism.” Yet even in the midst of challenges, Black principals have a positive impact on the lives and academic performance of Black students (Lemotely, 1987). School districts must find ways to effectively support Black male principals and break the cycle of mistrust.

Important Finding Five: Trust

Trust is a new finding that emerged from the data collected and is not connected to the literature in the study. Principals Diligent and Fair thought school district systems offered too little support for Black principals and offered more support to White principals. They and Principal Collaborative also believed that Black principals are placed in low-performing schools where it is difficult to raise academic scores. They also thought their intelligence, instructional knowledge and (in Principal Fair’s case) educational accomplishments were questioned and doubted. Principals Persistent, Fair

and Collaborative also said they had to work twice as hard as White principals to receive recognition, and Principal Collaborative did not believe he would be given the same career advancement opportunities as his White counterparts. Although they experienced trust issues in the school district, they mentioned forming good relationships in the community: engaging with community partners who provided resources for schools, and personally giving students financial support for college and other goals.

Principals Innovator and Persistent also mentioned that they developed trust with colleagues, with trust seeming to develop over time. Although Principal Persistent didn't initially trust his all-White staff, he didn't report challenges and still had high instructional expectations for them. Perhaps the two didn't have as many overt race-related challenges in their schools.

Principal Innovator was also concerned with the way his staff viewed African American students and worked hard to change those beliefs and perceptions. He created an environment of trust with his staff in letting them take risks and rewarding them for innovation. Trusting his internal beliefs and trusting his teachers and giving them time to change their attitudes, he made significant report-card gains in closing the gap in Black and White achievement, and increased AP enrollment and the number of Black AP teachers. My hope would be that other participants would also continue to persevere through barriers and would model and encourage trust with staff while moving forward to achieve student achievement outcomes.

Important Finding Six: Mentors

Another key emergent finding was that mentors and other Black colleagues were significant to Black male principals' professional growth and development. This is

another new finding that emerged from the data collected and is not connected to the literature in the study. Each principal during the interview reminded me of the importance of collaborating with a trusted colleague or a mentor. Both Principals Fair and Persistent shared the importance of networking specifically with other Black male principals and having a designated time for collaboration. This is important because other Black male principals in similar positions have navigated through storms, often cultural storms, and could provide timely counsel. Having someone to call upon and confide in during challenging times seemed invaluable, particularly if principals believed they lacked district support.

Even if some principals tended to report that they did not receive support from the school districts, they could turn to colleagues, especially Black colleagues and mentors, for advice and support. The three principals who reported school report card gains—Principals Innovator, Fair and Diligent—seemed to value collaboration to bring solutions to the forefront, to strategize. Principals Diligent, Persistent, and Fair also collaborated within the community to bring resources and/or solutions to violence that affected their schools.

Important Finding Seven: Innovation/Finances

Interview responses also showed that Black male principals need financial resources for tutors and professional development, including training on teacher instructional strategies and on equity and inclusion. Black male principals in low-achieving schools may also desire more financial support to pay teachers extra to work with students and provide tutoring. Black male principals in the 19th and 20th centuries led Black children with limited resources, and Black male principals in today's low

socioeconomic urban districts are still leading Black children with limited resources (Dolph, 2017; Tillman, 2004b). Limited resources mean fewer opportunities for students and staff and create significant disadvantages (Acton, 2018; Dolph, 2017). Financial resources for Black male principals' own professional development is also significant. Principals Fair and Diligent noted that attending conferences and completing additional coursework broadened their educational perspectives. Growth in turn can lead to innovation.

It can also take innovative leadership to lead beyond the barriers Black male principals encounter. It was clear from the interviews that Black male principals' approach to innovation is connected to instructional leadership and involves finding solutions to challenges and barriers that ultimately affect academic outcomes. Black male principals are able to create innovative pathways for the students they serve, particularly African American students. Their ability to accomplish this special task is consistent with African American Male Theory (Bush & Bush, 2013). Principal Innovator shared, "Innovation is living in the gap, living in the wrinkles, and if you're not looking for them, you'll miss them. If you're not examining the gaps, you'll run right past them and you'll miss the innovation." Innovation is a key component of instructional leadership. Some principals said their approach to innovation is a natural experience because they have always had to think creatively to solve problems. This type of leadership is also reflected in Transformational Leadership Theory: "Intellectual stimulation involves the leader's encouraging followers to be creative and innovative and to look at problems through a different lens and find new solutions (Money, 2017; Yukl, 2013). It is also possible that

innovation could be an area where Black male principals need support and professional development.

Important Finding Eight: Microaggression

Black male principals experience levels of microaggressions from their White staff. They are often not given the respect that is equal to their position. This is confirmed in the research with Lemotely (1987) who claims teachers' perceptions and treatment of the principal differ depending on the race of the principal. Madsen and Mabokela (2002) went on to say their credibility as leaders is often questioned by resistant white teachers. Principal Fair experienced a microaggression when his white teacher refused to recognize him as Dr. Fair instead calling him Mr. Fair.

Microaggressions are less overt today than during the pre-Brown era. Whether overtly or inadvertently done, microaggression is the hurtful putting down of a race to maintain a level of superiority over non-Whites. This ties in with the Critical Race Theory (CRT) in that it is used "to explain how everyday forms of racism – racial microaggressions – emerge in the everyday experiences of minorities" (Ladson- Billings, 1999).

Important Finding Nine: Code-Switching

Code-switching is a part of a Black male principal's daily experience. It is a natural experience for many Black men, so much so, they are not often aware that they are code-switching until it is brought to their attention. When Black principals do not code-switch and instead speak up for their race, they are often viewed as exclusionary (Khan, 2016). Code-switching is how Black men navigate in and out of environments where predominately White mainstream culture is the status quo. It is a necessity to code-

switch in all environments, especially in the workplace. This minimizes the stereotypes that were created about Black men and increases the comfort level of Whites, present in the room.

Code-switching could make the difference between someone getting a promotion, being accepted by their staff, getting approved for a loan, or being treated fairly while interacting with the police. During the data collection process, code-switching took place with each of the five principals in the study. Their comfort level, language, and dialect changed depending on whether they were doing an interview with the Black male researcher or were being observed meeting with their staff and White colleagues. Sharing his experiences with White principals not having to code-switch, Principal Innovator said:

They don't have to code-switch. They don't have to understand the coded language. The majority is what they're fighting for, that is the status quo. They don't have to negotiate that space of compromising this or that to get what you really want. They can stand in front of the staff and say that we're going to do this because this is what's best. That is the status quo. That code is what they live by. They don't have to think about or understand the code and how the code switches. They can be who they are, wherever they are, because they are the status quo. They can live in their own White male privilege space and not have to worry about what happens. I don't have that option.

As mentioned in chapter II, the Critical Race Theory (CRT) considers the challenges and barriers racism has on Black male principals. Inferior groups will inevitably experience racism (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Black males, unlike their White

male counterparts, struggle with being their unique selves because past norms dictate what is culturally tolerable. This belief structure requires that non-Whites conform to White systems and cultures for acceptance. Code-switching emerges. This has a negative effect on the impact of the Black male principal. It is difficult for this leader to promote staff and student achievement when his own achievement is minimized by racial biases and other systematic oppressive methods.

The African American Male Theory discusses the experiences and behaviors that shape and influence the development of African American boys and men (Bush and Bush, 2013). White males created the code that Black males have to switch to in order to gain equal recognition, resources, and respect. In America, one race ultimately determines the worth and behavior of others. Code-switching is one way for the Black male principal to overcome the systems designed to keep them inferior. Overall, Black male principals should have the option to be their authentic selves and not worry about the consequences of living in their own skin.

Important Finding Ten: Black Male Identity

When I think of the identity and essence of a Black male principal, I compare it to the layers one puts on during a cold brisk day. This identity is created by experiences and environments. All of the participants mentioned various life experiences that affected their leadership, including the influence of the military (Principals Diligent and Persistent) or sports (Principals Collaborative and Fair). Principal Fair was the only participant to mention the impact of spiritual experiences on his leadership. Principal Innovator shared the importance of being his authentic self; whether he is at school, home, or the community, he is consistent in who he is, and students and the school get the

best of his leadership. All of the participants are fathers and have made sacrifices for their students and their own children. Because the role of a principal is demanding, principals' personal lives often are influenced by, as well as influencing, the role.

The environments in which Black male principals lead schools cause them to rise to a different level. As Principal Innovator described, they lead between and beyond the gaps. They lead in poverty-stricken areas where schools have limited resources and where staff with blind spots may hold implicit biases and stereotypes of Black men or display racism. Black principals' environments are also influenced by community expectations. The interviews showed that the Black principals' deep involvement in the community was unique and was significant to what occurred in their schools. From Principal Diligent's late nights, when police called him to help youth, to Principal Fair's connection with faith-based organizations and ex-felons, to Principal Persistent's relationships with community organizations and mentors, this level of community involvement added another layer on top of the traditional roles and responsibilities of a principal.

The implicit biases and racism that Black male principals experience adds another layer. Critical Race Theory sees racism as a part of society and the everyday lives of African American men (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Black male principals must be resilient and withstand rejection and disappointment, and they must resist acting on society's stereotypes, expectations, and norms (Bush & Bush, 2013). Principal Innovator displayed this resilience while persuading his staff to accept the new status quo of all students' having equitable access to all levels of the curriculum. Even with the stigma of being

viewed as an Uncle Tom by some or Malcom X by others, he persevered and created paths for African Americans to access high-level curricula.

How can we sit in a room and look at kids' profiles, and then look at kids' race and say, they both, they both deserve the same exact thing. Just because he can't synthesize this information yet doesn't mean that he doesn't deserve the opportunity to synthesize information, as an example. (Principal Innovator)

Everyone deserves the opportunity to access high-quality rigorous curricula.

Table 4 shows the relationship between the three data sources and key findings.

Table 4

Triangulation Table of Key Findings and Data Collection Sources

Findings	Interview 1	Interview 2	Direct Observations	Document Reviews
Finding 1 Pathways for Success	x			x
Finding 2 Challenges Poverty/Support	x	x	x	
Finding 3 Instructional Leaders	x	x	x	x
Finding 4 Challenges leading White Staff	x	x	x	
Finding 5 Trust	x	x		
Finding 6 Mentors	x			
Finding 7 Innovation/Finances	x	x		x
Finding 8 Micro-aggression	x			

Findings	Interview 1	Interview 2	Direct Observations	Document Reviews
Finding 9 Code-Switching	x		x	x
Finding 10 Black Male Identity	x	x		

Note: The triangulation table shows key findings and their correlation with data sources.

Discussion

This phenomenological research study represented the voices of five Black male principals and provided insight into the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. The important findings in this study were supported by research from the literature review. Black male principals have made significant contributions to the lives of Black children over the years (Tillman, 2004b), and continue to do so as indicated in this study. From the 1860s, Black men have also played a key role in providing leadership in education and in the community (Tillman, 2004b), and it is obvious from this study that their work in these roles continues today.

Black Male Principals

As indicated in the fourth finding, challenges leading White staff, the race of the principal still matters in 2021. Critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1999) holds that racism persists, and African American male theory (Bush & Bush, 2013) holds that African American men need to be resistant and resilient in the face of racism. This study showed that overt racism may have decreased, given that Black male principals are leading urban high schools, including schools where White staff are the majority. However, Black male principals still lead past stereotypes (for example, about physical or intellectual characteristics, or principals' role as disciplinarians), unequal treatment (in

support received from school districts, compared to White principals), discrimination (in career advancement), and in inequitable school environments that lack needed resources and where Boards continue to adopt curricula that are not culturally relevant for Black students. Black male principals lead beyond the gaps, and sometimes the permanence of racism is the gap that some are blind to, but which is obvious to others.

Savage (2001) also wrote that Black principals fulfil their roles and responsibilities with far fewer resources, including money, than White principals do. This study further showed that Black male principals have identified financial resources for professional development and academic tutoring for their students as a necessity. Access to financial resources would support principals' desire to increase test scores and student achievement. Henderson (2015) also suggested that school districts need to add additional resources, such as counselors, social workers, behavioral health supports, and parent connectors so principals can better concentrate on instruction and student achievement. This is important because although Black male principals view themselves as instructional leaders, they are often dealing with student behavioral issues where other staff could definitely offer support. This challenges school districts to take a closer look at how they allocate funding for staff resources and to be intentional in funding formulas for high-poverty, low-achieving schools. If school districts want Black males to be authentic instructional leaders, they should invest in their professional development, add non-instructional personnel, and create space to listen to their concerns and provide support.

Instructional Leaders

As indicated in the third finding, instructional leadership, there has been a shift in role of the principal. Instructional leadership involves analyzing the curriculum and ensuring that students have access to rigorous coursework. Considering Critical Race Theory, Ladson-Billings (1999) notes “distortions, omissions, and stereotypes of school curriculum and access to what is deemed *enriched* curriculum via courses and classes for the gifted and talented” (p. 2). The absence of Black students from courses designed for the gift and talented is prevalent in many urban schools. Principal Innovator was determined to increase enrollment for African American students in advanced placement and honor classes at his school. He was heavily involved in making decisions and rewriting policies that served as the gateway to those curriculum offerings. African American male theory explores success stories and invites positive contributions to the lives of African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). Principal Innovator’s work clearly supports this theory as he increased African American enrollment in AP courses by 300% and added two African American female AP teachers to his faculty. Also consistent with African American Male Theory, he took action that shifted the trajectory of African American students' course options to a non-deficit model. Principal Innovators actions were bold and courageous, designed to create equitable access to the untapped curricula that several African American students in his school never experienced. This is the bold work that other Black male principals should rally behind and tackle for African American students in their schools.

Transformational Leaders

Further, as indicated in the eighth finding, this study shows the complex identity of Black male principals as transformational leaders. According to Okcu (2014), transformational leaders are visionary and have the capacity to lead change and inspire others to follow. The present study showed that Black male leaders are creative and innovative and look at problems through different lenses and find solutions in the midst of challenges. Black male principals are different; they are deeply involved in their communities, they wear several hats in their communities and at school, they lead teams that do not trust them and question their instructional knowledge and intelligence, and yet they carry out the traditional roles and responsibilities of a principal.

With regard to the specific elements of transformational leadership, Black male principals showed these in various ways. Inspirational motivation involves the leader's ability to have followers rally behind the vision of the organization and carry out current and future tasks (Aydin et al., 2013). Inspirational motivation was the one component of transformational leadership observed in each direct observation. Although the current task dealt with managerial tasks related to the pandemic, each principal was a calming voice for their teams and motivated them to keep meeting the needs of their students even when it seemed impossible to get students to engage onscreen during online learning lessons. Principal Innovator also worked with teachers and administration to open academic pathways for African American students to take AP and Honors classes. Several principals (e.g., Principals Fair and Diligent) had the daunting task of leading in high-poverty schools, and to succeed as reported, they had to have charisma to get staff to follow their vision.

Individualized consideration involves coaching, encouraging, and providing support for followers (Aydin et al., 2013), such as staff, students, community, and parents. Each principal provided a level of encouragement and support to followers, whether in communicating with teachers or parents to help them understand school goals, helping students financially, or encouraging community members to become involved with the school.

Intellectual stimulation involves leaders encouraging followers to be creative and look at problems through a different lens and find new solutions (Aydin et al., 2013). This is the essence of a Black male principal. Considering all the challenges and barriers to the role of the principal, Black male principals' finding new solutions to survive and create conducive learning environments is a requirement. You have to be creative and have the skills to get others to think outside of the box.

Idealized Influence involves the transformation leader making sacrifices within their own behavior, ultimately serving as a role model to their followers (Aydin et al., 2013). Black males' code-switching applies here. As Black male leaders continue to make sacrifices, one day they will be able to do it without code switching and compromising their authentic selves in front of their predominately white staff. As far as sacrifices, all of the participants sacrificed family time and money. For Principal Fair, setting the example for his assistant principals as the first to arrive and the last to leave cost him his marriage.

Servant Leaders

As indicated in the second finding, challenges poverty/support, Black male principals find ways to persevere and lead beyond the barriers to meet the needs of their

students and staff. I believe one of the essences of Black male principal centers around servant leadership, a leader committed to serving others first (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leaders consider the needs of their staff and teams first, are committed to enhancing the performance of their teams, and make positive contributions to society (Blanchard, 2010). In addition, African American male theory (Bush & Bush, 2013) considers historical continuity in the experience of Black males, and this includes their ability and willingness to make sacrifices to help the community. The Black male principals in this study also showed the uniqueness of Black males in their innate desire for self-determination, their ability to persevere in spite of challenges, and their ability to challenge the White mainstream status quo and still lead in an environment where privilege is never secure. Black male leaders have always had presence, strength, will, and resilience to carry them through the challenges pre/post Brown and today.

Throughout history, there have been several Black male servant leaders (Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Muhammed Ali, Nelson Mandela, and John Lewis) with presence, strength, and courage that have challenged the White mainstream status quo and have been the voice that fought for equal rights, equity, and inclusion. Today, we have several Black male leaders (Former President Barack Obama, Attorney Ben Crump, LeBron James, Colin Kaepernick, and Patrick Mahomes) who have presence, strength, and the courage to serve as voice for social justice. I admire LeBron James for using his platform and voice to fight for change and social justice. He continues to challenge the White mainstream status quo by not just dribbling a basketball that was suggested by the White Fox news television host; however, he opened the I-Promise school in Akron Ohio that is serving at-risk students, a school that has the potential to produce Black male

teachers and ultimately Black male principals to continue to create innovative pathways for all students that lead to success.

Situational Leaders

As indicated in the first finding, pathways for success, Black male leaders are transformational leaders; however, the COVID-19 national pandemic had an impact on this research study. I had expected to find and observe Black male principals serving fully as transformational leaders. Yet the observations mainly showed evidence of situational leadership: dealing with and adapting to tasks at hand because of the national pandemic. The principals had to rely on a different type of leadership in their toolbox: crisis management and situational leadership. Inspirational motivation was the one component of transformational leadership observed in each direct observation. Although the current task dealt with managerial tasks related to the pandemic, each principal calmed their teams and motivated them to keep meeting the needs of their students even when it seemed impossible to get students to engage onscreen during online lessons. What emerged is that not everyone will be a transformational leader all the time; it depends on the context in which they are leading and what the situation involves.

Historical Similarities and Differences

Historically, Black male principals were the backbone of the Black community. The pre-Brown study revealed that they were the voice that represented Black families and an advocate for students to have the resources needed to enhance learning (Savage, 2001). Black male principals were effective in leading high performing schools in the segregated South (Walker, 1996). They embodied the characteristics of servant leaders, instructional leaders, and transformational leaders. They motivated their

students and staff to excel at high levels, served their communities, made sacrifices, wore many hats, and made sure their students were safe in their learning environments (Tillman, 2004b; Walker, 2000). At that time, the Black male principal was a role model and considered the status quo in the Black community.

The Black male principal was able to live unapologetically within his own skin in front of his students and teachers without being pressured to change his dialect or body language or conform for acceptance. They had the support of the students, teachers, and the community and could make recommendations and lead their schools (Tillman, 2004b; Walker, 2000). Black male principals were successful pre-Brown largely because they did not have to code-switch to fit in the White mainstream culture during segregation (Walker, 1996, 2000). Although they dealt with racism, microaggressions, and discrimination in society; however, in the workplace, they were able to be their authentic selves in a segregated school environment (Tillman, 2004b; Walker, 2000).

Other aspects of the Black male identity that is compromised in present day include how Black male principals are viewed as leaders by White staff. Their academic intellect is constantly in question as reported by Principals Fair and Collaborative. Instead of being recognized for their instructional knowledge, Black male principals are pigeon holed into the role of a disciplinarian, according to Principal Fair. This directly affects how the Black male is identified as a leader. It minimizes his academic abilities and diminishes his academic credibility (Tillman, 2004a).

During pre-Brown, the Black community understood the importance of education and that it was their passport to the future (Savage, 2001). The community pulled their resources together to ensure that students had a place to learn and that their learning

environment was safe (Walker, 2000). After the *Brown v Board of Education* case, the community lost their Black voice and Black identity (Tillman, 2004b). Ultimately, students lost their advocate and Black role models. In an educational setting, students went from a segregated nurturing environment to a desegregated hostile environment (Lopez & Burciaga, 2014; Walker, 2000).

While the presence of Black male principals is slowly returning, their experience today far differs from pre-Brown Black male principals. The big difference is in the lack of community resources and support in high poverty urban districts. Today, unlike Pre-Brown where education was a high priority, other external factors such as poverty and crime shift the focus from learning to addressing non-academic concerns (Acton, 2018). Students living in poverty have difficulties focusing on learning (Dolph, 2017). Principal Fair spoke about the war on poverty and his challenge of dealing with students being hungry, neglected, and living with no lights or running water. Urban school districts must increase funding allocations to support students' socio-emotional needs to create space for the principal to focus more time on being an instructional leader (Henderson, 2015).

The participants in the present study share several characteristics with the Black male principals of the pre-Brown era. They too are servant leaders, instructional leaders, and transformational leaders. Racism, microaggressions, and discrimination are still prevalent, but I believe life is better today than it was during the pre-Brown era. The difference is that today's Black male principals have an undeniable obligation to code-switch if they want to fit in and be successful in the White mainstream status quo.

As I reflect on my own achievements as a Black male educator, I often wonder if I would be in the position that I am in today if I had not become proficient at code-switching. I wonder how much of me adjusting my personality and behaviors to accommodate White comfort in the workplace contributed to my success. This is not something that my White colleagues have to think about or a concept that they ever have to entertain.

It is important for current and future Black male principals to know and understand the historical perspectives of Black male principals and experiences they share. It is equally important for Black male principals to network and collaborate with one another, share stories and challenges, support and help each other navigate through common barriers, and create a Black male principal coalition that fosters growth and goodwill amongst the group. This could very well be more valuable than the traditional professional development while building a pipeline of Black male principals as it did pre-Brown.

Significance of Study

This phenomenological study added to research on the lived experiences of Black male principals in urban settings. It offered insight regarding principals' perceived accomplishments, challenges, and barriers; how they describe their leadership roles and responsibilities; and the leadership strategies they use to enhance the success of students and schools. The findings from this study will add value to the field of education, inform school-district leaders, and contribute to society's understanding of the role of Black male principals and what they can bring to the lives of our children.

Describing the success, challenges and barriers of Black male principals can add context to graduate curricula and will enhance graduate programs in the field of education. It is important for future educators and principals to be aware and understand the impact and history of Black male principals on schools. For example, the important findings around innovation and the identity of Black male principals coupled with African American Male Theory (Bush & Bush, 2013) are new and unique concepts that could only strengthen the perspectives and knowledge of faculty members and students. This study will particularly provide insight to Black male graduate students who aspire to become principals. Graduate schools of education that add this literature and focus on Black male principals would also position themselves to recruit more Black male teachers to their graduate programs.

This study will also benefit educational leaders, school district leaders, human resource directors, and central office administrators who participate in the recruitment and internal placement of Black male principals and supervise, support, and coach them. Understanding the dual roles of Black male principals, including their roles as instructional leaders, their roles in the community and the many hats they wear, will add context to the type of support they need. For example, administrators will better understand the need for additional staff to help Black male principals deal with social, emotional, and societal issues in poverty-stricken low-achieving schools. Black male principals are typically employed in urban schools (Brown, 2005), and their successful leadership practices that enhance student achievement could be shared and duplicated across other urban districts or may help in meeting the complex needs of specific communities. The data from the study will also provide other principals (e.g., female

principals, principals of different races) with a different lens when dealing with challenges in an urban district.

Finally, this study will be timely and beneficial to school districts by helping them recruit, sustain, and retain current Black male principals. As educational and school district leaders learn more about the role and identity of a Black male, understanding the lived experiences of Black male principals will also enhance society and the global community and could help in understanding parallel challenges faced by Black leaders in other industries. Racism continues to exist in 2021 and Black men have certainly been on the receiving end of racism. From the historical context of racism that Black male principals experienced pre-Brown and post-Brown, to the current day police murders of Black men such as George Floyd of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Tamir Rice of Cleveland Ohio, and most recently Andre Hill of Columbus, Ohio, Black males have historically endured racism and discrimination like no other group in society. To change this trajectory, society needs to be introduced to African American Male Theory and to work together to change the plight and trajectory of Black boys and Black men. I believe Black male principals have been engaged in this work and this study could encourage others and society to join the journey. and increase their support. This could also decrease the amount of code-switching that Black male principals do.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research could also be used as a springboard to further explore the lived experiences of Black male principals. For example, future research could more deeply explore the identities of Black male principals, how these are influenced by personal experiences and leadership environments, and what makes them unique. How do Black

male principals describe their identity and how is identity described by others and society? How are Black leaders' lived experiences similar or different in different industries?

It would also be interesting to replicate this study with elementary school Black male principals. Are the challenges and barriers the same? Do they have the same influence on the community as Black male high-school principals do? One could also study Black male principals in high-performing high schools. First, I wonder if those Black male principals exist, and if they do, what are their challenges and barriers? How would they describe their roles and responsibilities? Compared to Black male principals in poverty-stricken, low-performing schools, how do Black male principals in affluent, high-performing schools define support? One could replicate this study with assistant principals and explore their experiences being younger administrators before they enter the principal role. This study could also be replicated with Black female principals in urban settings to learn more about their live experiences and impact on student achievement. Last, the study's sample size was relatively small and specific to urban settings in Ohio; new research could study a larger sample from multiple states and other district types than urban districts.

Conclusion

Black principals, particularly Black male principals, have made significant contributions to the lives of Black children (Tillman, 2004b) and continue to do so today as shown in this study. It is my hope that this study will help aspiring Black male principals as they prepare for the role, will help school districts support Black male principals more effectively, and will strengthen graduate courses of study. My hope is

that the voices of Black male principals are heard, valued, and respected and that their career trajectories are filled with more accomplishments and successes than challenges and barriers as Black male principals continue to lead between and beyond the gaps to level the playing field for all students going through this process.

REFERENCES

- Abney, E. E. (1980). A comparison of the status of Florida's Black public school principals. *Journal of Negro Education, 69*, 398-406.
- Acton, K. S. (2018). The tale of two urban school principals: Barriers, supports, and rewards. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 64*(3), 304–317.
- Aydin, A., Sarier, Y., & Uysal, Ş. (2013). The effect of school principals' leadership styles on teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 13*(2), 806–811.
- Bass, R., & Bernard, R. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.
- Black, G. (2010, June). Correlational analysis of servant leadership and school climate. *Catholic Education, 13*(4), 437-466.
- Blanchard, K. (2010). *Leading at a higher level* (updated ed.). Blanchard Management Corporation.
- Bloom, C. M., & Erlandson, D. A. (2003). African-American women principals in urban schools: Realities, (re)constructions, and resolutions. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(3), 339-369.
- Brooks, J. S., & Jean-Marie, G. (2007). Black leadership, White leadership: Race and race relations in an urban high school. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(6), 756–768.
- Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and school leadership: An introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 41*(4), 585-590.
- Brown, S., & Henderson, C. (2017). Brown versus Board at 62; Marching back into the future. *Education, Citizenship, and Social Justice, 12*(3), 244-251.

- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 83 (1954).
- Bush, L., & Bush, E. (2013). Introducing African American male theory (AAMT). *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 4(1), 6–17.
- Bush, L., & Bush, E. (2018). A paradigm shift? Just because the lion is talking doesn't mean that he isn't still telling the hunter's story: African American male theory and the problematics of both deficit and nondeficit models. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 9(1), 1–18.
- Butchart, R. E. (2020). Freedmen's education during reconstruction. *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. 16 September 2020. Web. 01 October 2020.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/freedmens-education-during-reconstruction>
- Carson, C. (2004). Two cheers for Brown v. Board of Education. *The Journal of American History*, 91(1), 26-31.
- Cerit, Y. (2009). The effects of servant leadership behaviors of school principals on teacher's job satisfaction. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 37(5), 600-623.
- Columbus Ohio. (2020, March, 30). In *Wikipedia*.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus,_Ohio
- Council of Great City Schools. (2018). *Annual Report*. <https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/16/Annual%20Report.website.pdf>
- Crenshaw, K. (1988). Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in anti-discrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, 101(7), 1331-1387.

- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five designs*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Dolph, D. (2017). Challenges and opportunities for school improvement: Recommendations for urban school principals. *Education & Urban Society*, 49(4), 363–387.
- Ethridge, S. (1979). Impact of the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision on Black educators. *Negro Educational Review*, 30, 217-232.
- Fultz, M. (2004). The displacement of Black educators post-Brown: An overview and analysis. *History of Education Quarterly*, 44, 11-45.
- Givens, L. (Ed). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Gooden, M. A. (2005). The role of an African American principal in an urban information technology high school. *Education Quarterly*, 41, 630-650.
- Greenleaf, R. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Robert K. Greenleaf Publishing Center.
- Guba E., & Lincoln, Y. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

- Henderson, G. (2015). Leadership experiences of African American male secondary urban principals: The impact of beliefs, values, and experiences on school leadership practices. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 6(2), 38–54.
- James, J. C. (1970, September 17-20). Another vanishing American: The Black principal. *New Republic*.
- Khan, L. (2016). The challenge of being a Black principal in today's racial and political climate. *Education Digest*, 82(4), 4-7.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1999). Just what is critical race theory, and what's it doing in a nice field like education? In L. Parker (Ed.), *Race is...race isn't: Critical race theory & qualitative studies in education* (pp. 7–30). Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). *The good high school: Portraits of character and culture*. Basic Books.
- Lomotely, K. (1987). Black principals for Black students: Some preliminary observations. *Urban Education*, 22(2) 173-181.
- Lomotely, K. (1989). *African-American principals: School leadership and success*. Greenwood Press.
- Lopez, G., & Burciaga, R. (2014). The troublesome legacy of Brown v. Board of Education. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 50(5), 796-811.
- Lyman, L. (2000). *How do they know you care? The principal's challenge*. Teachers College Press.
- Lynn, M., & Parker, L. (2006). Critical race studies in education: Examining a decade of research on U.S. schools. *The Urban Review*, 38(4), 257-261.

- Madsen, J. A., & Mabokela, R. O. (2002). Introduction: Leadership and diversity: Creating inclusive schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 77(1), 1-6.
- Marcucci, O. (2017). Zora Neal Hurston and the Brown debate: Race, class and the progressive empire. *Journal of Negro Education*, 86(1), 13-24.
- McBride, A. (2006). *Landmark cases. Brown vs Board of Education 1954.*
https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/landmark_brown.html
- McCluney, C., Robotham, K., Lee, S., Smith, R., & Durkee, M. (2019). The costs of code-switching. *Harvard Business Review, Advancing Black Leaders.*
- McCoy, D. L., & Rodricks, D. J. (2015). Critical race theory in higher education: 20 years of theoretical and research innovations. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 41(3), 1-136.
- McCray, C., Wright, J., & Beachum, F. (2007). Beyond Brown: Examining the perplexing plight of African American principals. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34(4), 247-255.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (n.d.) *African American*. <https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/African%20American>
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (n.d.). *Segregation*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/segregation>
- Money, J. (2017). Effectiveness of transformational leadership style in secondary schools in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(9). 135–139.

- Odumeru, J., & Ogbonna, I. (2013). Transformational vs. transactional leadership theories: evidence in literature. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 2(2), 355-361.
- Okçu, V. (2014). Relation between secondary school administrators' transformational and transactional leadership style and skills to diversity management in the school. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 14(6), 2162–2174.
- Orfield, G. (1975). How to make desegregation work: The adaptation of schools to their newly-integrated student bodies. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 39(2), 314-340.
- Patton, A. (2011). Pioneering principals in a segregated school, Lincoln High School, Forrest City, Arkansas. *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, 42(1), 3-21.
- Rousmaniere, K. (2013). *Principal's office: A social history of the American school principal*. State University of New York Press.
- Rudestam, K., & Newton, R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Salkind, N. (Ed). (2010). *The encyclopedia of research design*. Sage Publications.
- Savage, C. G. (2001). Because we did more with less: The agency of African American teachers in Franklin, Tennessee: 1890-1967. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76, 170-203.
- Schroeder, B. (2016). The effectiveness of servant leadership in schools from a Christian perspective. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 8(2), 13-18.
- Shagaloff, J. (1963). A review of public school desegregation in the North and West. *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, 36(6) 292-296.

- Smith, A. (2020). What to know about microaggressions. *Medical News Today*.
- Reviewed by Jennifer Litner, LMFT, CST.
- Terosky, A., & Reitano, M. (2016). Putting followers first, the role of servant leadership in cases of urban, public school principals. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(1), 192-222.
- Tilman, L. (2004a). Unintended consequences?: The impact of the Brown v. Board of Education decision on the employment status of Black educators. *Education and Urban Society, 36*, 280-303.
- Tillman, L. (2004b). African American principals and the legacy of Brown. *Review of Research in Education, 28*, 171-204.
- Tillman, L. C. (2008). African-American principals and the legacy of Brown. In Linda C. Tillman (Ed.), *Sage handbook of African-American education* (pp. 171-204). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Trochim, W. M. K., & Donnelly, J. P. (2008). *The research methods knowledge base* (3rd ed.). Atomic Dog: a part of Cengage Learning.
- Urban. (2020). In *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban>
- Vergon, C. (1990). The school desegregation movement: Implications for equity and excellence. In S. Goldberg (Ed.), *Readings on equal education*. AMS Press, 10, 317-336.
- Walker, S. V. (1996). *Their highest potential—An African American school community in the segregated South* (1st ed.). University of North Carolina Press.

- Walker, S. V. (2000). Valued segregated schools for African American children in the South, 1935-1969: A review of common themes and characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), 253-285.
- Walker, S. V., & Archung, K. N. (2003). The segregated schooling of Blacks in the southern United States and South Africa. *Comparative Education Review, 47*, 21-40.
- Walters, C. H. (2001). Assumptions of qualitative research methods. *Perspectives in Learning, 2*(1). <http://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/pil/vol2/iss1/14>
- Watras, J. (2010). The racial desegregation of Dayton, Ohio public schools 1966 - 2008. *Ohio History, 117*(1), 93- 107.
- White-Smith, K. A. (2012). Beyond instructional leadership: The lived experiences of principals in successful urban schools. *Journal of School Leadership, 22*(1), 6–25.
- Will, M. (2019). Thousands of Black educators lost jobs after Brown v. Board. *Education Week, 38*, 17.
- Wilson, W. (2013). Combating concentrated poverty in urban neighborhoods. *Journal of Applied Social Science, 7*(2), 135-143.
- Wilson, W. J. (1992). The plight of the inner-city Black male. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 136*(3), 320-325.
- Wilson, W. J., & Freedman, J. O. (2001). The new economy and racial inequality. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 54*(4), 41-48.
- Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Prentice Hall.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

November 15, 2020

Dear (Participant),

I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Youngstown State University. I am conducting a study on the lived experiences of African American male principals. I will be conducting interviews, direct observations, and document reviews as part of my research study and I am asking you to participate. As an African American male principal in an urban district, you are in an ideal position to contribute to the scholarly works about the actual lived experiences of African American male principals. This letter will serve as a formal invitation to participate in my research study.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in an initial 60-to-90-minute interview and a 30-minute follow up interview. Both interviews will be audio-recorded and face-to-face at a location off school grounds in a place convenient for you. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Data will be collected and kept private and you will select a pseudonym of your choice. After the audio-recordings have been transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review the data prior to submission for my study. This will ensure that I have accurately represented your comments.

In addition to the interviews, I am also asking you to submit three artifacts for document review to be reviewed by the researcher that showcase your communication and leadership to your staff. One of the documents will be a copy of your beginning-of-

the-year letter to your staff, a copy of a staff-meeting agenda and another document of your choice. Examples of the third document could include professional-development presentations, meeting notes, newsletters or any other artifacts that showcase their communication and leadership.

In addition to the document reviews, I will need to directly observe you engaged at a staff meeting at school for 30 minutes. I will not be a participant in the meeting and will not interfere with the observation.

I sincerely hope that you will consider contacting me to participate in my study. If you would like to participate, please contact me no later than seven days after the date of this email. Once you agree to participate, a consent form will then be emailed to you.

Best,

Corey D. Grubbs

Doctoral Candidate, Youngstown State University

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent for Participation in Research Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research phenomenological study will be to describe the lived experiences of African American male principals in an urban district. Interviews, observations, and document reviews are the data collection methods that will be used to determine my outcomes. The findings of this research study may be used to help future African American male educators who aspire to be principals and to help search-firms, human-resources departments and senior-level administrators in the recruitment of African American male principals.

I understand that I will be involved in an interview that will last between 60 and 90 minutes and I will participate in a follow up interview for 30 minutes. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher will ask questions to gain insight into the participants' lived experiences as African American male principals in urban settings. Handwritten notes will be taken and the interview responses will be audio recorded.

I understand that I will be involved in a direct observation that will last 30 minutes of the participant's engaging in his role as a principal. Field notes will be taken and the actions of the principal will be documented on an observation form.

I understand that I will submit a demographic questionnaire to be reviewed by the researcher.

I understand that I will submit three documents to be reviewed by the researcher that showcase my communication and leadership to my staff. One of the documents will be a copy of my beginning-of-the-year letter to staff, a copy of a staff meeting agenda and another document of my choice. Examples of the third document could include a professional-development presentation, meeting notes, a newsletter, or any other document that showcases my communication and leadership.

I understand that by participating in this study I am contributing to research that will fill a gap in the literature concerning the lived experiences of African American male principals in urban settings. I understand the researcher will take the necessary steps to protect my confidentiality, including using a pseudonym and omitting details that might be used to identify me; however, it is possible that my responses may identify me and may lead to potential risk.

I volunteer to participate in this study conducted by Mr. Corey D. Grubbs from Youngstown State University. I understand this study will gather data concerning the lived experiences of African American male principals in an urban setting.

I understand that I will not be identified by name in any reports or publications. My confidentiality will be ensured during this study and all data gathered will be subject to standard data use policies which protect my privacy and personal information. Only the researcher will have access to the data gathered during this study.

I understand if I feel uncomfortable at any point during this study, I have the right to opt out of participating in the study.

I have read all the above information about the research study in addition to my rights as a research participant. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form.

My Printed Name: _____

My Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Corey D. Grubbs

Youngstown State University

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the demographic questionnaire below. Please write or type your responses and either mail it back in the envelope provided to the researcher or bring it to the interview.

1. Chosen pseudonym

2. Current position in the district

3. Number of years in education

4. Number of years taught in the classroom

5. Number of years as a high school principal

6. Number of years as principal in current building

7. Number of urban districts beside your current district that you have worked in?

8. Highest degree obtained

9. Superintendent's License held _____ yes _____ no

10. Age range _____ 30-39 _____ 40-49 _____ 50 - 59 _____ 60-over

11. Anything else you'd like to share:

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>1. How do African American male leaders in urban settings describe their roles and responsibilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your roles and responsibilities? • How would you describe your vision as a principal? How do you inspire others to follow and carry out your vision? • How would you describe your role and responsibilities in influencing the community? • In what ways do you provide support and encouragement to those you serve? • In what ways do you stimulate creativity and innovation with your staff? • In what ways have you made sacrifices for the good of others?
<p>2. In what ways do African American male principals in urban settings describe their lived experiences?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. How do African American male principals describe their successes?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. How do African American male principals describe their challenges and barriers?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">c. How do African American male principals describe the supports they perceive most beneficial?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been your greatest achievement as an African American male principal in an urban setting? • What has been your greatest challenge or barrier as an African American male principal? • What, if any, socioeconomic barriers or challenges do you deal with? • What, if any, cultural or racial barriers or challenges do you deal with? • What barriers or challenges within the school system do you deal with? • What supports or activities have been most influential in your career? • How, if any, do you believe your experiences as an African American male principal have differed from that of a White male principal?
<p>3. In what ways do African American male principals describe their leadership practices as contributing towards the academic success of their students and school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leadership practices or strategies have had the most impact on the academic success of your school? • What leadership practices or strategies have had the most impact on the culture of your school?

<p>a. How do African American principals describe their involvement and service to the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What leadership practices or strategies have you used that have not worked?• What life experiences have equipped you with being successful as a principal?• What advice would you give to other aspiring African American male principals?
---	--

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

1. As the interview participant entered the room, he was welcomed, offered a bottle of water and asked to have a seat at a table across from the researcher.
2. I thanked the interview participant for being present and engaged him in small talk regarding how their day and school year were going. I used this opportunity to build a relationship with the participant with hopes of his being more open and transparent when the interview began. This information was not used in the data collection for my study.
3. I also assured the interview participant that I would be using his pseudonym during transcription to ensure his anonymity.
4. The interview participant was given an informed consent form (Appendix B) and asked to read the form and sign it.
5. I collected the signed copy and gave the participant an additional copy of the informed consent form for his records. I offered to answer any questions the participant might have regarding my research study. I also collected the three documents for review.
6. I told the interview participant that I would now record the interview. I also told the interview participant that I would be scripting notes while he was answering questions.
7. I turned on the recording device and began asking the interview questions (Appendix C). I asked probing questions in between interview questions if I deemed it necessary.

8. At the end of each question, I paused and asked if there was anything else the participant wanted to add to his response. Throughout the interview I stayed engaged with the interviewee through my nonverbal responses and limited verbal responses.
9. At the conclusion of the interview, I reviewed my scripting notes and asked any additional follow-up questions needed.
10. I thanked the interviewee for making contributions to my research study by sharing his experiences as an African American male principal.
11. Last, I turned the recording device off at the conclusion of the interview. The same above process was repeated for all interviews to ensure reliability in the study.
12. Each interview participant was then advised of the member checking procedures after all the data had been collected and was escorted to the door.

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FROM COMMON THEMES

1. Please share two adjectives that would describe you as a leader.

2. Do you feel you are seen differently as an African American male principal and if so, how?

3. What challenges or barriers have you faced as an African American male principal leading a predominately white staff?

4. How has being an African American male principal impacted the way you approach innovation?

5. How have your lived experiences as an African American male principal impacted the way you approach change and reform in education to improve student achievement and student outcomes?

6. How have your lived experiences influenced the way your approach leadership as an African American male principal?

APPENDIX G

OBSERVATION PROCEDURES

1. The researcher met each participant at a previously determined location to begin the observation process.
2. The researcher's presence was noted to anyone present in the room at the beginning of the observation. No other information was provided.
3. The researcher sat in a space towards the back of the room and did not interfere with or participate in the activity observed.
4. The direct-observation data collection form was used to record notes during the observation. The observation, date, time, and location were recorded on the form. The number of years the principal had been in education and the number of years the principal had led that building were also recorded.
5. The researcher ended the observation and left the room.

APPENDIX H

DIRECT OBSERVATION FORM

Observation Date, Time, and Location:

Principal leadership task observed:

Number of years in education: _____ Number of years at current building: _____

Inspiration/Motivation	Empowerment/Support	Innovation/Creativity	Idealized Influence: e.g., Sacrifices/Serving others

Additional Notes:

APPENDIX I

DOCUMENT REVIEW FORM

Date and time document received: _____

Document reviews received:

A: Beginning-of-the-year staff letter

B: Staff-meeting agenda

C: Participant's choice of document

Inspiration/Motivation	Empowerment/Support	Innovation/Creativity	Idealized influence: e.g., Sacrifices/serving others

Additional Notes:

October 29, 2020

Dr. Jane Beese, Principal Investigator
Mr. Corey Grubbs, Co-investigator
Department of Teacher Education and Leadership Studies
UNIVERSITY

RE: IRB Protocol Number: 018-2021
Title: The Lived Experiences of Black Male Principals in Urban Settings

Dear Dr. Beese and Mr. Grubbs:

The Institutional Review Board of Youngstown State University has reviewed the above mentioned Protocol via expedited review and determined that it meets the criteria of an expedited protocol, Category #7. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that your project has been fully approved for one year. You must submit a Continuing Review Form and have your project approved by October 28, 2021, if your project continues beyond one year.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB. Best wishes in the conduct of your study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Severine Van Slambrouck
Director, Office of Research Services, Compliance and Initiatives
Authorized Institutional Official

SVS:cc

c: Dr. Marcia Matanin, Chair
Department of Teacher Education and Leadership Studies

