Exploring the Experiences of Black Male Teachers and School Leadership Practices That Influence Retention

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife Lauren. Thank you for your support and unwavering belief in me throughout this entire process. I also wish to dedicate this work to my family, who inspire and motivate me to follow my dreams. Thank you for showing me what it means to stay committed to my goals.

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Abstract of Dissertation

Exploring the Experiences of Black Male Teachers and School Leadership Practices That Influence Retention

Teacher retention is a persistent challenge in public school education for school leaders, specifically the retention of Black male teachers. There is limited literature on specific leadership practices that focus on supporting Black male teachers. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences and identity of Black male teachers. Additionally, perceived leadership practices employed by school principals that influence attrition and retention of Black male teachers were examined.

This qualitative research design study involved interviews of 13 current and six former Black male teachers from two districts in Mid-Atlantic states and one district in one Southern state. The study utilized transformative leadership theory and critical race theory as a conceptual framework to understand the lived experiences of current and former Black male teachers related to career transitional decisions. Analysis of the interview data suggests that school leaders who foster transformative workplace environments where Black males are recognized and supported positively influence their retention decisions. Alternatively, interview data suggest that when Black males have limited opportunities to contribute to their school communities in meaningful ways, they are more likely to leave the profession.

Implications include recommendations for school districts and policymakers to create programs and initiatives that support the retention of Black male teachers as there are positive effects of having Black male teachers. Additionally, future research should

address leadership perceptions of Black male teachers to provide an in-depth analysis of what it means to support Black male educators.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

In an era of public and political demands for school reform, there is a high demand for quality teachers (Holme, Jabbar, Germain & Dinning, 2018; Hughes, 2012). Although volumes of research have demonstrated that teachers are the most powerful factor in student learning, the retention of qualified teachers remains a significant issue for many organizations (Bethell, Hunt, & Shenton, 2004; Dallas, 2006; Dingus, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher attrition and retention are two widely researched educational phenomena that serve as indicators for the number of teachers staying, moving, or leaving the field of education (Billingsley, 2004; Carroll, 2007; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Perda, 2014). According to Glennie, Mason, and Edmunds (2016), teacher retention percentages have ranged from 83% - 86 % following the first year of teaching to 54% - 55% following the fifth year of teaching, thus raising the cost of recruiting new teachers. Continually searching for, hiring, and training teachers, only to lose them after a short period, can undermine school improvement efforts focused on increasing student achievement (Holme et al., 2018; Hughes, 2012). Researchers have found that school leadership is as an essential predictor of teacher attrition and retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Hughes, Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Matt & O'Reilly, 2015; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2014).

More importantly, researchers have suggested that more influential school leaders are better able to retain teachers due to their ability to create positive school climates and working conditions (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Gomba, 2015; Grissom &

Bartanen, 2019; Ingersoll, 2011, Ladd, 2011). Factors such as teacher autonomy and shared decision-making are additional indicators that have led to greater job satisfaction for teachers (Devos, Tuytens & Hulpia, 2014; Gomba, 2015; Shaw & Newton. 2014; Thomas, Tuytens, Devos, Kelchtermans, & Vanderlinde, 2020). Along with school leadership, workplace conditions, and job satisfaction, personal characteristics and compensation can also influence and impact teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Ladd, 2011). Supportive behavior, instructional support, and intellectual stimulation were found to serve as leadership functions that support organizational commitment to the profession of teaching (Devos et al., 2014; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011; Shaw & Newton, 2014 Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Thomas et al., 2020).

Student diversity remains in stark contrast to teacher diversity as minority teachers, specifically Black male teachers, make up less than two percent of the educational workforce (Bristol, 2015; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Kearney, 2010; Will, 2016). The current literature on Black male teachers focuses primarily on examining the challenges and experiences that Black male teachers have faced within the educational workforce (Bristol, 2014; Brockenbrough, 2012; Harris & Davis, 2018; Hayes, Juarez, & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014; Kohli, 2018; Lynn, 2006; & Will, 2016). As drawn from the literature, societal pressures, feelings of isolation, and workplace conditions drawn from the literature have informed researchers of the lived experiences of Black male teachers (Brown, 2009; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018).

In order to combat Black male teacher retention issues, it is essential to understand the systemic structures that hinder Blacks from entering the profession.

Historically, the experiences of Black teachers involve racism and patterns of inequality (Burkholder, 2012; Gordon, 2002; Gundalk, 2007; Torres, Santos, Peck & Cortes, 2004). Haney (1978) adds that laws and practices were adopted to promote unequal pay amongst Black and White teachers. Post *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1954), the number of Black teachers across 17 states declined due to the integration of schools (Ethridge, 1979; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Madkins, 2011). Another factor that hindered Blacks from entering the profession includes K-12 school experiences. More specifically, the school experiences of Black male students have influenced their decision to enter the profession lataer on (Goings & Blanco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011; Madkins, 2011). The negative perceptions of teachers and teaching and schools' views as oppressive institutions have limited the Black male teacher workforce (Goings & Blanco, 2016; Graham & Erwin 2011).

Scholars Dee (2005) and Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, and Papageorge (2018) found that increasing Black teachers in the educational workforce benefits student achievement. Exposure to Black teachers at the elementary school level has benefited Black male students' educational attainment and impacted their student achievement (Brown, 2009; Hayes et al., 2014; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018). Students exposed to same-race teachers yielded statistically significant achievement gains (Dee, 2005; Gershenson et al., 2018; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018). Black students assigned to a Black teacher at least once during their elementary school years were less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to seek higher education opportunities. A common theme throughout the literature supported the value-added specifically by Black male teachers due to beliefs and higher expectations for Black students (Brown, 2009; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018).

Additional benefits of having Black male teachers included authentic relationships with Black students and increased opportunities to engage Black students through culturally rich teaching strategies (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2012; Wilder, 2000; Scott & Alexander, 2019). With student achievement at the forefront, there is value-added to retain Black teachers (Bristol, 2015; Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018). Therefore, examining of leadership practices that hinder or help Black male teacher retention presents a sense of urgency.

According to Bristol (2015), Black male teachers' decisions to enter the field of education included having positive experiences with male educators of color and experiences with ineffective teachers. Additionally, Black male teachers stated that serving as role models for students of color served as a driving force to enter the profession (Bristol, 2015). The task of serving as the sole representative for the Black or minority experience and being positioned as disciplinarians impacted Black male teachers' decision to stay in teaching (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Kholil, 2018; Will, 2016). Ultimately, balancing various job responsibilities and feelings of alienation, working conditions, and a lack of professional growth influenced the retention of Black male participants in multiple studies (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2012; Kholil; 2018). Black male teachers' decisions to enter and stay remain unknown, as literature heavily focuses on the factors that cause Black male teachers to leave the profession, thus creating a clear gap that served as the underpinnings of this study.

Statement of Problem

The educational status of Black males presents a complicated picture, as the review of multiple sources paints the pressing educational underperformance among

Black males students (Howard, 2013; NAEP, 2019). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examination found that there is still an achievement gap among Black males compared to other student groups in grades four, eight, and twelve (NAEP, 2019). Black male students are improving in math in grades four and eight, but their grade level proficiency scale scores are still below White, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian male students (NAEP, 2019). In 2019, the average reading score for White male students on the NAEP fourth and eighth-grade exams was 28 points higher than Black male students. The 12th-grade assessment in 2019 revealed that White male students were 31 points higher than Black male students. Historically, Black male students continue to perform below White male students in reading, dating back to 1992 (NAEP, 2019).

Additionally, the performances in mathematics were consistent with reading. Black male students, compared to their male peers, are performing lower in grades four and eight, with a more significant achievement gap by grade twelve (NAEP, 2019). The average reading score for White male students on the NAEP fourth grade exam was 27 points higher than Black male students. Reading scores for grade eight revealed a more significant gap, with the average score for Black male students being 35 points lower than White male students and 32 points in grade twelve (NAEP, 2019). Overall, the data mentioned explains the persistent under-achievement and alarming disparities of Black males in U.S. schools. Historically, Black male students continue to be one of the more academically and socially marginalized sub-groups as achievement gaps increase, specifically in grade 12 (Howard, 2013; NAEP, 2019).

According to student achievement literature, the role of same-race teachers serves as a factor in schooling outcomes, particularly as it relates to closing the achievement gap of Black males in reading and math (Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018; Hayes, Juarez & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014). Additionally, culturally relevant teaching practices utilized by Black male teachers yield positive achievement outcomes for students of color (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2012; Hayes et al., 2014; Wilder, 2000). It is important to note that when Black students are assigned to Black teachers during their elementary school years they are more likely to aspire to college and less likely to drop out of high school. Therefore, it is essential that there is a sufficient representation of Black male teachers in U.S. schools (Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay & Papageorge, 2018; Hayes, Juarez & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014).

Research has also shown a disproportionate amount of teachers of color, explicitly concerning Black males (Goldring et al., 2014; Mitchel, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education School and Staffing Survey (SASS), male teachers constitute approximately 23.7% of the workforce, Black teachers make up 6.7%, and Black male teachers make up less than 2% of teachers in U.S. public schools (Goldring et al., 2014). The disproportionality, and absence, of Black male teachers are essential given the diverse educational student population. According to NCES (2019) elementary and secondary enrollment data, fall 2015 student population data consisted of 49% White, 15% Black, 26% Hispanic, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, and 3% two or more races. More specifically, in the fall of 2015, 30% of public students attended public schools, with a combined enrollment of minority students being at least 75% of the total enrollment. Over 58% of Black students attended such public schools (de Brey,

Musu, McFarland, Wilkinson-Flicker, Diliberti, Zhang, & Wang 2019). Within high minority-majority school settings, the number of Black male teachers decreases, which increases the underrepresentation while adding to the compelling unsolved challenge of closing the achievement gap for Black male students, which is concerning (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kearney, 2010; Kholil 2018; Will, 2016).

Building on the existing literature, this study sought to fill the gap in knowledge regarding the retention of Black male teachers. More importantly, a review of the literature highlighted the increasing need for Black male teachers, along with limited empirical evidence of specific leadership practices that influence retention and attrition. As mentioned above, there is a positive impact and value-added of Black male teachers, but what remains unknown are the lived experiences of Black male teachers that shape what needs to retain them effectively. The current teacher attrition and retention literature fail to focus on Black males' needs as most studies cluster Black male teachers under the minority educational workforce subgroup. The consistent misrepresentation of Black male teachers enlarges the gap within the current literature while limiting the amount of empirical evidence that identifies the current lived experiences of the Black male teacher. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Black male teachers as they relate to school leadership factors facilitated by school principals.

Purpose and Research Questions

As mentioned, less clear are the lived experiences of the Black male teacher and the effects of school leadership that specifically influence the retention decisions of Black male teachers. Additionally, there is a limited amount of well-defined leadership strategies that school principals can implement to assist with retaining Black male

teachers. The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences and identity of Black male teachers. In addition to understanding the identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers, this study focused on perceived leadership practices employed by school principals that influence the attrition and retention of Black male teachers.

Two proposed research questions informed this study:

- **RQ1**: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?
    - In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?
    - In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?
- **RQ2:** What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?
    - What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?

Statement of Potential Significance

Professional Literature

Findings from this study can have significance in expanding the professional literature around Black male teachers. Furthermore, research concerning Black male teachers will add to the existing literature on the benefits of having a Black male teacher concerning student achievement. As mentioned, the literature has shown that teachers serve as an influential factor in raising student achievement (Bethell, Hunt, & Shenton, 2004; Dallas, 2006; Dingus, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001), yet there is limited literature on

leadership practices specifically regarding the retention of Black male teachers. This study adds to the professional literature on school leadership by utilizing transformative leadership theory as a perspective to examine the retention of Black male teachers.

Policy

This study can be used to support educational policy research on how to close the achievement gap, as there are stark differences between minority and nonminority student achievement data. As mentioned, teacher quality and retention heavily impact student achievement. Seeking to understand the experiences of Black male teachers as it relates to principal school leadership will provide important information to federal, state, and local policymakers regarding the implications of mandated policies and initiatives that might hinder the retention of Black male teachers. Finally, school districts and universities will benefit from this study by improving recruitment strategies for Black male teachers, improving coaching, curriculum resources, and materials for current and aspiring school principals related to Black male teachers, all while gaining insight into the perspectives and lived experiences of Black male teachers.

Practice

Understanding the lived experiences of Black male teachers will also serve as a framework for school principals and districts that are seeking to improve or implement programs to strengthen the representation of Black male teachers. It is vital to hire, retain, and build a diverse educational workforce that represents and matches a diverse student population. This study can provide school principals and districts with practical strategies to increase Black male teachers' overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment. School principals and districts will also benefit from directly hearing from Black male

teachers, a vital underrepresented subgroup of teachers, to adjust or shift daily leadership practices and supports.

Participants

The study will allow participants to reflect and share their narratives through the art of storytelling as Black male teachers. Additionally, this study can inform and provide Black male teachers with a richer sense of their identity and how to better navigate and advocate in educational spaces Ultimately, the co-construction of their lived experiences may enhance their understanding of what it means to be a Black male teacher.

Personal

As a Black male school-based leader serving in a Title I public school setting, it is of great importance that I examine how to diversify the teacher workforce to represent the diverse student population. I am pinpointing the specific systems and structures necessary to increase the representation of Black males in education to guide my work in providing a varied representation of educators for the scholars that I serve. More importantly, this study will add to my knowledge of supporting Black male teachers and a relentless focus on closing the achievement gap while hiring and recruiting teachers who represent my student body.

Theoretical Foundation

According to Sleeter, La Vonne, and Kumashiro (2014), the school setting should be a place where academic knowledge is constructed and transmitted while setting enduring values that shape children's future. Therefore, the current educational student population requires a diverse teacher workforce to support student learning. Two theoretical frameworks, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and transformative leadership guide

the notion of creating a diverse teacher workforce. CRT consists of five elements that focus on the deconstruction of oppressive structures to reform racial societal structures (Barnes 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT explores the commitment to social justice and the intercentricity of race and racism through experiential knowledge, often known as storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Research shows that the application of CRT specifically for Black male teachers can derive an authentic narrative for this particular subgroup of teachers (Lynn, 2006). Lynn (2006), applied CRT to address the challenges and barriers Black male teachers face to examine the organizational conditions that impact Black male teachers.

Transformative leadership is an approach to leadership that calls for critical awareness, reflection, and analysis, leading to activism against injustices (Shields, 2012). Transformative leadership starts with acknowledging the disparities outside of an organization that impacts the organization as a whole, with a goal of individual, organizational, and societal transformation through deep and equitable change in social conditions (Shields, 2012). The process includes the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge that generates inequities while acknowledging power and privilege that impinge on the success of varied stakeholders within the organization (Shields, 2012). Therefore, transformative leaders are "primarily concerned with organizational effects and outcomes" while "attending to the differential backgrounds and experiences of those within the organization" (Shields, 2012, p.20).

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences of Black male teachers to understand leadership factors that influenced their intentions to stay or leave the profession of teaching. With a focus on Black male teacher longevity despite

challenges in the workplace, transformative leadership theory and CRT will assist with unpacking discriminatory policies and practices that undermine career longevity among Black male teachers. The lived experiences of current Black male teachers will help expound facets of transformative leadership that helped them stay in the profession despite practices that perpetuate racial inequality that may have influenced former Black male teachers to leave the profession. Overall, the experiences and marginalization of current and former Black male teachers may offer insight into how leaders may recognize disparities and policies concerning Black male teachers and ultimately change them.

Methodology

The methodology for this study included an interview-based phenomenological qualitative methodology for current and former Black male teachers. Phenomenology is described as the study of the shared meaning of an experience or phenomenon for several individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2017; McCaslin & Scott, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological study aims to reduce the meaning of an individual's experience with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (Creswell & Poth, 2017). More specifically, knowledge is constructed through the use of multiple in-depth interviews where participants are asked open-ended questions to provide an understanding of the lived experience of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The use of phenomenology within the study allowed for a deep and rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities that current and former Black male teachers have faced within public school education with an emphasis on influential school principal leadership factors that impact their retention. Explicit methodological procedures and methods are outlined in chapter three.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to the lived experiences of Black male teachers from two districts in two Mid-Atlantic states and one district in one Southern state. As mentioned, investigating the lived experiences of Black male teachers is of great importance due to the disproportionate number of Black male teachers and the positive effects that having Black male teachers have on student achievement. Solely focusing on Black males eliminates generalizability to other sub groups of the educational workforce. However, results may contribute and inform future research concentrated on supporting the retention of Black male teachers to close the achievement gap for Black males.

Limitations

This study may be influenced by my years of experience as a Black male teacher and school administrator, which may cause unintended potential bias. However, to combat potential bias, trustworthy techniques such as reflective journaling were employed throughout the data collection process. Additionally, the nature of this study focuses on current and former Black male teachers describing their lived experiences accurately. Potential bias could arise between two groups due to the varying perceptions. Black male former teachers may have provided biased answers due to leaving the profession.

Definitions of Key Terms

A number of terms appear consistently throughout the study.

Attrition: In the context of this study attrition refers to two types of individuals.

"Movers" are teachers who are still teaching in the current school year but had moved to a different school after the base year. "Leavers" are teachers who leave the teaching profession after the base year (Goldring et al., 2014).

Black: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Census Bureau, 2018).

Minority: According to the US Census Bureau, the term minority refers to several different race categories—Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Other, and Two or More races. Hispanics are also considered a minority, though Hispanic, or Latino.

Race: A person's self-identification with one or more social groups (Census Bureau, 2018).

Retention: Pertains to teachers who remained in the same teaching assignment and the same school as the previous year (Billingsley, 2004).

Transformative Leadership: Transformative leadership is a leadership model that critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but also for a better life lived in common with others (Shields, 2010).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the career transitional behaviors of Black male teachers through the lens of school leadership. Eight sections shape this particular chapter, an introduction, search engines and terms, review of Black male teacher literature, a review of teacher attrition and retention literature, and literature on the role of leadership, followed by a conceptual framework, inferences form the literature, and research questions. The following academic databases consulted while searching for current peer-reviewed literature included:

Education Source	ERIC (EBSCO)	Google Scholar
ProQuest	Gelman Library System	JSTOR

The search terms and keywords used to drive the search were:

African American teachers	Minority teacher
Black teachers	Minority teacher recruitment
Black male teacher	Minority teacher retention
Black male teacher retention	Teacher attrition
Black male teacher attrition	Teacher compensation
Black student achievement	Teacher turnover
Critical Race Theory	Teacher retention
History of Black teachers	Teacher reform
History of Teaching	Teacher quality
Male teacher retention	Transformative leadership
Male teacher attrition	Workplace conditions

After reviewing a collection of articles, studies, and books, several themes have shaped this literature review. This literature review will begin by providing a historical context of the Black teacher, along with an exploration of the benefits and value added of Black male teachers. In the next sections the current state of teacher attrition in relation to factors such as personal characteristics, workplace conditions, and compensation will be reviewed. Following this, the literature review will look at the various teacher attrition and retention factors that impact Black male teachers. Next, a review on the role of leadership regarding teacher attrition will lead to an examination of the literature related to leadership practices that support Black male teachers. Finally, the literature review will discuss the theories that form the theoretical and conceptual framework for this proposed study.

Historical Context of Black Teachers

To understand the lived experiences of Black male teachers in the U.S. an in-depth analysis of historical perspectives and trends around Black teachers was needed. During slavery, Whites barred Blacks from religious instruction, schooling and literacy, making many educational practices for Blacks during slavery hidden (Gundalk, 2007). As a result, enslaved children and adults bartered with White adults to learn basic skills and concepts (Gundalk, 2007).

In the early 1900s, Black teachers served as the stewards for education, educating 90% of Blacks who lived in the south (Morris & Monroe, 2009). Burkholder's (2012) study examined Black teacher journals from 1929 to 1954 that focused on the lived experiences of Black teachers in the south. In fact, racial handicaps and discriminatory practices shaped the overarching themes presented throughout the study. Black teachers

during this time period focused on teaching health, cleanliness, punctuality, and good work ethic to students as a form of racial uplift (Burkholder, 2012). The Great Depression led to an increase in disparities among Black educators, including lack of facilities and other tangible resources. As a result, Black teachers continued to advocate for equality (Burkholder, 2012).

Midway through the 1900's half of all Black professionals were employed as teachers in the United States (Cole, 1986; Dingus, 2009; Walker, 2000). The profession of teaching offered a sense of pride and tradition for many Black educators (Dingus, 2009). During segregation, many Blacks were drawn to teaching as a career because teaching provided stability and security (Coursen, 1975). As mentioned, teaching within the Black community was seen as a well-respected and highly regarded profession, which resulted in Black teachers placing high expectations on Black students (Burkholder, 2012; Gordon, 2002; Perkins, 1989).

The Supreme Court ruling Brown v. Board of Education 347 U.S. 483 (1954) sparked a shift among the educational workforce of Black teachers. The Brown decision mandated the integration of public schools across the United States. The integration of Black students in White schools shifted the number of Black teachers remaining in the profession. Before Brown, nearly 82,000 Black teachers were employed across the U.S. (Hawkins, 1994). After the Brown decision, many Black teachers lost their jobs as a result of the integration of public schools (Madkins, 2011). Black teachers across 17 states lost their positions as teachers and administrators between 1956 and 1965 (Ethridge, 1979; Hudson & Holmes, 1994), shifting the number of Black educators in the public school system.

In fact, many Black teachers left the profession due to not being initially hired in desegregated schools after the Brown ruling (Foster, 1997; Madkins, 2011). Black teachers who remained employed in the south experienced racial injustices by only being hired to educate Black students, while White teachers were hired to teach White students (Torres, Santos, Peck & Cortes, 2004). In addition to solely educating Black students, many schools closed as a result of the Brown ruling (Haney, 1978) causing Black teachers to be dismissed from their schools with no prior cause. School boards and state legislatures also adopted laws and practices that promoted unequal pay amongst Black and White teachers (Haney, 1978). By 1978, the percentage of Blacks in the teaching workforce declined to 12%, marking the beginning of a long period of the loss of Black teachers (Madkins, 2011).

Black Male Perspective of Teaching as a Career

The historical perspective on Black male teachers provides insight as to why Black males eventually at the teacher level, continue to be fewer. Goings and Bianco's (2016) study examined the perspective of 22 high school age Black males regarding factors that influenced or deterred their consideration of becoming teachers. The qualitative study, interviewed students from two high schools within the same district. Open-ended, interview questions were formed based on students' responses to a 58 short answer Likert-scale survey. Findings revealed that negative school experiences coupled with low expectations, racial stereotypes, and microaggressions were factors that deterred participants from becoming a teacher. In fact, low expectations served as a reoccurring theme throughout the study, as participants in the study recounted teachers' disinterest in them because they were Black males. Moreover, the findings from Goings and Blanco's

(2016) study presented evidence of Black male students being turned away from becoming teachers as early as high school. Similar to Goings and Blanco (2018), Graham and Erwin's (2011) study also examined the perceptions of teaching as a career option for Black male high-school students. Sixty-three Black males who were performing well academically participated in the study that used a phenomenological approach to examine and discuss their lived experiences. Findings from Graham and Erwin's (2011) study presented the following factors that influenced the perceptions of teaching: negative perceptions of teachers and teaching, and schools as oppressive institutions.

Consistent with Goings and Blanco (2016), Graham and Erwin (2011) asserted that the school experiences of Black male students influence and shape their view of teaching as a profession. Several participants within the study agreed that Black male students are often treated unfairly within schools, which devalues the experience of Black male students (Graham & Erwin, 2011). Consequently, there is a connection between the negative perceptions of teaching that high school aged Black males possess, and choosing teaching as a career.

Although Goings & Blanco (2016) and Graham & Ervin (2011) discussed the various factors that hindered participants from seeing themselves as teachers, an in-depth look utilizing CRT could have added a deeper examination of the participants racialized experiences. Graham & Erwin (2011) briefly discussed schools as oppressive institutions and how participants felt that teachers devalue the experiences of Black males but unsuccessfully examined the leadership practices of these particular institutions.

Several bodies of Black masculinity studies have informed the perceived identity of the Black male teacher (Brown, 2009; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018). According to Meidl

(2018) societal pressures around Black masculinity served as a critical factor as to why Black males are not entering the profession (Meidl, 2018). A phenomenological qualitative study conducted by Meidl (2018) investigated the beliefs and challenges of recruiting Black males to teach in early childhood education. Findings from the study found that societal pressures of being a man and being a provider contributed to the lack of Black male teachers wanting to teach in an early childhood environment (Meidl, 2018). More specifically, earnings and the profession of teaching were seen as less than the goal of affluence and had a significant impact on the choice to enter teaching as a career (Meidl, 2018). Findings from Meidl's (2008) study asserted that Black men are missing from the experience of young children in schools, which causes many Black boys to not see themselves as teachers.

Meidl's (2018) study of 23 Black male teachers offered insight regarding the societal pressures of being a Black male teacher in education, but the participants examined mentored and served students in non-teaching roles, thus limiting the authenticity and validity of the study. To make a more substantial impact, investigating Black male educators who currently serve as teachers in an early childhood environment would have assisted in gaining an in-depth insight of the challenges and factors that cause Black male teachers to leave or stay in an early childhood educational setting.

Underrepresentation of Black Male Teachers

It is important to note the longstanding trends of racial oppression and inequalities Black teachers have faced in the United States. Historically, the desegregation of schooling marked the beginning of the loss of Black teachers within the profession of teaching (Madkins, 2011; Tillman, 2004). Today, Black teachers make up 6% of the

educational workforce in the U.S. and 2% are black men (Goldring et al.,2014; Feistritzer, Griffin & Linnajarvi, 2011; Pabon, 2016), thus making, Black males one of the most underrepresented demographics in teaching (Goldring et al., 2014; Mitchel, 2016). According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), the U.S. teaching workforce remains predominantly White, while minority student populations are increasing. Of the 50.7 million students in the U.S., White students account for 24.1 million, and the remaining 26.6 million are composed of minority students (NCES, 2018). In regard to distribution in public elementary and secondary schools, teacher numbers consisted of 80.1% white, 6.7% Black, 8.8% Hispanic, 2.3% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 0.3 Alaska Native, and 1.4% two or more races (Goldring et al., 2014). With regards to Black teachers, trend NCES data shows a decrease of Black teachers dating back to 1987. In 1987, Black teachers made up 8.2% of the teaching population. During the year 2016, Black teachers made up of only 6.7% of the teaching population in comparison to 80.1% of White teachers. The data presented highlights the gravity of the challenge to represent Black male teachers in the educational workforce. Additionally, the number of Black male teachers dwindles even more in high poverty, high minority-majority school settings which increases the underrepresentation of Black male teachers (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kholil, 2018; Will, 2016). Thus, there is a need for more minority teachers, specifically Black male teachers to represent the educational workforce. The benefit and value of a diverse educational workforce, specifically concerning Black males will be addressed in the next section.

Benefit and Value of Black Male Teachers

In an era of public and political demand for school reform, there is an ever increasing high demand for minority male teachers (Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011). According to the literature, the benefits and value of Black male teachers include improved student achievement outcomes that are linked to being familiar with cultural norms of Black students. Several studies (Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018; Hayes, Juarez & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014) assert the existence of positive effects from having a same-race teacher in elementary school on Black students' educational attainment. In addition to providing critical instructional connections with students inside of the classroom, Black male teachers serve as role models for Black students (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2012; Wilder, 2000).

Student Achievement

A review of the literature showcased two distinct studies conducted by Dee (2004) and Gershenson et al. (2018). The study conducted by Dee (2004) examined test score data from Tennessee's Project STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) class-size experiment. Dee (2004) utilized Project STAR public access data, which included only the observations from Black and White non-Hispanic students with Black and White non-Hispanic teachers. To examine the effects of an own race teacher on student achievement, Dee (2004) used a basic econometric model. The model used by the researcher related grade and subject specific percentile test ranks for students in schools, grade, and class, to student, teacher, and classroom traits for kindergarten to third grade students (Dee, 2004). Findings indicated that a teacher of the same race yielded

statistically significant achievement gains for both Black and White students in math and reading (Dee, 2004).

In addition to Dee's (2004) study, Gershenson et al. (2018) focused on examining longitudinal administrative data on all public school students in North Carolina. Gershenson et al. (2018) critique of Dee's (2004) previous study undergirds the purpose of the study, which focused on how exposure to a same-race teacher had a long-term impact on educational achievement. The study showcased that Black students who were randomly assigned to a Black teacher at least once in the third, fourth, or fifth grade were more likely to aspire to college and less likely to drop out of high school. The empirical examination focused on student-level data from all public schools in North Carolina for students who entered third grade between the year 2001 and 2005.

Gershenson et al. (2018) used an instrumental variable (IV) identification strategy that focused on transitory, conditionally random variation within schools over time regarding the demographic composition of teachers. To assess the validity of the IV strategy, Gershenson et al. (2018) compared the effects of the protocol to Dee's (2004) Project STAR experiment. Findings revealed that the exposure to one Black teacher had a meaningful effect on students' long-run outcomes, while being exposed to a second Black teacher had a marginal effect (Gershenson et al., 2018). According to Gershenson et al. (2018) the exposure to a Black teacher in primary school cut high school dropout rates by 39%.

Similar to Dee (2004) and Gershenson et al. (2018), Hayes et al. (2014) also examined the impact of own race teachers in relation to student achievement. The aim of the qualitative study focused on the role of two Black male teachers in regard to the

effective schooling of Black and other students of color. Participants were selected with an emphasis on Black male educators who attended Jim Crow schools and who had taught pre-and post-Jim Crow (Hayes et al., 2014). Hayes et al. (2014) utilized a variety of external stakeholders, unlike many other studies to gain access to potential participants. Recommendations from parents, students, educator colleagues, community members, school faculty, and staff helped identify participants (Hayes et al., 2014). Similar to Dee (2006), Hayes et al. (2014) used a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of Black male teachers. Researchers applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) to address the educational experiences of Black male teachers that drove Black student achievement. Findings from Hayes et al. (2014) study included the beliefs and viewpoints of the two Black educators on how culturally relevant teaching increased their engagement with students.

Related to Hayes et al. (2014), Brown's (2009) ethnographic study focused on the tools and strategies that Black male teachers utilized to improve the educational and societal conditions of Black male students. Brown's (2009) study took place in a large urban metropolitan city in the Midwest at a Title I school where 95% of the student population received free or reduced lunch. Nine Black male teachers were observed working specifically with Black male students in a variety of settings throughout the school during a two-week period. Field notes were analyzed using a comparative method to assess the observed interactions of the nine participants (Brown, 2009). Findings similar to Hayes et al. (2014) revealed that Black male teachers work through uncertainties and employed a myriad of beliefs, practices, and pedagogies to address the needs of Black male students to improve the educational and social conditions of Black

male students (Brown, 2009). Brown (2009) categorized these experiences as a product of a Black teacher's ability to employ a variety of culturally based rhetorical strategies to engage student learning.

Wilder (2000) examined the value added of Black male teachers through the narratives of Black students. Wilder (2000) asserted that fluid relationships with teachers that extend beyond the classroom were significant to students; therefore, adding to the argument that it is essential for Black students to be exposed to Black teachers. Wilder's (2000) qualitative study consisted of 12 students who enrolled at a four-year university in a northeastern state. Ninety minute in-depth interviews were conducted to gain their perceptions of their elementary and secondary schooling experiences. Congruent with Brown (2009), Wilder's findings (2000) also noted the positive impact and influence that Black teachers have on Black students. Students highlighted their experiences with Black teachers stating that having a Black teacher increased their confidence, provided them the opportunity to relate to Black culture, and placed a strong emphasis on making connections between education and the real world.

In sum, the literature reviewed presents some evidence that there are some educational benefits and value added of a diverse educational workforce (Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018 Hayes et al., 2014). Although Dee's (2004) study presented evidence of increased student achievement due to the assignment of an own-race teacher in the early grades, findings from the study cannot speak directly to regions outside of Tennessee. In addition to the location of the study, the validity of the Tennessee STAR project is of concern as the data focused on larger schools, excluded older students in Tennessee, and had a limited number of male teachers. Restructuring the

parameters of the assessment would have provided a holistic picture of the impact of same race teachers, specifically Black male teachers on student achievement. One strength of Gershenson et al. (2018) study was the examination of a large number of Black students in North Carolina (100,000), while comparing their results to the state of Tennessee. However, focusing on North Carolina students who entered the third grade between a certain time frame limited the generalizability of the value added of teacher race and student achievement on a wider scale. More must be done to include more grade levels and school districts to generate more quantitative data that supports the argument that there is value added of employing Black teachers, specifically Black male teachers at multiple levels in education. While Hayes et al. (2014) examined student achievement through the perspective of the Black male teacher, the study only consisted of two Black male educators and offered more of a quantitative, rather than qualitative analysis. Although proponents for increasing the amount of Black male teachers assert that there is a strong correlation to student achievement, one major missing piece related to the benefit of Black male teachers and student achievement is the small sample sizes within the studies. Future research should include more studies that examine the impact of same race teachers and student achievement as most of this literature was written six or more years ago with the exception of Gershenson et al. (2018) study.

Teacher Attrition

There are several negative consequences for schools with a high turnover: a disruption of school culture, a decline in student achievement because the overall teaching experience of new teachers is usually low, and a lack of funds to provide quality recruitment and training for new teachers (Glazerman, Senesky, Seftor, & Johnson, 2006;

Carroll, 2007; Djonko-Moore, 2016). According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, America's schools are struggling with a growing teacher dropout problem that is costing the nation over $7 billion a year (Carroll, 2007). Data suggest that, after just five years, 40 to 50% of all beginning teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Carroll, 2007). With the high rate of new teacher turnover, the U.S. educational system continues to lose half of all teachers before they reach their peak effectiveness (Carroll, 2007). Therefore, continually searching for, hiring, and training teachers, only to lose them after a short period, undermines the ultimate goal of school improvement, causing the career system to favor recruitment rather than retention (Hughes, 2012; Lortie, 1975). The following sections will discuss the current state of attrition along with specific factors that influence teacher attrition.

Current State of Teacher Attrition

NCES categorizes three different types of attrition: stayers, movers, and leavers (Goldring et al., 2014). Teachers who remain in the same position are known as stayers, while teachers who change schools often are referred to as movers, and teachers who leave teaching entirely are known as leavers (Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Macdonald, 1999; Goldring et al., 2014; Perda, 2014). Findings from the 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) showed that out of 3,377,900 public school teachers employed during the 2011-2012 school year, 84% remained at the same school, 8% moved to a different school, and 8% left the profession (Goldring et al., 2014). In terms of novice teachers with one to three years of experience, 80% stayed in their base-year school, 13% moved to another school, and 7% left teaching in 2012–13 (Goldring et al., 2014). The distribution of leavers according to school community type in 2012-13

consisted of 8.4% of teachers leaving in rural communities, 7.9% in the city, 7.3% in suburban communities, and 6.4% in town school communities (Goldring et al., 2014). Schools with a high percentage of students who receive free or reduced-price lunch represented a higher amount (9.8%) of teachers leaving the profession, while schools with a 0-34% of students on free or reduced lunch represented a lower amount (6.9%) of teachers leaving the profession (Goldring et al., 2014).

While it is essential to examine the current state of teacher retention, it is crucial to examine the teacher attrition and the factors that cause teachers to leave the educational profession. According to 2012-2013 NCES TFS data, about 51% of public school teachers who left teaching in 2012–13 reported that the manageability of their workload was better in their current position than in teaching (Goldring et al., 2014). Additionally, 53% of public school leavers reported that their general work conditions were better in their current position than in teaching (Goldring et al., 2014). Although there are varying percentages of teachers who leave teaching in the first five years, one stable theme was that attrition is higher for younger teachers (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006).

What the current state of teacher attrition literature failed to uncover was the attrition rate for Black male teachers. The literature, precisely the NCES data, lacked the racial breakdown of statistical data that identified which subgroups left the profession. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the trends of Black male stayers, movers, and leavers. Future data sets should include racial subgroups to provide a deeper understanding of teacher attrition.

Teacher Attrition Factors

Teacher attrition literature researchers have suggested that there is a multitude of reasons that cause beginning teachers to leave the educational field (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Carroll, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). According to Borman and Dowling (2008), personal characteristics were significant predictors of turnover. More importantly, factors such as school staffing actions, dissatisfaction with teaching, low salaries, and student body resources were vital moderators that caused teachers to abandon the profession (Borman & Dowling 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). More importantly, job dissatisfaction played a significant role in about two-thirds of all beginning teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Student discipline problems, lack of support from administration, and lack of teacher autonomy profoundly influenced teachers to change careers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

As a result of high turnover, high-need urban and rural schools, according to Carroll (2007), are frequently staffed with inequitable concentrations of under-prepared, inexperienced teachers. Furthermore, the isolation and lack of support cripple the growth of new teachers as they are left to labor on their own to meet the needs of their students (Carroll, 2007). Ultimately, high levels of employee turnover have suggested that an organization has underlying problems that lead to problems in how the organization functions (Mobley, 1982; Price, 1977; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The 2012-2013 NCES data aligned to teacher attrition literature as it supported the universal themes of why teachers leave. Personal life factors, classroom factors, student performance, and career and school factors served as clear voluntary indicators to explain teacher's decisions to stay, move, or leave the profession (Goldring et al., 2014). Among the five indicators,

personal life factors rated number one (38%) as the most crucial reason why teachers decided to leave their position (Goldring et al., 2014).

Personal Characteristics. According to Borman and Dowling (2008) many personal and professional factors that are prone to change across the life span and career path influence attrition. Personal characteristics of teachers, including their backgrounds and qualifications, are significant predictors of teacher turnover (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Teachers who hold certificates that required additional coursework, or the passage of a test were more likely to leave than teachers who held a regular or standard state certificate (Goldring et al., 2014; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Historically, attrition tended to be higher with teachers at the beginning of their careers due to personal and family factors (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Lortie, 1975). Along with personal characteristics, the certification and qualification of teachers impacted the odds of attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008, Dojonko-Moore, 2016; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Teachers who have no graduate degree are more likely to leave the profession of teaching in comparison to teachers who earned a graduate degree (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Djonko-Moore (2016) examined attrition patterns of teachers in high poverty, racially segregated school in the U.S. Teacher characteristics were examined to predict the rates of attrition within sampled schools. A multi-level multinomial logistic regression was used to examine the contribution of teacher characteristics in relation to teacher attrition. Djonko-Moore (2016) defined teacher characteristics as measurable or categorical demographic data such as age, gender, and race specific to a particular teacher.

Djonko-Moore (2016) utilized data from the 2007-08 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and 2009 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS). The SASS and TFS sample included 730 kindergarten through grade 12 public school teachers. The sample included regular full-time teachers, and non-regular and non-full time teachers were removed.

Additionally, Djonko-Moore (2016) removed data from teachers who were on leave, and whose contracts were not renewed. The teacher characteristic variables included total years of teaching experience, pathway to certification, race, ethnicity, gender, highest degree earned and total school earning. As mentioned, a multinomial logistic regression was used to examine the impact of teacher characteristics. The dependent variable for this study was teacher status one year following the initial survey as a mover, stayer, or leaver. The results consisted of descriptive statistics of 730 public school teachers. Of the 730 participants, 69.8% were female and 30.2% were male. The racial breakdown of the 730 participants consisted of 68.5% White, 16.9% Black and 4.2% Asian. Results of the logistic regression included that most of the teacher characteristics examined were not a good predictor of teacher mobility except teacher certification as this characteristic was close to the level of significance and predicted an increase in the odds of mobility (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Overall, the study concluded that teacher characteristics did not show a significant impact on attrition, but school salary predicted teacher attrition. A major limitation of this study would be the sample population. The observed population mirrored the current trends of the educational workforce, as participants were mostly White and female. Although there were a percentage of Black participants, the study did not specify the gender of this particular

group. In addition to a broad sample population, the study utilized data from a survey, which limited a more in-depth qualitative analysis of teacher characteristics.

Marinell and Coca's (2013) study drew on the analysis of the New York City Department of Education's human resource records. A comprehensive look at middle school teacher turnover consisted of examining surveys from 4,000 full time middle school teachers, and case studies from four New York City public middle schools. The aim of this particular study focused on examining what predicts New York City middle school teacher's intentions to stay or leave their school. In addition to staying or leaving their schools, Marinell and Coca (2013) assessed how these teachers' perceptions of their work environment influence their decision.

Marinell and Coca's (2013) analysis revealed that among middle school teachers who entered the profession of teaching during the past decade, more than half left within three years of teaching. According to the study, 27% of middle-school teachers left within one year, 55% within three years, and 66% left within five years. The researchers asserted that this particular turnover of middle school teachers in New York City appears to be largely driven by individual teachers' characteristics and choices (Marinell & Coca, 2013). According to Marinell and Coca (2013) teachers with less experience are more likely to leave their schools. The examination of the surveys elicited the point that teachers are more likely to consider leaving their school if they entered teaching through alternative routes, or are teaching a new subject for the first time (Marinell & Coca, 2013). Comparable to Borman and Dowling (2008) and Dojonko-Moore (2016), teacher certification impacted the attrition of new teachers.

In sum, Marinell and Coca (2013) assert that the exodus of teachers presents challenges to addressing students' academic and developmental needs. Overall, the literature focused on the impact of personal characteristics offered some understanding as to why teachers leave the profession due to certification, personal choices, and years of service. According to Borman and Dowling (2008), and Marinell and Coca (2013), years of service and experience impact attrition factors. Djonko-Moore (2016) addressed certification as a predictor for attrition, which aligned to the overarching theme that pathways to certification can impact teacher attrition. Noticeably missing from the studies reviewed are the personal characteristics for specific subgroups of the teacher workforce. Results from the studies examined offer a general analysis of personal characteristics that influence attrition but lacked an in depth examination of the educational workforce by race and gender.

Workplace Conditions. The location of a teaching position along with organizational factors within a school impacted the attrition of newly hired teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Lynch, 2012). In addition to the location and organizational factors, school characteristics influence the workplace and predict the variation of teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Urban and suburban schools who have higher enrollments of low achieving students suffer from higher attrition rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; NCES, 2018). More importantly, job dissatisfaction plays a significant role in about two-thirds of all beginning teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Lack of support from administrators, student discipline issues, and lack of autonomy within the classroom account for higher amounts of teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Glennie, Mason & Edmunds, 2016; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Student

behavior challenges were also a source of stress for teachers that contribute to a lack of job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Furthermore, higher rates of attrition were strongly linked to job dissatisfaction (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009), which increased the rates of attrition. The lack of freedom and control to make curricular decisions, along with participating in a school-wide decision-making process, caused teachers to abandon the profession and pursue other employment options (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Teachers were more likely to quit when there was a lack of support from administrators (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Congruent with Borman and Dowling (2008), and Ingersoll & Smith (2003), Ladd (2011) examined the relationships between teachers' perceptions of their working conditions and their intended and actual departures from schools. Findings from the Ladd (2011) study supported the connection between school leadership as an important factor for teachers regarding working conditions. In totality, Ladd (2011) asserts that principal leadership is an active broker of workplace conditions. Teachers' perceptions of working conditions at the school level are highly predictive of attrition rates (Ladd, 2011).

A more recent study conducted by Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) used data collected from a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant that had information on 37 Arizona public schools consisting of 1400 teachers over three academic years, spanning from 2010 to 2014. The 37 schools examined were classified as Title I schools leading the researchers to consider them high needs schools. Researchers used two sources of data where the participants were part of the data sets. One data set was a merit pay program aimed to incentivize teachers to improve student achievement and the second data set was

from a working conditions survey. Due to the fact that both data sets included the same participants, researchers were able to make inferences about the relationship between teacher retention rates and working conditions (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). A mixed method approach was used to identify connections between school working conditions and school characteristics related to teacher retention patterns. Geiger and Pivovarova's (2018) quantitative analysis consisted of conducting independent sample t-tests to determine if work conditions were significantly different based on school characteristics such as poverty, race, and enrollment. The qualitative analysis of this study consisted of researchers creating a list of seven a priori codes corresponding to working condition items such as school leadership, facilities and resources, and professional development.

Ultimately, the sample consisted of 1479 teachers across a three-year span coming from 37 schools that participated in the TAP program in Arizona. Of the 37 identified schools, 81.1% were classified as high poverty, 29.7% were classified as showing high Hispanic enrollment, and 21.6% were classified as high Native American enrollment. The results of this study, similar to Borman and Dowling (2008) and Lynch (2012) revealed that teachers in low poverty schools had higher levels of satisfaction with their working conditions compared to teachers in high poverty schools.

Although Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) revealed that workplace conditions influenced teacher attrition in their study, specific characteristics of the participants involved were limited. This study did not identify the race or gender of the participants. Further research should include specific workplace conditions that influence or deter attrition for Black male teachers.

Differing from Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) Burke, Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Louviere, and Prescott (2013) include age and gender while investigating the reasons some teachers stay in the profession and while some leave the profession. This mixed-method study collected qualitative and quantitative data to analyze participant's decisions. Interviews were conducted to capture qualitative data and an online survey was used to capture quantitative data.

The qualitative data methodology began with 42 beginning teachers participating in up to three phone interviews where they could share their experiences in the profession, while noting ways in which they had been supported, as well as challenges they had faced. Open coding analytical methods were used to categorize the findings into themes that were common across the participants (Burke et al., 2013). Burke et al. (2013) utilized a best-worst scaling framework to collect quantitative data related to the decision novice teachers make to remain in the profession. An online survey link was sent out to 1,700 beginning teachers in Australia who had started teaching within five years of the survey date. The survey included questions pertaining to factors determining their choice to remain teaching. Of the 1,700 teachers, 258 teachers completed the survey. Close to one third of the participants started teaching less than a year prior to completing the survey, another third between one and two years, and the last third had between two and three years of teaching (Burke et al., 2013). All remaining participants had been teaching for three to five years. Findings from this mixed method study consisted of multiple dominant themes. Participants expressed that class sizes impacted their experience within the profession. In addition to class sizes, professional collegiality, collaboration, and support from administrators were also deemed important for beginning teachers.

In relation to the Burke et al. (2013) study, the Marinell and Coca (2013) study also found that teachers are more likely to stay in schools that are perceived to have high levels of order and teacher collegiality. Findings from Marinell and Coca's (2013) study asserted that attrition was lower in schools where teachers reported that the principal was trusting and supportive of the teaching staff, a knowledgeable instructional leader, an efficient manager, and adept at forming partnerships with external organizations. Marinell and Coca's (2013) survey of middle school teachers revealed that in those cases where teachers reported average or high levels of support, rapport, trust and respect among their colleagues, rates of turnover were lower. Thus, the association between workplace conditions and teacher attrition suggests the interrelatedness of these two characteristics. Ultimately the results of Marinell and Coca (2013) study suggest that working conditions at school's influence attrition as professional control, teacher collegiality, and student behavior all were deemed important decision-making factors for the participants surveyed.

Overall, the literature examined concerning workplace conditions offers some insight as to why teachers in general either stay or leave their current positions. Specific school characteristics such as class sizes, poverty levels, support from colleagues, professional development, and administrative support, influence attrition factors for teachers (Burke et al., 2013; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Ladd, 2011; Lynch, 2012). Noticeably missing from the literature is the diversity amongst participants. Similar to the educational workforce, male participants, specifically Black male participants, are missing from these studies. Most, if not all, of the studies mentioned represent the larger

portion of the workforce, White and female. Including a diverse set of participants would add value to the literature as student demographics are rapidly changing.

Compensation. According to Borman and Dowling (2008), higher compensation impacts lower attrition and influences a teacher's decision to stay or go. A total of 6.8% of teachers who left teaching in 2012-2013 reported that salaries impacted their decision to leave the profession (Goldring et al., 2014). Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's (2015) Australian study explored the similarities and differences of career decision-making considerations of Australian teachers. The sample size for the study included 133 current and former teachers who completed free-response questionnaires about their decisions to stay or leave the profession. Of the sample, 68.4% were female and 31.6% were male teachers, and participants ranged from 23 to 70 years old. Findings related to compensation were limited as teachers suggested extra pay for overtime and extra work, but placed more emphasis on increasing support from school-based leadership. Findings from Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) align with the argument that, although money serves as a factor impacting teacher attrition, money does not always keep teachers in the profession.

Petty, Fitchett, and O'Connor's (2012) study focused on the perceptions of teachers from a southeastern state to gain ideas about how to attract, support, and retain teaches in high-need high schools. The sample consisted of high school teachers working in a high-need high school across one southeastern state of the U.S. Researchers defined high need as a school where at least 80% of the children were from low-income families or at least 80% of the student enrolled were from low-income families eligible to receive federal Title I funds. The survey was sent to 537 possible participants, 189 of whom

responded. Of the respondents, one third of the teachers sampled had zero to five years of teaching experience, while 26 respondents had six to 10 years, 35 respondents between 11 and 15 years, 18 respondents between 16 to 10 years, and 26 respondents between 16 to 20 years (Petty et al., 2012).

Researchers coded open-ended responses using thematic analysis and emerging codes were combined and categorized into larger themes. Findings from the study included teachers reporting that money was the most effective approach to recruit teachers to high needs high schools. Participants recommended monetary bonuses, cancelable loans, and financial assistance to support degree attainment as a way to recruit teachers. Similar to Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's (2015) findings, administrative support and class resources were indicators that teachers viewed as important. Findings from Petty et al.'s (2012) study also aligned with Borman and Dowling's (2008) comprehensive review of teacher attrition literature, which indicated that teachers viewed money as the most significant contributor to teacher retention. One interesting finding of the study included the justifications for leaving and staying in the profession according to the participants. When teachers were asked why they would stay or leave their current schools, money was not a central issue. According to Petty et al. (2012), teachers planned to stay at their high need high school because of relationships with students, administrative support, and school environment. What should be noted is that contrary to Borman and Dowling's (2008) claims, compensation is not a significant driving force to retain teachers. Borman and Dowling (2008) asserted that the salary teachers receive has continued to be a highly salient predictor of attrition outcomes, but Petty et al. (2012) and

Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) affirm that, although money serves as a factor impacting teacher attrition, money does not always keep teachers in the profession.

Aligned to the studies mentioned, Shifrer, Turley and Heard's (2017) and Curtis's (2012) studies both examined if receiving financial awards improved teachers' likelihood of retention and mean student achievement gains. Shifrer et al. (2017) compared teachers who received awards versus teachers who did not receive an award in a district where all teachers were eligible. In addition to examining if financial awards incentivize teachers to remain in the profession, researchers attempted to link financial awards to student achievement gains. Shifrer et al. (2017) used census data from a district to focus on teachers of grades three through eight, and their students and schools from 2009 to 2011. The large urban school district examined consisted of approximately 200,000 students, 12,000 teachers, and 300 schools. Eighty-two percent of the district students qualified for the free or reduced lunch program; 62% were Hispanic, 26% were Black, and 30% were limited English-proficient (LEP) (Shifrer et al., 2017). Researchers excluded roughly 380 teachers who were no longer in the district as of August 2010, 83 charter school teachers, and seven teachers who opted out of the award program. To analyze the association between award receipt and teacher outcomes, researchers used regression discontinuity techniques. Dependent variables included teachers retained in the district along with mean student test score gains on the state math and reading test. The independent variable included performance pay program, which included the differences in potential award amounts. As with the aims of the study, the regression discontinuity techniques also aligned to the dependent and independent variable aid in investigating whether teachers

in a large urban district who receive financial awards achieve higher student achievement gains and are more likely to be retained the following school year.

Findings from Shifrer et al.'s (2017) study were similar to Petty et al. (2012) and Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's (2015), as all three studies fail to support consistent positive effects of financial awards for teachers in this district. The results from Shifrer et al. (2017) indicated that the effect of receiving a small or large financial award were negative for teacher retention and student achievement. More specifically, teachers who received a large award were less likely than teachers who received a small award to be retained in the district.

Like Shifrer et al. (2017), Curtis (2012) examined how compensation impacts the reasons mathematics teachers enter and leave the teaching profession. To investigate how compensation impacts mathematics teachers, random sampling occurred to gather information. A total of 5,000 middle school and high school mathematics teachers were selected to participate in the nation-wide study (Curtis, 2012). The survey distributed to participants consisted of questions asking their reasons for becoming a teacher. Four-point Likert scale questions asked participants to respond to their level of satisfaction with being a teacher, or whether they would become a teacher again. Once surveys were completed, researchers separated the surveys into 'leaver' and 'stayer' categories. Approximately 37% of those responding were male, while about 62% were female. Researchers took a random sample of 32 from the leaver category and conducted interviews to expound on their reasons for becoming a teacher, as well as their reasons for leaving the profession.

This quantitative research study employed a chi square test to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent variables of the reasons to become a teacher with the dependent variable of leaving and staying. A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted using the independent variables of the responses to being satisfied with being a teacher and becoming a teacher (Curtis, 2012). Findings from the study consisted of survey participants citing low salary, the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation, and lack of administrative support as primary reasons for leaving the profession. Compensation, according to this study, was the third most salient reason for leaving the profession as roughly 8% of the total participants surveyed stated that salary and compensation influenced their reason to leave the teaching profession.

Contrary to conventional assumptions, compensation is not an important factor according to the literature reviewed. Although the literature (Curtis, 2012; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Petty et al., 2012; Shifrer et al., 2017) discussed that compensation does not have a huge impact on the attrition and retention of teachers, there is still a missing link, as the studies reviewed do not represent the diverse educational workforce. The studies reviewed show no representation of any minority participants, specifically Black male teachers. For example, Curtis (2012) offered insight regarding factors other than compensation, but the findings categorized participants by gender and years of service, excluding race.

Limitations also included studies that were more quantitative than qualitative. Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015), along with Petty et al. (2012), gathered evidence from participants through the use of online surveys, which limits the exploration of answers provided by the participants. Shifrer et al. (2017) also missed the opportunity to

quantify a monetary amount associated with retention due to the nature of the survey provided.

Factors that Influence Black Male Teacher Attrition

According to teacher attrition research, turnover rates are lower in schools where teachers report better principal leadership, and more autonomy within the classroom (Glennie et al., 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). Teachers of color are more likely than White teachers to work in high-need urban schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011). More importantly, Black male teachers leave schools at a higher rate than other subgroups, but the factors as to why they leave are unknown (Ingersoll & May, 2011). According to Kholil (2016), Black male teachers regularly combat many microaggressions, such as proving their worth and challenging the myth of intellectual inferiority. An emergent body of literature has attempted to discuss the factors that cause Black male teacher attrition, which included the desire for and affordances of male-centered spaces for reflection and bonding (Brockenbrough, 2012).

Workplace Conditions. According to Petty et al. (2012) the experiences and working relationships with various school stakeholders added value to higher job satisfaction and intentions to remain in a particular school site (Bethell et al., 2004; Glennie et al., 2016). Therefore, active support systems and friendship helped reduced turnover amongst teachers (Dallas, 2006). Due to the limited amount of Black male teachers, feelings of isolation, pressure, and balancing unofficial disciplinarian responsibilities impacted the experiences of Black male teachers (Bristol, 2015; Kholil, 2018; Will, 2016).

An additional factor that impacted teachers of color included racial climate. Kholil's (2018) qualitative study focused on teachers of color who experience racism, and how a volatile workplace impacts their well-being, growth, and retention. Kholil (2018) asserted that teachers of color, specifically Black male teachers, expressed feelings of alienation. Findings from the study discussed the impact of balancing multiple responsibilities while learning how to teach under pressure as Black male teachers, all of which led to burn out (Kholil, 2018). Similar to Kholil (2018), Brockenbrough (2015) established that Black male teachers were positioned as disciplinary agents in predominantly Black urban school districts. Brockenbrough's (2015) study focused on the struggles Black male teachers had adopting disciplinarian personas within the teaching profession. Brockenbrough (2015) interviewed a total of 11 Black males and discovered strong links to anxiety, stress, and frustration related to the patriarchal authoritarianism defined by Brockenbrough (2015), that was expected of Black male teachers.

Moreover, Brockenbrough's (2015) findings provided a deeper understanding of the working conditions that influence Black male teachers. A survey conducted by Education Trust echoed the sentiments of Kholil's (2018) study, as Black teachers reported being pigeonholed into specific roles by their colleagues, administrators, and parents (Will, 2016). Researchers spoke to 150 Black teachers in public schools and public charter schools across seven states who reported frustrations about being placed into a disciplinarian or counselor roles, which impacted instructional and planning time (Will, 2016). Will's (2016) and Kholil's (2018) studies convey the burden placed on

Black teachers as they are expected to relate to every Black child and minority students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures.

Aligned to Will (2016) and Kholil (2018), Bristol and Mentor (2018) examined the organizational conditions in which Black male teachers teach, to explore the school-based experience of Black male teachers. The researchers focused on examining the Black male teachers' perception of school in relation to the role their colleagues and administrators expected them to fulfill (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). The Bristol and Mentor (2018) study explored the school-based experiences of 27 Black male teachers across 14 schools in one urban school district. Contrary to Kearney (2010), Bristol and Mentor (2018) challenged the role of the Black male teacher asserting that there is an unintended consequence of linking the presence or absence of Black male teachers in schools. Additionally, both researchers asserted that positioning these particular teachers as being solely responsible for improving the Black male student achievement can be detrimental to the role of the Black male teacher (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Kearney, 2010).

Two rounds of semi-structured interviews with elementary, middle, and high school Black male teachers allowed Bristol and Mentor (2018) to discuss the perceived role of the Black male educator through the lens of the Black male. The participants of this study ranged from 25 to 56 years old and included various content areas such as Math, Spanish, English, Physical Education, Physics, and Performing Arts. The participants believed that their colleagues and administrators viewed their role as disciplinarians first and educators second (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). Overall, the findings from this study add to the ever-pressing theme of Black male teachers' perceptions of

being encapsulated in the role of solely managing student behavior (Bristol & Mentor, 2018).

Although Kholil (2018) focused on workplace conditions and job responsibilities of teachers of color, convenient sampling was utilized due to participants being selected through a national professional development conference targeted for teacher of colors who identified a commitment to racial justice. In addition to sampling techniques, 80% of respondents were women, limiting the association to Black male teachers. Bristol & Mentor's research (2018) served more of a true representation of the views and perceptions of Black male teachers. As mentioned earlier, the study consisted of 27 Black male teachers. A larger sample size with a range of content areas, years of service, and age provided a more in-depth and descriptive discussion of the actual role of a Black male teacher.

Brockenbrough (2012) also conducted a study that focused on the experiences of Black male teachers within the workplace through the lens of gender politics. Brockenbrough (2012) explored 11 Black male teachers in a predominantly Black urban school district to capture the narratives of their lived experiences as Black men and Black male teachers. Similar to many researchers Bristol (2015), Bristol and Mentor (2018) and Meidl (2008) focused on the lived experience of the Black male teacher. Brockenbrough (2012) employed a three-interview regimen to construct a narrative reflective of Black male teachers. Findings from the study informed a desire for a more male-centered space due to negative encounters with female colleagues (Brockenbrough, 2012). Although the qualitative study included an in-depth interview protocol, the composition of each focus group was determined by the participant's availability, which dampened the opportunity

for all participants to collaboratively explore and make meaning of their experiences as Black male teachers. Ultimately, Brockenbrough (2012) exposed the lived experiences of Black male teachers solely in a middle school and high school context limiting the amount of literature that addresses Black male teachers in an elementary school setting.

Factors that Influence Black Male Teacher Retention

To explore and identify the factors that contribute to Black male teachers remaining in the profession of teachings, Bristol's (2015) study examined three specific indicators that impacted the Black male teacher experience. The experiences that prompted Black male teachers to consider teaching, organizational conditions that influenced workplace experiences, and the factors that affected Black males to stay or leave their current sites or the profession (Bristol, 2015). The results of the study identified that Black male teacher turnover was greater in schools with higher amounts of Black men on the faculty (Bristol, 2015). Although this was one of the findings for this particular study, it is important to note that less than ideal workplace conditions contributed to a certain group of participants leaving their current site. This particular finding may have a greater impact on workplace conditions that influence Black male teachers.

To unpack and examine these particular indicators, Bristol (2015) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study consisting of 27 Black male teachers within the Boston Public school system. Bristol (2015) categorized participants within two subgroups: 'groupers' and 'loners'. Groupers represented schools that had more than one Black male teacher, while loners represented participants who were the only Black male on the faculty. Utilizing semi-structured interviews, Bristol (2015) found that many

participants stated that their reasons for choosing to become a teacher included having a male educator of color as a role model. For example, 13 out of the 27 participants noted that their own experiences in education influenced their decision to pursue teaching. In addition to having a male educator Bristol (2015) noted that experiences with ineffective teachers served as the driving force towards the decision to enter the profession of teaching.

According to Bristol (2015), the daily experiences of groupers and loners differed due to feelings of social isolation within the school organization. Groupers suggested positive attachments to the organization due to the positive working relationships with colleagues. More specifically this particular group of Black male teachers described that the acknowledgement of their voices heightened a sense of camaraderie amongst staff members in comparison to loners. Bristol (2015) asserted that not having one's voice heard in a formal or informal setting leads to mixed feelings about being a member of an organization, thus increasing feelings of social isolation. Bristol (2015) found that leadership and a strong desire to pursue different professional opportunities were factors that impacted both groups to leave their current teaching placement. Another factor that influenced one teacher group to leave (groupers) was less than ideal working conditions. Respondents of the study cited that less than favorable working conditions constituted a greater amount of day-to-day challenges (Bristol, 2015).

Additional findings from the study found that Black male teachers' resistance or acceptance of roles assigned by colleagues encapsulated them into being responsible for managing student behaviors (Bristol, 2015). Respondents, both loners and groupers, believed that their colleagues would more likely be asked to deal with discipline rather

than content (Bristol, 2015). Drawing on Will's (2016) study, the role and expectations of Black male teachers differ from their White counterparts. What is of importance from Bristol's (2015) study is the connection between organizational challenges and the presence of one or two same-race and gender colleagues, which supports the empirical claims (Dee, 2006) mentioned to increase the amount of Black male teachers. Bristol's (2015) findings also support the assertion that teachers of color are more likely to work in challenging schools, which may impact their retention regardless of staff demographics (Kearney, 2010).

To understand the impact of critical mass of teachers of same race on job satisfaction and retention in the workplace, Harris and Davis (2018) examined the experiences of three Black African male math teachers. More specifically, this collective case study focused on the experiences of Black male math teachers in a same race and gender peer-mentoring program. Harris and Davis's (2018) study was conducted in a mid-Atlantic school district that served over 100,000 students. The district observed created a male teacher of color network that focused on supporting Black male teachers new to the district.

Harris and Davis (2018) located members of the study by contacting the male teachers of color network and sending a request to all members. The three men that participated in the study were all secondary-level math teachers within the district and pseudonyms were used to avoid identifiable information about the participants and the school district. Harris and Davis (2018) utilized semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth information about the participants, including why they chose to become teachers, the challenges they faced, and the impact of participating in the male teacher of color

network. Interviews lasted between 27 and 35 minutes, and transcripts were reviewed, professionally transcribed, and member-checked by each participant.

Findings from the study consisted of participants sharing that being treated as a father figure by students, and having a principal who believed in their ability and supported their growth added value to their experiences. All three participants shared that being in a same race and gender-mentoring program assisted them in developing meaningful relationships Harris and Davis's (2008) study suggests the importance of same race and gender programs within an organization to combat feelings of isolation in the workplace.

Similar to Bristol (2015) and Harris and Davis (2008), Scott and Alexander's (2019) grounded theory study investigated the experiences of Black male educators through the lens of special education teachers. The focus of the study sought to examine strategies for recruiting and retaining Black males in a special education teacher preparation program and in special education. More specifically, a grounded theory was selected to analyze strategies that impact and influence the recruitment and retention of Black males (Scott & Alexander, 2019). To select participants, criterion and snowball sampling were used to recruit Black males seeking a special education teacher preparation program, Black males currently enrolled in a special education teacher preparation program, and Black male special education teachers (Scott & Alexander, 2019).

A total of 18 participants ranging from 24 to 40 years participated in the study. Of the 18, nine were fully licensed special education teachers, and seven out of nine had achieved tenure career status (Scott & Alexander, 2019). Demographic questionnaires

were completed prior to the semi-structured interviews to collect participant data. Face-to-face interviews with each participant lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, deriving from research focused on recruiting and retention of Black male teachers, along with incorporating participants experiences (Scott & Alexander, 2019). To establish trustworthiness, the researchers used peer debriefing, triangulation of data sources, and triangulation of each researcher's analyses.

Findings from the study included a central theme of focused strategies for recruitment and retention. Similar to Bristol's (2015) and Harris and Davis's (2008) study, participants mentioned that an internal system of support should exist to help their retention. Additionally, participants reflected and stated a desire to network with other Black peers and mentors to build a sense of community within their respective teaching spaces. (Scott & Alexander, 2019)

Ultimately, Scott and Alexander's (2019) study placed emphasis on the importance of mentorship and community as a way to retain Black male teachers, but there were some limitations regarding participation selection. The use of criterion sampling supported the purpose of the study in which Black male teacher were or interest, but the snowball effect could have increased bias among the participants. Utilizing this method limited the variability of the obtained sample, which weakened the inferences made throughout the study. Widening the scope and increasing the sample size would have added more depth to the study, allowing the researchers to represent more lived experiences.

Campoli (2017) analyzed Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data of 1,600 Black teachers. Campoli (2017) identified specific conditions that improved the

likelihood of a Black teacher staying or leaving their current position. Teachers who perceived a more supportive administrative leadership and a stronger culture of collegiality were less likely to move from their schools (Campoli, 2017). Secondly, the examination of the SASS data showcased that Black teachers would stay at schools where there is a shared mission and there is collaboration among the faculty (Bristol, 2019; Campoli, 2017).

The reoccurring theme of the literature exposed a desire for Black male teachers to build a network to aid in staying in the profession (Bristol, 2018; Campoli, 2017; Harris & Davis, 2008; Scott & Alexander, 2019). In addition to a sense of community, the importance of having a competitive salary, along with teaching a more culturally responsive curriculum to engage students with disabilities, emerged as factors that influenced the retention of Black male teachers (Bristol, 2018; Harris & Davis, 2008; Scott & Alexander, 2019).

Role of Leadership on Teacher Attrition and Retention

As mentioned before, researchers have suggested that effective school leaders are better able to retain teachers due to a multitude of factors, thus reinforcing the influence of leadership on teacher attrition and retention (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Gomba, 2015; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Ingersoll, 2011, Ladd, 2011). A review of the broad set of practices, policies, and activities that school leaders enact to retain teachers will inform the role of leadership on teacher attrition and retention.

School Management and Organizational Context

Boyd et al. (2011) explored the relationship between school factors and teacher retention decisions in Ney York City. School factors examined included influence over school policies, effectiveness of school administration, staff relations, student behavior, facilities and safety (Boyd, 2011). To uncover the relationship between school working conditions and teacher retention, Boyd et al. (2011) surveyed all first-year teachers in a New York City public school district. With a 70% response rate, 4,360 teachers completed a 300-question five-point scale survey (Boyd et al., 2011). Follow-up surveys were given to teachers who remained in teaching for a second year focused on their experiences and future career plans, with a 72% response rate of 1, 587 participants (Boyd et al., 2011). Lastly, an additional follow-up survey for teachers who left was administered to ask about the factors influencing their decision to leave and to collect their dissatisfaction with different aspects of teaching, which had a 61% response rate of 368 participants (Boyd et al., 2011).

A multinomial logistic regression was used to measure the relationship between teacher retention decisions and school characteristics to address teacher responses to both surveys (Boyd et al., 2011). Boyd et al. (2011) found that school administration played a large role with 40% of respondents citing that their dissatisfaction with their administration influenced their decision to leave their school. Results also included the importance of administrative support. Participants who left the profession of teaching indicated that they receive more recognition and support from their current supervisors than they did as teachers (Boyd et al., 2011).

Parallel to Boyd et al.'s (2011) study, Grissom and Bartanen (2019) investigated the link between school leadership and teacher retention by examining longitudinal

administrative data from Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). This particular model collects performance measures for principals and teachers that include surveys from Tennessee teachers to rate the leadership quality in their schools (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). To assist with providing a more accurate measure of principal performance, Grissom and Bartanen (2019) investigated principal effectiveness scores completed by supervisors trained to rate principals. The aim of the study was to investigate whether schools led by more effective principals showed evidence of higher teacher retention rates (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

The model for examining the extent to which principal effectiveness was associated with teacher attrition and retention included the probability that a teacher would leave their position in a year was a function of the effectiveness rating of the principal and teachers own effectiveness (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Similar to the Boyd et al. (2011) study, results showed that principals with higher TEAM ratings experienced lower rates of average teacher turnover.

Congruent with Boyd et al. (2011), Grissom and Bartanen (2019), and Ladd (2011) examined the relationships between North Carolina teachers' perceptions of their working conditions through the lens of school leadership and their intended and actual departures from schools. Similar to Boyd et al. (2011), Ladd (2011) used an empirical model to examine the planned probability of teacher attrition. To determine the predictive power of working conditions, Ladd (2011) compared survey data as a vector of characteristics of the school including student demographics, salary, and characteristics of the individual teacher. The 2006 North Carolina administrative data surveys examined were administered electronically throughout the state and consisted of a five-point Likert

scale (Ladd, 2011). All three educational levels of schooling, elementary, middle, and high school were analyzed to establish the trends and patterns of the state.

Findings from the Ladd (2011) study supported the connection asserted by Boyd et al. (2011) and Grissom and Bartanen (2019), categorizing school leadership as an important factor for teachers regarding working conditions and attrition. Ladd (2011) emphasized that perceived quality of school leadership at all three levels of schooling negatively correlated with the probability of departure. In totality, Ladd (2011) asserted that principal leadership is an active broker of workplace conditions.

Allensworth, Ponisciak and Mazzeo's (2009) study examined the principal leadership and workplace conditions regarding teacher retention in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Allensworth et al. (2009) performed analyses of CPS teacher records form 2002-03 to 2006-07 to assess the relationship between retention rates and school characteristics, which included records from 538 elementary and 118 high schools. Findings from the study reported that principal leadership remained a strong, significant predictor of teacher retention (Allensworth et al., 2009). Teacher retention rates were higher in schools where teachers reported working together with the principal to design and coordinate instructional programs (Allensworth et al., 2009). More specifically, teacher retention rates were four to five percentage points higher where teachers reported high levels of trust of their principal (Allensworth et al., 2009).

Kraft, Marinell, and Shen-Wei Yee (2016) investigated if strengthening organizational contexts in schools would decrease teacher turnover while strengthening student achievement. Kraft et al. (2016) utilized New York City Department of Education's (NYC DOE) School survey. The NYC School Survey administered to

teachers, students, and parents captured data regarding academic expectations, communication, engagement, and safety and respect. To construct measures of school context, teacher responses were used as the source for teacher turnover data and NYC student assessment data served as the basis for achievement outcome data (Kraft et al., 2016). Each survey response consisted of more than 40-item responses coded on a 4-point Likert scale (Kraft et al., 2016). To inform the construction of school context measures, Kraft et al. (2016) screened out items that were not common across survey versions from 2008 to 2012, and removed items about school context features that we judged as primarily capturing factors largely outside of the control of school staff.

Researchers anonymized teacher responses but linked their response to the school to construct an outcome to measure teacher turnover, which included full-time middle school classroom or special education teachers (Kraft et al., 2016). Student assessment data samples derived from middle school standardized assessments in math and English with traditional grades and middle schools with traditional grade six through eight configurations.

Findings from the study included that schools with higher quality contexts experience lower turnover, and that improvements in the organizational context within a school over time is associated with decreases in teacher turnover. Researchers asserted that school leadership emerged as having the strongest relationships with turnover similar to Boyd et al. (20110 and Ladd (2011). Kraft et al. (2016) discussed that the average turnover rate among middle school teachers in NYC was 15.1%, and a one standard deviation increase in the quality of leadership alone is associated with approximately an 11% reduction in turnover (Kraft et al., 2016).

Ultimately, the results from this study suggest that improving the school context in which teachers work could play an important role in a multifaceted plan to reduce teacher turnover among middle schools. Kraft et al. (2016) suggest that when schools strengthen the organizational contexts in which teachers work, teachers are more likely to remain in these schools, and student achievement on standardized tests increases at a faster rate. Kraft et al.'s (2016) findings add to the notion that leadership plays an important factor regarding teacher turnover, but there are some limitations within the study. Eliminating items from the NYC School survey eliminated characteristics that school leaders can influence, along with factors that may be related to teacher's career decisions. The qualitative nature of the study also limits an in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of the teachers who decide to leave or stay at their respective schools.

Similar to Kraft et al. (2016), Stockard and Lehman (2004) investigated teacher's retention behaviors. Researchers hypothesized that the measure of teachers' satisfaction will independently influence both their intentions to stay or leave, as well as their actual retention behavior. Additionally, Stockard and Lehman (2004) investigated demographic variables such as social support, effectiveness, and school management, all of which may have an impact on teacher's satisfaction and retention.

To test their hypothesis, Stockard and Lehman (2004) utilized two surveys from first year teachers. The first data set used a national sample and was collected as part of the SASSS, while the second data set involved a survey mailed out to teachers from one western state. For the national sample, Stockard and Lehman (2004) used three composite measures of the teachers' perceptions of school management, influence over school policy, perceived control over classroom planning and teaching, and perceived

effectiveness of the principal. Additionally, the statewide sample included two composite measures of school management, teachers' perceptions of their administrator and their assessment of mentoring in their school (Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Stockard and Lehman (2004) analysis focused on the 379 public school teachers in grades one through 12 who responded to both surveys, identified themselves as regular full-time teachers, and were identified on the data file as beginning teachers. Respondents of the surveys were predominantly young, non-Hispanic White women with bachelor's degrees (Stockard & Lehman, 2004).

Results from the study discussed that satisfaction is strongly related to retention intentions and decisions and more important, different factors appear to influence each construct (Stockard & Lehman, 2004). School management directly related to school leadership appeared to be the most strongly related to satisfaction, whereas the availability of alternative job opportunities is more strongly related to retention (Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Limitations of the study include specific examples of how leaders can ensure teacher satisfaction to aid in retaining teachers.

In addition to studies conducted in the U.S., Hulpia et al. (2011) conducted a study in Belgium that linked teacher retention and school leadership. Hulpia et al. (2011) examined whether the quality of leadership impacted teachers' organizational commitment. Unlike the previous studies mentioned, Hulpia et al. (2011) incorporated assistant principals, and teacher leaders under the school leadership category. Hulpia et al. (2011) collected questionnaire data from 1,522 teachers from 46 secondary schools in Flanders, Belgium. The questionnaires were implemented to draw from factors that affect teacher's commitment to their schools (Hulpia et al., 2011). To measure the impact and

quality of school leadership, Hulpia et al. (2011) utilized the Distributive Leadership Inventory (DLI). The leadership functions measured included strength and vision, supportive behavior, instructional support, and providing intellectual stimulation. The results of Hulpia et al.'s (2011) study indicated that the supportive relationships between teachers and school leaders relate to teacher's organizational commitment, characterized by providing a clear school vision, quality professional development, and shared decision-making. Thus, reinforcing the concept of school leadership as driving force regarding teacher retention (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Ladd, 2011).

Fairchild, Tobias, Corcoran, Djukic, Kovner, and Noguera (2012) assessed White and Black urban public school teachers using data taken from the restricted use 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), examining the effects of relational demography on teacher job satisfaction. Fairchild et al. (2012) defined relational demography as racial and gender congruence between teachers and their principal, colleagues and students. According to Fairchild et al. (2012), relational demography suggests that proportions differentially influence behaviors, therefore members of a majority group are thought to have different attitudes than individuals who are not part of the majority.

To study this phenomenon Fairchild et al. (2012) examined the direct interaction between the organization and personal characteristics in a school setting between Black and White teachers. The sample consisted of full time, public school teachers who identified as White, non-Hispanic or Black, or non-Hispanic working in an urban setting. Of the 8,665 teachers one to 15 teachers from each of the 1,992 schools contributed to the sample. Within the study, teacher-to-student and teacher-to-principal congruence was

measured as the percentage of teachers within a school who shared the same race as the teacher.

Findings from the study revealed that teacher job satisfaction was connected to relational demography. The congruence between teacher–principal gender and teacher–student race had a direct effect on teacher job satisfaction (Fairchild et al, 2013). More specifically, teacher–principal gender congruence was associated with a slight decrease in teacher job satisfaction.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2011) Norwegian study also examined supervisory support in relation to teachers' feelings of belonging. A total of 2,569 teachers from over 120 Norwegian elementary and middle schools participated in the study (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Out of the 2569 teachers, 72% were females, and the ages ranged from 23 to 69, with 16 being the average number of years in the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). In regard to the measurement of supervisory support, a three-item scale was used to measure teacher's experience of receiving cognitive and emotional support from school leadership (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Findings from the study supported the notion that supervisory supports were significant and independent predictors of a teacher's sense of belonging (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Shared Decision Making and Mentorship

Contrary to Stockard and Lehman (2004), Stauffer and Mason (2013) focused on investigating leadership practices that help retain teachers. An analysis of 64 suburban elementary school teachers' responses to a survey focused on stress served as the underpinning of this study (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). Researchers hypothesized that teacher's stressors would be similar for teachers who worked at a high priority and non-

high priority schools (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). To collect data, research packets were distributed about equally to teachers at six different schools from a major metropolitan school district in the southeastern US (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). Stauffer and Mason (2013) coded high priority schools as challenging school environments and high rates of student poverty and non-high priority schools as schools who had limited amounts of transiency, and students on free and reduced lunch. A total of 36 teachers from high-priority schools and 28 teachers from non-high-priority schools responded to the qualitative Stressors instrument utilized by Stauffer and Mason (2013).

Stauffer and Mason (2013) assert that in order to gain teacher support and organizational commitment, leaders must incorporate teachers in shared decision-making and prepare them to address district-level curriculum changes. Stauffer and Mason (2013) go on to emphasize the importance of school administrators coordinating programming to address these needs or to allot time within the work schedule to address certain stressors. More importantly, listening attentively to teachers' concerns and recognizing teachers' good work outside of formal evaluation assist with increasing organizational commitment (Stauffer & Mason, 2013).

Overall, Stauffer and Mason (2013) provide recommendations to garner teacher support and organizational commitment, but fail to provide authentic evidence based on the surveyed participants. The recommendations made are rather one-sided as the narrative is heavily saturated with teacher feedback instead of adding school leaders to lend to the investigated topic. More importantly, this particular study lacked the empirical evidence regarding what specific leadership practices yield optimal results as it relates to teacher turnover.

Tillman's (2005) case study focused on leadership practices and teacher mentoring in an urban school context. More specifically, Tillman (2005) investigated and discussed the role of the urban school principal in implementing and facilitating mentoring arrangements that will lead to competence, retention, and improved student achievement. Participants included a first-year African American teacher, mentor, and the principal.

Tillman (2005) asserts that in the urban school context, the principal's role in mentoring 1st-year African-American teachers was critical as it relates to their retention and development of professional and personal competence. Three critical mentoring themes served as the framework for this study, mentoring as a vehicle to enhance the professional and personal competence of first year African American teachers, mentoring as a means of transmitting the culture of the educational environment, and mentoring as a catalyst for transformative leadership (Tillman, 2005).

This study was conducted in a large, urban high school in the South with a 98% African-American student population, and more then 70% of the student population eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Tillman (2005) utilized journaling and interviews to investigate and capture the educational and societal factors in the urban school context that affected the everyday lives of African-American teachers and students. Interviews were held individually and in groups up to two times a week during the study. Questions focused on the backgrounds and experiences of the participants and their perspectives on mentoring, teacher competence, teacher and principal expectations, leadership practice in the urban school context, as well as racial, cultural, and class issues in the urban school context (Tillman. 2005).

Findings from this study included the teacher sharing concerns regarding her professional relationship with her immediate supervisor, the principal. Additionally, the participant shared feelings of not being valued as a professional in the school, and concerns about meeting the academic needs of the students, all of which fueled her dissatisfaction (Tillman, 2005). Journal entries and interviews also revealed that mentoring to enhance the professional and personal competence of the new teacher provided an opportunity for the principal to serve as a mentor.

Tillman (2005) recommends that school leaders must consider the backgrounds and preservice experiences of first-year African-American teachers when designing mentoring programs. In addition to specifically designed mentorship programs, Tillman (2005) asserts that school leaders, specifically principals, may need to employ unique mentoring strategies that bridge any gaps that may exist between alternative and traditional teacher-education programs. More importantly, Tillman advocates that principals should make a special effort to identify specific areas of a teacher's work that must be addressed in order to enhance his or her professional and personal competence. Tillman (2005) discussed that a transformative leadership approach to mentoring would lead new teachers to view mentoring as an integral part of their socialization, rather than as a survival strategy.

Although Tillman's (2005) case study focused on the needs of an underrepresented subgroup of the teaching population, there were some limitations of this study. The limitations included an extremely small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the study. In addition to the sample size the location of the study took place in an urban school context. Tillman discussed the theme of mentorship but failed to

go into explicit detail about the specific programs implemented throughout the study. Including these details would have provided information for future studies to replicate to measure its effectiveness.

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) examined whether teacher induction programs yielded a positive effect on the retention of beginning teachers. Researchers focused on whether first-year teachers who participated in induction activities such as mentoring or collaboration with other teachers, or who received additional resources were more or less likely to stay with their teaching jobs the following year (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) utilized SASS data from 1999-2000 that included all beginning teachers in the US. Four researcher questions guided this study, which focused on the effectiveness and frequency of mentorship and induction programs on the likelihood that beginning teachers will leave their jobs.

Researchers presented descriptive data on induction, mentoring, and turnover over the past decade across the U.S. School context characteristics, participation in mentorship activities, participation in group or collective induction activities, and extra resources, such as reduced workload or teacher aides, were examined as predictors for first-year teacher turnover. Moreover, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found a strong link between participation in induction programs and reduced rates of turnover through a multinomial logistic regression analysis. Having a mentor from the same field, common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, collaboration with other teachers on instruction, and being part of an external network of teachers contributed to reduce rates of turnover (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Overall, researchers assert that teachers participating in combinations or packages of mentoring and group induction activities are less likely to

migrate to other schools or to leave teaching at the end of their first year. This qualitative study, similar to Stauffer and Mason's (2013) study, provided statistical data that supported what is needed to retain and support first year teachers. Utilizing statistical data increased the validity of this study, but limited the voice and perspective of the first-year teachers who completed this survey. A mixed-method approach would have allowed researches a more in-depth analysis of how first year teachers mitigate challenges and obstacles in their work setting.

Leadership Styles

Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) explored authentic leadership behaviors and the effects that it had on the withdrawal behaviors among teachers. Researchers examined self-reports and school records regarding three withdrawal behaviors, lateness, absenteeism, and intent to leave. An Mplus statistical package was applied to analyze the impact of the three withdrawal behaviors regarding authentic leadership (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Ultimately, researchers aimed to answer if the teachers' perceptions of a principal's authentic leadership impact a teacher's psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior and withdrawal behaviors.

A total of 366 teachers from two rural districts in central Israel participated in the study. Of the 366 teachers who participated in the study, 75.4% were female and 24.6% were male (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Participants anonymously answered a questionnaire related to their perceptions about their principals' authentic leadership, attitudes relating to psychological empowerment, and personal background. The survey consisted of a five-point Likert scale ranging from one, equating to strongly disagree, to five, equating to strongly agree. Six months later, participants attached copies of absence

records, reports regarding lateness, and intent to leave in an effort to help researchers link the questionnaires from the first phase of data collection. To determine the perspective of teachers regarding authentic leadership Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) used a 16-item original authentic leadership questionnaire.

Findings from the study indicated that the perceptions of authentic leadership among teachers positively relates to their psychological empowerment attitudes. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) assert that when teachers perceive their principal as an authentic leader who empowers them in making meaningful changes, they feel that they have influence on what happens in the school. Therefore, they are motivated and feel in control at work, while receiving respect from other colleagues, which ultimately induces teachers to act as role models, thus reducing their absenteeism (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014).

Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) sought to investigate teacher retention from international schools in the Near East South Asia (NSEA) region. Mancuso et al. (2010) specifically examined teacher characteristics, school characteristics and organizational conditions. Researchers contacted participants by sending a web-based questionnaire link to 40 school heads who were directed to randomly distribute the link to 20 percent of their teachers (Mancuso et al., 2010). The sample of invited teachers consisted of 520 teachers with a 47% response rate of 248 teachers. Of the 248 teachers, 77% were stayers and 23% were movers. Additionally, the sample size consisted of 52% female and 48% male with a mean age of 42.55 who worked at schools that ranged in size from 20 to 2500 students. Mancuso et al. (2010) created an International Teacher Mobility Survey to measure qualifying information that mirrored the NCES SASS. Four significant

predictors emerged from the questionnaire regarding satisfaction with salary, perception of school head's supportive leadership, and teachers' perceptions of the amount of input they have in decision making (Mancuso et al., 2010).

Findings included that teachers perceived school heads to be effective if they were supportive, gave them respect, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and solved school or department problems. Mancuso et al. (2010) emphasized that the findings from this study associate with the tenets of transformational and distributive leadership. Transformational leaders according to Mancuso et al. (2010), are leaders who treat staff fairly, incorporate others in problem solving, articulate clear goals and provide support in difficult situations.

Mancuso et al. (2010) asserted that school heads that exhibited a leadership style consistent with transformational and distributed leadership would promote teacher retention. Specifically within this study, school heads who exhibited a more transformational and distributed leadership style were linked to reduced teacher turnover. Overall, Mancuso et al.'s (2010) study suggest that these two leadership skills may subsequently witness reduced turnover, improved continuity and improved student learning as teachers within this study chose to stay at their schools due to school heads exhibiting the characteristics mentioned above.

Shaw and Newton's (2014) quasi-experimental quantitative study assessed the relationship between three variables, level of perceived servant leadership characteristics present in a school principal, the level of job satisfaction of the teaching professionals within those schools, and the intended retention rate in that school. Servant leadership

according to Shaw and Newton (2014) implies that an individual aspired to serve first, and then they makes a conscious choice to lead.

Cluster sampling took place to collect data from four teacher surveys that consisted of questions regarding demographic information and teacher's perception of the principal as a servant leader, job satisfaction, and intentions regarding the profession (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Shaw and Newton (2014) utilized the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument survey to collect evidence regarding teachers' perceptions of servant leadership practices and the Organizational Leadership Assessment to measure job satisfaction. The last two surveys consisted of 54 Survey Monkey questions created by Shaw and Newton (2014) that inquired about teachers plans on staying in the profession, or to remain in the current school. Participants of the study included a total of 288 high school teachers from 15 different schools.

Shaw and Newton (2014) generated a Pearson correlation statistics from the survey data, and a correlation between the level of perceived servant leadership characteristics of the principal and teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, a point-biserial correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between perceived servant leadership characteristics of the principal and intended job retention, both within the field of education and the school in which they currently teach. Ultimately survey data showed a significant positive correlation between teachers' perception of their principals' level of servant leadership and teachers' job satisfaction and intended retention. A total of 69% of the variability in teachers' job satisfaction was explained by teachers' perception of their principals' level of servant leadership. Shaw and Newton (2014) assert that clear

consideration should be given to the role of the principal and to servant leadership as a predictor of teacher retention and job satisfaction.

Shaw and Newton (2014) presented information establishing a strong link between servant leadership practices and both teacher retention and job satisfaction, but due to the study being conducted in one state, more information needs to be gathered to widen the scope of the study. For example, Shaw and Newton (2014) eliminated the voice of the teachers due to the quantitative nature of the study. Incorporating and exploring the lived experience of a servant leaders impact on teachers' would have added value to the study. The researchers also provided limited information related to the participants, as there were no statistics regarding the gender, years of service, or age demographic, and only included high school teachers. Additionally, the study offered limited information related to the reasons why participants decided to leave the particular schools or the profession altogether. Adding these key elements mentioned would have strengthened the argument that exemplary leadership practices that help retain teachers.

In addition to investigating servant leadership, Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2014) examined the relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' organizational commitment, mediated by distributed leadership. Devos et al. (2014) used several conceptualizations of distributed leadership to build a guiding framework and to investigate the influence of the leadership of the principal on teachers' organizational commitment, mediated by the leadership of members from the leadership team. Devos et al. (2014) asserted that in secondary schools the supportive leadership function of the school principal was positively related to teachers' organizational commitment.

Devos et al. (2014) implemented a stratified random selection of 46 secondary schools in Belgium. School principals were contacted and basic information about the school and initial interviews with the principal, assistant principal, and teacher leaders were conducted. Teachers that represented the 46 schools in the study participated in a survey, representing a response rate of 64%. The sample of 1,495 teachers was comprised of 58.1% women and participants' average job seniority was 13 years. The Distributed Leadership Inventory a self-report five-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed to collect data regarding the function of the principal, cooperation within the leadership team, decision making of teachers, organizational commitment, and context variables. A multiple mediate model was examined to test whether the relationship between leadership provided by the school principal and organizational commitment is partly explained by the distributive leadership practices of the leadership team.

Results indicated that the school principal strongly influences how leadership is distributed. Teachers perception regarding leadership was strongly related to the leadership of the assistant principal, teacher leaders, participative decision making of teachers, and cooperation within the leadership team. Additionally, the results indicated that the cooperation at the level of the leadership team was directly related to teachers' commitment to the school (Devos et al., 2014). Devos et al. (2014) implied that school principals must learn the art of creating and facilitating the process of distributed leadership in order to have committed teachers in schools, thus affirming the conclusion that principals' are associated with teachers' commitment to the school (Devos et al. 2014).

Although Devos et al. (2014) linked distributive leadership practices to teacher commitment using a self-reporting questionnaire to gather information, there was one major limitation of the study. Bias from the respondents may have impacted the results of the study limiting the validity of the findings. Researchers could have used other methods to measure the leadership variables through qualitative methods to increase the validity of the results. More specifically, a longitudinal study of certain schools may have allowed the researchers to examine other factors that may have influenced teachers' commitment within the school building.

Thomas, Tuytens, Devos, Kelchtermans and Vanderlinde's (2020) study examined the relationship between transformational school leadership and job attitudes of first-year teachers that motivate them to stay in the profession. More importantly, Thomas et al. (2020) hypothesized that the transformational leadership of the principal is positively related to beginning teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Thomas et al., 2020).

To examine the relationship between transformational school leadership and first-year teachers' job satisfaction, researchers contacted teacher training programs in Flanders to gain permission to contact their graduating class of 2015. A total of 446 graduates returned their questionnaires consisting of sample of 89.5% female and 10.5% male (Thomas et al., 2020). The survey conducted consisted of demographic information and career path aspirations. Survey results revealed that, out of the 446 questionnaires completed 292 had a teaching job. The 292 who had a teaching job formed the sample of the study (Thomas et al., 2020).

To analyze the data, researchers calculated descriptive statistics concerning teachers' job attitudes, self-efficacy, transformational leadership of the principal, and professional collegial support. Next, researchers used a path analysis to test the research model and hypothesis. Results concerning the relationship between transformational school leadership and teachers' attitudes indicated that transformational leadership of the principal was positively related to beginning teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Thomas et al., 2020). The path analysis revealed that transformational school leadership had a statistically significant relationship with professional collegial support, measured by self-reported in-degree and perceived usefulness. Researchers asserted that the more first-year teachers perceived their principal to have transformational abilities, the more they were intrinsically motivated to teach, and were satisfied with the job, based off of the mean scores of the study. Additional findings from the study supported the notion that transformational leadership impacts and mediates teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach. More specifically, the results showed that self-efficacy as a result of transformational leadership remains a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Thomas et al., 2020).

Overall, Thomas et al. (2020) empirically explored factors that are important precursors of teacher retention. The study provided insight regarding the interplay of transformational school leadership, job attitudes, and teacher self-efficacy. Ultimately, the findings and analysis revealed that transformational principals elevated first-year teachers' self-efficacy, which in turn, increased their intrinsic motivations to teach and job satisfaction.

Limitations of the study included the sample group of first-year teachers. The findings from the study consisted mostly of female teachers, with a limited representation of male teachers. Therefore, the findings of the study must be interpreted cautiously due to the limited amount of male first year teachers. In addition to the demographics of the sample, the findings were collected through self-reported measures of the participants. Having participants self-report implies that the results must be interpreted carefully, as there might be a higher level of bias among the participants. In addition to the sample size and data collection technique, the generalization of this study was restricted due to the context of where the study took place. However, future research should include a more diverse representation of the educational workforce, along with varying methods to collect data from school leaders, participants, and additional stakeholders.

Overall, there is an established global trend within the literature that associates school leadership with teacher retention (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Ladd, 2011; Hulpia et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), but there still remains a gap within the literature concerning supportive leadership practices pertaining to Black male teachers. Although Boyd et al. (2011) placed a major emphasis on the role of administrators and school leaders with regards to teacher career decision, one major drawback of the study included only surveying first-year teachers in one school district. Gathering data from first-year teachers eliminates varying teacher perspectives. Additionally, the data produced from the study included respondent indicators according to age and race, but limited indicators for gender as there was no representation of the male gender, specifically Black males. This was a common concern in many of the studies examined (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom &

Bartanen, 2019; Ladd, 2011; Hulpia et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) as there was minimal or no representation of varying teacher subgroups. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) linked school leadership to teacher retention, and made a claim regarding Black teachers leaving at a higher rate than White teachers, but failed to explicitly unpack the characteristics of this subgroup. Boyd et al.'s (2011) study simply included female participants and no males. Ladd's (2011) statewide study included a general synopsis of data concerning gender and race, but lacked an in depth analysis of each subgroup of teachers and what causes them to leave or stay. The literature examined produced a more general approach to what is important for teachers in the educational workforce through the lens of school leadership. In sum, the literature suggests that the quality of school leadership practices influence teacher retention and attrition, but there still remains a gap in what is known about the specific leadership practices that support male teachers, specifically Black males. In addition to specific leadership practices, the perspective of the Black male teacher is of equal importance. The viewpoints and lived experiences of the Black male teacher will provide a rich narrative of what is needed to support this underrepresented group of teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

According to Jones (1998):

> Just as race and gender are intertwined in the construction of black male identity, so are racism and patriarchy associated with the marginalization of Black males. This intersection, so visible in statistical comparisons between black males and their white or female counterparts, is ironically visible in the discourse of equality....The experience of gender for black males is an experience of being 'shut out of the world' by a dualistic structure of myth in which the black male's gender, as well as his race, is deeply woven in the warp and woof of otherness. (p.41)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) consists of five elements that shape this theoretical framework.

- The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination
- The challenge to dominate ideology
- The commitment to social justice
- The centrality of experiential knowledge
- The transdisciplinary perspective - Solórzano and Yosso (2002)

According to Barnes (1989), CRT attempts to integrate experiential knowledge, drawn from a shared history to transform a world deteriorating from racial hegemony. CRT directly aligns to the issue of Black male teacher retention as CRT examines race and racism in order to change systems and structures that perpetuate racial inequality in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT is a theory rooted and utilized as a tool for the deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, and the reconstruction of equitable and socially just relations of power (Ladson-Billings, 1988). Moreover, CRT emerged in the mid 1970s with the goal of addressing the racial reform in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Early contributors Bell and Freeman addressed the notion that racism has been so engrained in the Unites States social order, that it appears to be normal and natural to society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Lynn, 2006). According to Barnes (1989), minority perspectives add value to the fundamental change in which society thinks and constructs knowledge. CRT seeks to interject oppressive minority viewpoints in an effort to reconstruct societal systems and structures that drive racial hegemony through stories and narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Barnes, 1989). More importantly, employing storytelling adds the necessary context to bring discourse regarding racial justice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

Overall CRT seeks the elimination of racial oppression in the U.S. by examining forms of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Lynn (2006) examined the life of a

Black male teacher in South Central Los Angeles through CRT to better understand the lives Black men live. Through the use of portraiture, Lynn (2006) made meaning of one Black male participant's lived experiences. Although there was only one Black male teacher examined, five interviews were conducted over the course of one school year, along with multiple informal interviews. Data were analyzed using CRT to understand the narrative and describe the work of one Black male teacher. After examining the participant's life story closely, results showed that the presence of Black male teachers help buffer negative outside forces for the participant (Lynn, 2006). Lynn (2006) asserted that Black male teachers view teaching as a form of "racial uplift" for blacks with limited choices and opportunities in a white supremacist context. Although the sample size of this study included only one participant, the results address the need to examine the social, political, and economic barriers Black male teachers face in today's educational workforce. In addition to a limited sample size, Lynn (2006) study did not examine or address the barriers or lack thereof from a leadership standpoint. Addressing the role of the leader's experience could have deepened the understanding of what it means to be a Black male teacher.

Overall, CRT can be utilized to examine race and gender within educational organizations with a targeted lens on Black male teachers, as this framework recognizes that the shared experiences of oppressed people serve as a vehicle for social change. The application of CRT can provide an understanding of the lived experiences of Black male teachers, but a succinct focus on the relationship between leadership and Black males could yield optimal results in addressing Black male teacher retention.

Transformative Leadership

Transformative Leadership

> The degree of collaboration and trust among teachers is closely linked to the nature of the school leadership; transformative leaders are far more likely to promote high levels of teacher collaboration, trust, and commitment to the school than are more controlling principals (Ladd, 2011)

Good school leadership is "leadership that is effective in terms of having his or her school run smoothly and effectively according to the criteria and goals he or she has set for the school." Shields (2012) asserts that there are many micro-political realities of schooling. These include an increase in accountability, reporting and paperwork, managing new technology and the rapidly changing pace of communication. According to Shields (2012), negotiating each of these elements and maintaining a focus on students requires more than good leadership; it requires transformative leadership. Shields (2012) states that it is important to consider what it means to be a "good" leader for all students regardless of their demographics such as their background, language, culture, and degree of influence of their parents. Transformative leadership starts at the end and evaluates current conditions while determining ways to change them. Transformative leadership acknowledges the fact that an unequal playing field leads to the impoverished working harder to reach success in school. Transformative leadership also recognizes that cultural norms create advantages for some children over others. According to Shields (2012),

> Transformative leaders combine careful attention to authentic, personal leadership characteristics, a focus on more collaborative, dialogic, and democratic process of leadership; and at the same time, attend simultaneously to goals of individual intellectual development, and goals of collective sustainability, social justice, and mutually beneficial civil society. (p. 19)

Transformative leaders start with the goal of transformation for the organization as well as society. Transformative leaders consider and care about the life experiences of

students and how those experiences impact their learning. This includes attention to the home life of students, as well as what is happening in the wider community outside of the school building. Considering all factors that impact the lives of students enables transformative leaders to improve learning for students by providing an equitable, individualized, meaningful experience that allows all students to excel and experience success.

The tenets of transformative leadership allow a deeper understanding of Black male teachers' lived experiences, as this particular framework can offer and identify the specific transformative leadership practices that influence the career transitional decisions of Black male teachers' through the reflection and lens of the Black male teacher. Tenets such as the emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness, along with the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice assisted with unpacking and creating the support and influence of school leaders as perceived by Black male teachers. Ultimately, this theory aided in adding to the narrative regarding the influence of school leaders on the retention of Black male teachers.

Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed examined and identified factors that have influenced the retention and attrition of Black male teachers including workplace microaggressions, disciplinarian responsibilities (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2015; Kholil, 2018; Will, 2016), and racial climate (Kholil, 2018). Therefore, it is important to examine the lived experiences and identity of Black male teachers in an effort to understand and recognize structures that support retention efforts. The existing research (Bristol, 2015; Goldring et

al., 2014; Kearney, 2010; Will, 2016) supported the value added of increasing the number of Black male teachers in the workforce in an effort to represent the diverse student population, while recognizing the challenges of being a Black male teacher. Organizational factors and workplace conditions contributed to the experience of the Black male teacher (Bristol, 2014, Dee, 2006, Will, 2016). Therefore, school principals must serve as transformative trailblazers and facilitate effective equitable systems and structures that allow Black male teachers to thrive.

Due to the lack of studies focusing on leadership practices that influence Black male teacher attrition, researching transformative leadership practices as they relate to Black male teachers may fill the gap in the literature regarding leadership practices that support the retention of Black male teachers. Focusing on the tenets of transformative leadership, which focus on equity, social justice, and fairness to empower marginalized communities, can offer a deeper understanding of systems and structures that support Black male teachers. As mentioned, Black male teachers make up less than 2% of the educational workforce; therefore, attempting to examine transformative leadership practices may offer insight into which practices positively impact Black male teachers. Thus, the literature, coupled with CRT and transformative leadership theory shaped the conceptual framework for this study. This conceptual framework is represented graphically represented in Figure 1.

The conceptual framework consists of multiple factors that influence Black males. The top of the conceptual framework represents CRT. CRT serves as the foundation to explore the Black male teacher's lived experiences related to the issue of the limited amount of Black male teachers in the educational workforce. To understand the measures

that are needed to recruit and retain Black male teachers, it is important to utilize CRT as a tool to explore the historical factors that impact and influence the narratives and identities of Black male teachers. The arrows from CRT extend to two other factors that influence the Black male teachers, the school principal and workplace conditions. The school principal arrow pointed towards the Black male teacher represents how school principals' transformative practices or lack thereof may influence Black male teachers' identity and career transitional behaviors to stay or leave in the profession. Leadership factors such as advocacy, accountability, collaboration, and support serve as factors that impact workplace conditions, the Black male teacher's identity, and career transitional behaviors for Black male teachers. Ultimately, the school principal embodies the transformative leadership theory, while representing potential strategies utilized to overcome systemic and unjust barriers and obstacles that yield positive outcomes for Black male career transitional behaviors.

The workplace conditions structure pointed towards the Black male teacher represents how the context of a school as a result of transformative leadership practices employed by the school principal impacts the racial and professional identity of the Black male teacher. The relationship between the CRT and workplace conditions represent the systems and structures that deter and hinder Black males entering the profession such as working conditions, unofficial roles, perception of teaching, and compensation. These factors align to the construction of the Black male teacher professional identity.

The racial identity structure represents how Black males see themselves in relation to who they are as Black male teachers, such as values, philosophy, and family structure. The racial identity of the Black male teacher is shaped through their beliefs,

values, and experiences stemming from their racial identity formed by societal influences, which aligns to CRT. Within the educational workforce, there is an intersection between the racialized identity and professional identity of the Black males as Black male teachers navigate a workforce where they represent the minority. The professional identity structure consists of the official and unofficial roles and responsibilities shaped by workplace conditions and the school principal. Along with day-to-day responsibilities, professional identity also consists of certification, as there are different opportunities in traditional and non-traditional routes for Black males to enter the profession of teaching. Ultimately, this intersection of the two identities can impact and influence the retention of the Black male teacher.

Thoroughly utilizing each structure will promote a more diverse workforce specifically concerning Black male teachers. Therefore, school principals, as transformative leaders, facilitate and create structures that promote the discourse amongst Black male teachers to deconstruct and reconstruct frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice as a tool to support their retention.

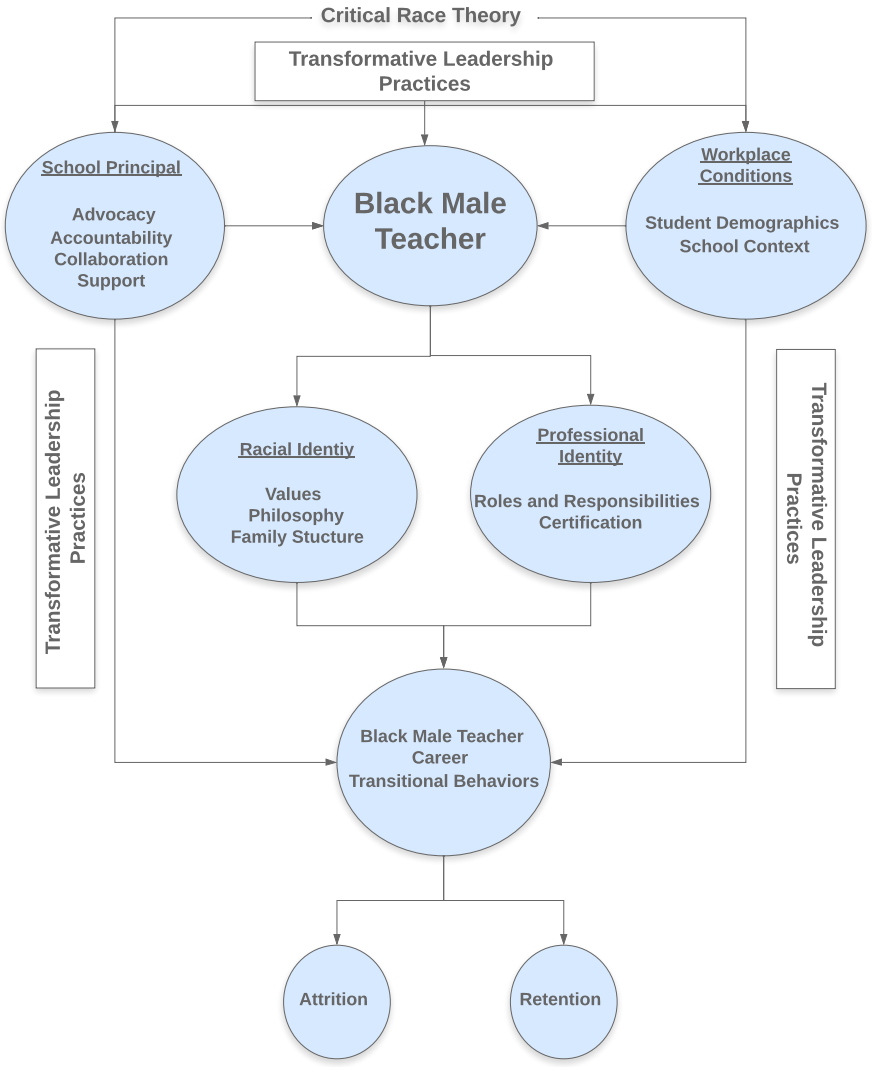


Figure 1

Inferences from the Literature

Overall, it is important to note what is at stake when teachers of color, specifically Black male teachers, are missing. The research examined showed that there is an impact and benefit to having a same race teacher in relation to student achievement indicators. Therefore, it is important to research and examine the factors and lived experiences of Black males to gain a deeper understanding of what needs to be done to effectively retain Black male teachers. As mentioned, student populations are rapidly shifting. Having an

educational workforce that mirrors the shifting population could lead to academic success for underrepresented groups. Thus far, we know the role different factors that influence teacher retention; we also know the identity of Black male teachers and the set of factors that influence their decision to remain or leave the profession. What still remains unknown is the way in which leadership supports or hinders teacher retention, and the type of practices and policies implemented by school leaders that impact Black male teachers.

What still remains to be an unknown are the links between effective leadership practices and a higher retention number of Black male teachers. Although there is some evidence that links increased minority student learning to the race of the teacher, additional information is needed regarding the lived experiences of Black male teachers. There is limited amount of empirical investigation of Black male teacher retention in comparison to other subgroups within the U.S. educational workforce. In addition to the limited amount of empirical investigation of Black male teachers, there is a need to understand the backgrounds of Black male teachers and how they view themselves as instructional leaders. Many studies combine Black teachers into the minority teacher subgroup, more importantly, Black male teachers. The grouping of Black male teachers under the umbrella of minority teachers misrepresents Black male teachers within the literature, thus creating a gap of what is known. This ultimately marginalizes the voice of Black male educators in the U.S. Therefore, it is essential to examine Black male teachers lived experiences to help school districts and school-based leaders support, and retain Black male teachers. To that effect, future research should explore the relationship between Black male teachers through the lens of school organizational factors that shape

their lived experiences of what it means to be a Black male educator through a leadership lens. To understand the retention of Black male teachers, attrition factors of the entire teaching population will be examined in the following section.

Researchers have identified the lived experience of Black male teachers (Bristol, 2015; Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Brockenbrough, 2012; Glennie et al., 2016; Kholil, 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003; Meidl, 2018; Will, 2016). What is missing from the literature includes the school based leadership perspective of Black male teachers. The research discussed the implications for leadership, but fails to examine the actual leadership practices that aid in retaining Black male teachers. Specifically, what is missing is the research on how school leaders cultivate and foster a culture that addresses feelings of isolation and alienation for Black male teachers. Essentially, the critical factor that is missing within Black male teacher literature is the link to leadership and Black male retention.

The literature discussed the roles of Black male teachers, but what are the leadership factors that support or hinder the growth and retention of the Black male teacher? More specifically what remains unknown are the actual systems and structures, and leadership techniques utilized by leaders to support Black males as they navigate through the pressures of teaching. There is still a dire need to determine which leadership practices are effective and supportive to Black male teachers. Therefore, it is important to establish and deepen the connection among effective school leadership practices that influence Black male teacher retention. What remains known from the literature is that Black male teachers feel marginalized in the role as disciplinarians. The studies examined (Bristol & Mentor 2018, Brockenbrough, 2012) showcase feelings of isolation, stress,

and pressure to live up to the perceived role of the Black male teacher. However, what still remains unknown is how leaders can support and challenge the assumptions of what it means to be a Black male teacher in an effort to support and ultimately retain Black male teachers in the field of education. Minority teacher retention literature argues the importance of having a diverse workforce for the benefit of student achievement (Bristol, 2015; Gershenson et al. 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kearney, 2010), but fails to examine the leadership components needed to support specifically Black male teachers specifically. An emphasis in data collection must be placed on Black male teachers, as there is an identified value added of having Black male teachers present in schools.

Ultimately, what still remains to be explored is whether compensation influences Black male teachers' decision to stay or leave the profession of teaching. An overall question would be whether Black male teachers share the same sentiment as the participants of the studies mentioned. To add depth to this particular topic, the literature needs to represent minorities in the educational workforce to ensure a thorough examination and analysis of compensation in teaching. Few qualitative studies focus on the Black male teachers within an elementary school setting. Although there are bodies of qualitative studies that examine the experiences of teachers of color, there are few studies that unpack and dive deep into the lived experiences of Black male teachers at a variety of educational levels (K-12). In addition to a limited amount of Black male teacher literature there are small sample sizes amongst many of the studies reviewed. Given the gaps in the literature, more research should address the limited amount of Black male teachers in education. The literature has highlighted the increased need for Black male teachers along with the systems and structures that influence their decisions to enter and

leave the teaching professions. Therefore, a focus on the Black male teacher's experience can potentially guide school-based leaders in effectively retaining Black male teachers. Less clear are the effects of leadership that impact the retention of Black male teachers.

Research Questions

The gaps in the literature formulated the following research questions:

- **RQ1**: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?
    - In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?
    - In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?
- **RQ2:** What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?
    - What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of Methodology

This study will examine the lived experiences of Black male teachers and how perceived leadership practices influence their retention and attrition. Two theoretical frameworks, CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and transformative leadership (Shields, 2012) theory were applied to make meaning of the examined experiences and practices employed by the proposed participants. The application of CRT was used to examine the experiences of Black male teachers to address and recognize the intercentricity of race and racism as it relates to the retention of Black male teachers. More specifically, perceived leadership practices that challenge dominant ideologies, and a commitment to social justice were examined to establish a relationship between leadership and Black male teacher retention. The tenets of transformative leadership were used to understand the specific leadership practices that influence the professional identity of Black male teachers along with their career transitional decision. Ultimately, transformative leadership theory aided in placing emphasis on leadership practices that deconstructs inequities and support Black male teachers.

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), qualitative research consists of using interpretive and theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems that address the meanings of a social or human problem. More importantly, qualitative research focuses on processing, understanding, and creating meaning as the researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, the process of qualitative research includes the collection of data in a

natural setting, data analysis that establishes patterns or themes, and a final written report reflective of the participants and researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merrian & Tisdell, 2016). This study utilized a phenomenological research approach to understand the lived experiences of Black male teachers. Phenomenology, according to Merrian and Tisdell (2016), consist of depicting the essence or basic structure of an experience.

Research Questions

The literature examined in Chapter 2 regarding Black male teacher retention and attrition revealed gaps in knowledge concerning school leaders practices that support the Black male teacher phenomena. Most empirical studies focused on the lived experiences of Black male teachers regarding topics such as feelings of isolation, unofficial roles, and workplace microaggressions. Many studies also examined the Black male teacher shortage and the impact that it has on student achievement. What remains unknown is the role of school leaders and how their leadership practices help or hinder Black male teacher retention. Therefore, this study can contribute to the literature concerning Black male teachers by examining the perceived school leadership practices that support Black male teachers through the lens of Black male teachers. The following research questions will address the gap in the literature:

- **RQ1**: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?
    - In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?
    - In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?

- **RQ2:** What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?
    - What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?

Collectively, the research questions seek to enhance the dialogue concerning the lived experiences of Black male teachers. Ultimately, developing a greater understanding of how Black male teachers perceive support within a school context can assist in unpacking their decisions to stay or leave the profession.

Epistemology

A central characteristic of all qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Crotty (1988) explains that constructionism is the process of human beings constructing meaning as they engage with the world they are interpreting. This qualitative study was grounded in an epistemology stance of constructivism. The epistemology of constructivism was appropriate for this study as the experiences of Black male teachers are varied and diverse which require examination. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), reality is socially constructed resulting in multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event.

The experience and retention of Black male teachers is a narrow researched phenomenon. Therefore, the aim of this study was to construct meaning of the experiences of Black male teachers. In addition to understanding the experiences of Black male teachers, the understanding of school leadership practices that influence Black male teachers' career transitional decisions is an additional area of examination.

Research Methodology

This study used a phenomenological methodology. A central feature of a phenomenological qualitative study is to focus on the meaning of an individual's experience toward a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Additionally, a phenomenological study focuses not on the life of an individual, but rather on understanding the lived experiences of a group of individuals around a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of its universal essence (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Moustakas (1994) categorizes this type of phenomenology as transcendental or psychological phenomenology, in which the focus is more on the experiences of the participants and less on the researcher. Knowledge is constructed through a phenomenological data analysis process in which data is collected through the use of in-depth and multiple interviews where participants are asked broad general open-ended questions to provide understanding of the common experiences. A guideline for gathering knowledge of a lived experience is for the researcher to first engage in a process called epoché. In the epoché, the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowing are set aside, and the phenomena are revisited (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). These prejudices and assumptions are then bracketed so that the researcher can examine consciousness itself (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Next, a review of interview data is conducted with the goal of producing a descriptive passage regarding the essence of the participant's experiences. To achieve this process, the analysis of significant statements to broader units of meaning is turned into detailed descriptions that summarize what

individuals have experienced and how individuals experience the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Ultimately, utilizing a phenomenological methodology was critical in examining and constructing what it means to be a Black male teacher with a focused lens on transformative leadership and CRT. This phenomenological methodology also allowed for the examination of each participant to explore and reflect on their career transitional behavior to leave, or stay in the field of education. Lastly, this methodology allowed for an analysis and understanding of systems, structures, and policies utilized by school leaders that support or hinder the Black male teacher.

Theoretical Perspective

Two theoretical frameworks aided in understanding the Black male teacher experiences. CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and transformative leadership (Shields, 2012) enriched the understanding of those perceived leadership practices that assist in supporting the experiences of the Black male teacher. The conceptual framework located in Chapter 2 visually represents the intersection and significance of these two frameworks as it relates to Black male teacher retention.

Sampling

The purpose of this study was to explore and make meaning of the experiences of Black male teachers with an emphasis on how school leadership practices influence the decisions to stay or leave the profession. In a phenomenological study, participants must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and who are able to articulate their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Therefore, two groups of teachers were

sampled throughout the study: Former public school Black male teachers who have exited the profession of teaching, and Black males who are currently employed as public-school teachers. Purposeful criterion sampling was utilized to select participants for this study, as this sampling strategy works well when all individuals represent people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Criteria of inclusion for current Black male teacher participants were individuals who identify as Black and have a minimum of three years of public school teaching experience at an elementary, middle, or high school setting. The criteria of inclusion for former Black male teacher participants included Black male teachers who have exited the profession of teaching at an elementary, middle, or high school setting. Former Black male teachers who have left the profession of teaching due to retirement were eliminated from the study. Human resource departments within each school district were contacted to collect district data for current and former Black male teachers utilizing the criteria of inclusion mentioned.

In addition to purposeful criterion sampling, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit and gain access to current and former Black male teachers for the study. Snowball sampling involves locating a few key participants who easily meet the criteria and during the early interviews, participants are asked to refer any other participants that easily meet the criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To recruit the six former Black male teacher participants, current Black male teacher participants were asked if they knew any Black males that left the profession at the end of their interviews. Former Black male teacher participants were then contacted by phone and email to secure an interview. Additionally, at the end of the first two former Black male teacher participant interviews, participants referred the remaining participants to the study when asked if they had any Black male

colleagues that left the profession. As mentioned, the current and former Black male public school educators that participated in this study involved interviews of 13 current and six former Black male teachers from two districts in two Mid-Atlantic states and one district in one Southern state. Online request to conduct research in multiple Mid-Atlantic school districts and an application to Institutional Review Board (IRB) through The George Washington University (Appendix C) was approved before inviting participants to interview.

Data Collection

To gather and structure the lived experiences of current and former Black male teachers, semi-structured phenomenological interviews (Appendix A & B) served as the major method of data collection through Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform. Zoom was utilized to increase the participants comfort to share their thoughts and experiences. Creswell and Poth (2017) assert that there are some advantages of using a qualitative data collection via-web based platform. Web-based data collection platforms can provide participants with time, space, and flexibility to reflect, consider and respond to requests for information. More importantly, utilizing a web-based platform assisted with participants providing a deeper reflection due to a nonthreatening and comfortable environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Nicholas et al., 2010). An informed consent document along with a confirmation email of the interview time were sent to each participant. As mentioned, interviews were held virtually utilizing the Zoom web-based platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a private, quiet, comfortable space with the participant. Interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes for each participant.

Semi-structured interview protocols permit researchers to access participants' perspectives and understanding of the world, guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016). This will allow an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, and allow an emerging worldview of responses, and to new ideas on current and former Black male teachers (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016). The current and former Black male teacher interview protocol (Appendix A & B) consisted of open-ended questions that focused on the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers. After the interview, all participants were invited through email to make meaning of their responses during the initial interview and to answer any clarifying questions.

Preliminary Data Handling

All interview transcripts were collected and uploaded using the Temi transcription service. Before uploading to Temi, each transcription was thoroughly reviewed to enter in any missing information and to denote any speakers. Additionally, each transcript audio recording and field notes were downloaded and renamed using pseudonyms and numbers to protect the anonymity of each participant. After the organization and creation of data files, the coding process took place by utilizing the data coding software MAXQDA. All transcripts and margin notes from each interview were uploaded to the platform to assist with the coding process.

Data Analysis

As mentioned above, each interview was recorded and transcribed electronically using Temi. Once transcribed, each interview transcript and field notes were reviewed before uploading to the data coding software called MAXQDA. Data analysis for this proposed study aligned to the parameters of phenomenological reduction (Moustakas,

1994). As mentioned, the purpose of phenomenological reduction is to lead the researcher back to each experience noted by the participants and reflect on the details. This process encourages the suspension of judgment from the researcher so that the researcher can stay with the lived experience of the phenomenon to be described in a fresh and open way (Moustakas, 1994).

Statements and quotes from the participants were analyzed to decipher how the experiences of Black male teachers connect to the concepts of transformative leadership and CRT. As mentioned, an emphasis on interconnectedness, and the need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice resulted in potential codes to analyze the experiences of Black male teachers. Aligned with phenomenological guidelines significant statements were highlighted and weighed equally and assembled into clusters of meaning, a process known as horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Common statements regarding the experiences of the participants were developed into textual and structural descriptions. The textual descriptions represented what participants experienced and the structural descriptions consisted of how the participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Both descriptions were combined to develop the essence of the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility of the study participants had the opportunity to review their transcripts to ensure that their experiences and perspectives were represented properly. Creswell and Poth (2017) consider the process of member checks as the most critical provision to bolster credibility, as it ensures that each participants had the chance to consider if their words match what they intended.

Another validity strategy employed was reflexivity. Clarifying researcher bias or engaging in reflexivity according to Creswell and Poth (2017), is the process of understanding the bias, values, and experiences that the researcher brings to a qualitative research study. Therefore, this strategy was embedded throughout the study through the process of reflecting journaling and field notes to note any impressions about what the findings might have indicated. Utilizing this process aided in refining certain aspects of the interview process while acknowledging my subjectivity.

Corroborating evidence through triangulation of multiple data sources also ensured trustworthiness of the data. Creswell and Poth (2017) refer to the triangulation process as a strategy to verify evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. Each interview was thoroughly analyzed to seek themes and patterns that may align to the conceptual framework to assess if there were similarities or differences between the experiences of Black male teachers. Creswell and Poth (2017) assert that reliability can be enhanced by a researcher employing good quality recording devices and by transcribing the digital files. To enhance the reliability of the study, a quality recording device known as Temi was employed to explicitly capture statements made during each interview. In addition to the use of Temi, a computer assisted software package known, as MAXQDA was utilized to easily share coding efforts. The final technique implemented was to ensure that there were thick, rich descriptions of each participant's experiences. Detailed descriptions are vital to promoting credibility as it helps to convey the participant's actual authentic experience to combat issues of external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Therefore, detailed descriptions of the experiences of

Black male teachers that describe in detail the setting and phenomenon were captured to make connections between the study and different settings to support transferability.

Subjectivity Statement

Peshkin (1988) argues that researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity before data collection and analysis. Therefore, it is important to identify and monitor my biases as a researcher in order to understand how my biases may negatively shape the collection and interpretation of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

There are various aspects that shape my identity and that have brought me to this study. As a Black male student, I have had an overall positive schooling experience. I have had teachers, along with family members advocate and support me throughout my schooling, which has led me to choosing teaching as a profession. I thrived and felt comfortable when I had teachers who supported and fueled my interest. I have also experienced low expectations from teachers that caused me to second guess my abilities as a student. Ultimately, these experiences have taught me to be careful with my words and actions as a Black male educator and school administrator.

Additionally, I have taught in Title I elementary schools with a high rate of families and students living in poverty, and a small number of staff members who look like me. This early professional experience caused me to question why there are so few Black males in education. I have worked in four different elementary schools where I have consistently been one of the few Black male educators in the building. I have worked in a building where I had a small group of Black male teachers to collaborate with and I have also worked in a building in isolation. Although my experiences with colleagues have been varied, I have consistently had school leaders who supported me

professionally and personally, which increased my commitment to the school community. This is important to mention, as I am seeking to understand the leadership practices that support the retention of Black male teachers.

Currently, I serve as an Assistant Principal in a Title I elementary school where I work with families, staff, students, and community members. I see the need firsthand for high quality teaching and learning, advocacy and support, along with a diverse staff, specifically Black male teachers. What is of great importance to me as a school administrator is retaining an effective and diverse staff. As a school leader, it has been my goal to create a space where all members of the school community can succeed, regardless of any barriers or challenges they may face.

Overall, my experiences and interest regarding Black male teachers shape the purpose of this study. Investigating the lived experiences of Black male teachers stems from my personal connection as a Black male teacher and school administrator who supports and leads a school with a limited amount of Black male teachers.

Human Participants and Ethics Precautions

The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative was completed through The George Washington University before the data collection phase of this study. Additionally, guidelines from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were followed to minimize any threats to participants. Potential participants were provided an informed consent form that outlined the purpose, procedures, timelines, potential threats, and rewards, and their right to withdraw from the study (Appendix C).

Data Handling

Due to the nature of the research, sensitive personal information was protected to ensure the anonymity of each participant. As mentioned, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to conceal identities when analyzing quotes. All audio recordings were erased after transcription. Field notes, and transcriptions were destroyed electronically and physically after the completion of the study. Personal data such as names, school sites, and school district information were treated as confidential information and were destroyed at the conclusion of this study to protect participants from social and economic risks. An additional layer of protection for participants was the encouragement to seek counseling as a way to minimize the emotional stress that may occur for participants during the interview process. Ultimately, this study posed no harm or conflicts of interest to all participants involved as the sole purpose was to investigate the lived experiences of Black male teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of methodology along with research questions that guided this study. Due to the epistemological perspective, this chapter outlined the research design and data collection procedures. Finally, this chapter described the potential risk and precautions that were implemented to minimize harm to the participants, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The findings from 19 study participants will be presented in this chapter. I conducted semi-structured interviews (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016) of 13 current and six former Black male teachers from two districts in two Mid-Atlantic states and one district in one Southern state. Interview transcripts were then analyzed through the process of phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of current and former Black male teachers as it relates to school leadership factors facilitated by school principals. I collected data on current and former Black male teachers lived experiences with a focus on factors that influenced their attrition and retention decisions. The following research questions and sub-questions guided this study:

- **RQ1**: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?
    - In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?
    - In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?
- **RQ2:** What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?
    - What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?

CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and transformative leadership (Shields, 2012) serve as the conceptual framework used to narrow the focus of this study. CRT was used as a tool to explore the historical factors that impact and influence the narratives and identities of Black male teachers in order to understand the measures that are required to recruit and retain Black male teachers. Additionally, the tenets of transformative leadership were used to discuss practices, or lack thereof, that influence Black male teachers' identity and career transitional behaviors to stay or leave the profession. As a result, nine themes emerged from the data. Ultimately, this chapter examines the results of 13 current and six former Black male teacher semi-structured interviews. The first section introduces the study participants by providing detailed participant profiles, followed by a report of coding results represented in a matrix table, detailed analysis and results of the nine overarching themes.

Participant Overviews

As mentioned in previous chapters, this study employed purposeful criterion sampling to select participants for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). To protect and ensure the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to conceal their identities. Nineteen interviews were conducted for this study to include 13 current Black male teachers and six former Black male teachers. Eight current Black male teacher participants were educators at the elementary school level, two participants teach at the middle school level, and one participant currently teaches at the high school level. The remaining two current Black male teacher participants had a teaching experience in addition to teaching at the elementary school level. Years of experience

amongst the current Black male teacher participants ranged from three to thirty years in education. Among the six former Black male teacher participants, two participants taught at middle school, one participant at a high school, one participant at an elementary school, and one participant taught at a middle and high school. Additionally, one participant had experience at all three school levels. Overall the years of experience among the former Black male participants ranged from two to fourteen year in education. Table 1 provides a general overview of all participants including pseudonyms, years of experience in education, current or former educator classification, school level, and content area.

Table 1

Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Years of Experience - Education	Current or Former Educator	Content Area	School
Aekeam	8	Current	Math	Elementary
Damien	3	Current	Physical Education	Elementary
Joshua	22	Current	Physical Education	Elementary
David	5	Current	Vocal Music	Elementary
Dwayne	5	Current	Vocal Music	Middle
Chase	3	Current	Math/Science	Elementary
Maurice	10	Current	English	High
Christopher	7	Current	All Subjects	Elementary
Wendell	30	Current	Vocal Music	Elementary/Middle
Enrico	20	Current	Reading	Elementary

Jordan	13	Current	Physical Education	Elementary
Brian	16	Current	ESOL	Elementary/High
Clark	21	Current	Physical Education	Middle
Peter	2	Former	Vocal Music	Elementary
Alonzo	5	Former	Physical Education	Elementary/Middle/ High
Levar	14	Former	Math	Middle/High
Anwar	2	Former	Math	Middle
Chad	3	Former	English/Spanish	High
Osi	3	Former	English	Middle

Aekeam. At the time of study, Aekeam was a current Black male teacher with eight years of experience. The majority of his career in education was in one school district. Aekeam's original career path focused on a law, but shifted once he received a full scholarship to obtain his master's in teaching. Aekeam was the only full-time Black male teacher in his current building. While reflecting on his lived experience as a Black male teacher, Aekeam discussed being "grateful" for being a Black male teacher. "I definitely wear it as like a badge of honor." Additionally, Aekeam mentioned the "vulnerability" and "transparency" of his school leader as a leadership quality that influenced his decision to stay in the profession.

Damien. Damien was a third-year elementary-school physical education teacher whose greatest motivator to become a teacher stemmed from the encouragement of his mother. Prior to becoming a teacher, Damien worked for various summer park and planning programs. "I never saw myself as being a teacher, but I knew that if I would be

somewhere around kids, I could see myself in the classroom." Damien had the benefit of engaging in collaborative planning with other Black male teachers to discuss instructional implications. Damien was one of three Black male teachers in his building where there was a support system amongst the Black male teachers that "supported" and gave him "motivation" to "tackle whatever struggles" that may arise. While reflecting on his lived experience Damien placed importance on school leaders being "approachable" and "practicing what they preach." Damien made note of wanting to have autonomy as it relates to school curriculum. Damien described that school leaders should "allow us Black males to give our own ideas as to how we can better the curriculum."

Joshua. Joshua was a current elementary-school physical education teacher, who had over 20 years in education, with the majority of his experience teaching at the high-school level for 18 years. Joshua's journey to becoming a physical-education teacher started with the support of a former high-school coach. Joshua served as a substitute teacher before stepping into a full-time teaching position at his old high school. Joshua described this experience as "being in the right place at the right time." When discussing school leadership, Joshua stressed the importance of school leaders having a "clear and concise vision." More specifically someone who is "open, honest, and just willing to help."

David. David was a fifth-year vocal music educator who started as a youth camp counselor before entering the profession of teaching. Negative schooling experiences drove David to become a teacher. David discussed "seeing teaching strategies" that were weird to him which has caused him to be a more intentional educator. David was the only

Black male teacher in his building, but discussed the value of "honesty" and "relatability" as important leadership qualities.

Dwayne. At the time of the study Dwayne was a fifth-year middle school vocal music teacher who grew up in a family of educators, making him a fourth-generation educator. Dwayne served as the department chair and Edgenuity lead teacher at his middle school. Dwayne's early experiences presented some challenges as he discussed being "frazzled" and "anxious" due to a lack of preparation regarding lesson planning and classroom management. While reflecting on specific leadership factors, Dwayne mentioned "integrity" and "embracing the experiences" Black male teachers bring to the profession.

Chase. Chase was a fourth-grade math and science teacher who joined the profession after retiring from another profession. Chase worked as a substitute and eventually became a teacher under the guidance of his principal, who presented him with a full-time opportunity. "Giving back" and "making an impact" were two elements that kept Chase within the teaching profession, as his primary focus centers around student achievement. Chase mentioned receiving support his first year as a teacher through training and modeling from his principal, specifically during collaborative planning meetings.

Maurice. Maurice was a high school English teacher. Maurice's experience attending a predominantly white college served as a motivator to become a teacher. Maurice began his career as a substitute teacher at the high school he attended. Although his first job in education centered around Math, Maurice trusted his former principal to assist him in securing a position within the English department. Maurice described

"seeking out opportunities" throughout his career to grow as an educator. At the time of the study Maurice shared aspirations to become a school administrator that advocated for students of color.

Christopher. Christopher was a second-grade elementary school teacher, who had seven years of teaching experience. Christopher described falling into teaching after graduating from high school: "I simply took classes and fell into teaching through working at preschools and daycare and interacting with children. Christopher prided himself on being a Black male teacher and mentioned that if he did not teach, he would be working with children in some capacity. Christopher was one of four Black male teachers in his current school building and had a very positive experience. Christopher identified that "having that one mindset that we want to impact the school to the best of our ability" is a rewarding experience for him. One salient leadership factor that Christopher deemed important included a leader who has a "strong desire to encourage others to take that next step and take that initiative."

Wendell. Wendell was a veteran teacher with 30 years of experience and had a wide range of experiences. Wendell taught in multiple states and settings, to include a school for the deaf and blind, and a military academy. Wendell was currently serving as a vocal music teacher and enjoyed building relationships with students. Wendell named "empowerment" and "transparency" as leadership factors that he considered essential. Wendell discussed a leader's "the willingness to learn" has influenced his lived experience as a Black male teacher.

Enrico. Enrico was currently serving as a sixth-grade reading teacher and had 20 years of teaching experience. Enrico initially desired to become a writer but knew at

some point he wanted to become a teacher. Enrico discussed how "having good teachers" motivated him to become a teacher. Enrico did experience challenges early in his career due to not having a background in education but discussed how his current school leader "puts people in positions to excel." Leadership traits such as trust, building capacity, and shared decision-making were considered to be important by Enrico.

Jordan. Jordan, a physical education teacher, had 13 years of experience. Jordan had recently returned to the field of teaching after taking a 10-year break to build a business. Due to the pandemic, Jordan returned to the classroom and taught at an elementary school. Jordan initially joined the profession of teaching shortly after completing college after attending a recruitment fair while serving as a substitute teacher. Jordan referred to teaching as a "calling" and stated that "there is a sense of connection" as he reflected about his experience as a Black male teacher. Jordan was the only Black male teacher in his current building and described this experience as a "different dynamic" due to only interacting with Black males who are custodians. Jordan conveyed that school leaders need to "have honest expectations" and be "intentional" in supporting Black male teacher's growth.

Brian. Brian was an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher with 16 years of experience. Brian started his career at the elementary school level for the majority of his career, but transitioned to a high-school position. Similar to many participants, Brian had no idea what he wanted to pursue as a career. He initially wanted to become an architect. As a first-generation college student, teaching became an interest after interacting with friends who were education majors during college. When speaking

about his lived experience and school leadership, Brian described school leaders "being personable" and "keeping standards the same for everyone" as a high priority.

Clark. At the time of the study, Clark was a physical education teacher who had 21 years of experience in education. Clark initially was unsure of his career path but knew he wanted to be a "good influence on others." Clark grew up overseas on a military base and moved back to the states at the age of 14. Clark described aspirations of pursuing a career in criminal justice, but was influenced while running a summer camp program for the youth. Clark had spent his entire teaching career at the same school and was the only Black male teacher in his building. More specifically, Clark had been the only Black male teacher for the past 15 years. Clark believed that school leaders need to be "visible" and "diverse in their message."

Peter. Peter was a former Black male teacher who taught elementary vocal music for roughly two years. Peter came from a family of educators and was offered a teaching opportunity through his father, which sparked his career. During his teaching career, Peter discussed "seeing the impact on children" as a big motivator. Ultimately, Peter's lived experiences teaching and with school leadership contributed to him leaving the profession and pursuing administration and remote educational positions. Peter shared "communicating expectations in a timely manner" and "mentorship" as factors school leaders should consider when supporting Black male teachers.

Alonzo. Alonzo was a former Black male teacher who spent five years teaching physical education to elementary, middle, and high-school students. Alonzo enjoyed "working with inner city youth." Alonzo participated in a mentoring program which led him to the field of teaching. While teaching, Alonzo considered himself a "role model"

and “mentor” while reflecting on his personal experiences as a teacher. “Addressing real issues” and “putting kids' interest first” were two factors that Alonzo deemed important. After teaching for five years, Alonzo left the profession of teaching, and pursued a career in cybersecurity.

Levar. Levar was a former Mathematics teacher who taught for 14 years. During his collegiate years, Levar worked at a summer program that focused on improving various math skills. Shortly after graduation, Levar pursued teaching with the assistance from a college professor. Levar expressed interest in teaching math, as there was a Black male teacher and found a position rather quickly. Levar originally planned to teach for two to three years, but thoroughly enjoyed teaching math to his students. Levar described his initial experience as positive but disagreed with the decisions of senior leadership towards the end of his teaching career. At the time of this study, Levar was serving as a manager for a cybersecurity company.

Anwar. Anwar was a former Mathematics teacher who taught for 2 years. Anwar considered himself a “military brat” as he traveled around the world at a young age. Once he returned back to the states, Anwar’s high school schooling experience shaped his decision to become a teacher. Anwar described noticing “that something is wrong with the education system,” which led him to apply for Teach for America. Anwar planned on remaining in the classroom as a teacher, but an opportunity from Teach for America presented itself, which pulled him out of the classroom. Anwar began to coach teachers through Teach for America and eventually ended up pursuing education philanthropy.

Chad. Chad was a high-school English and Spanish teacher for a total of three years. Chad’s father, who was an educator for over 40 years, influenced Chad’s decision

to pursue teaching. Additionally, “knowing that not every kid is getting a great education” was the driving factor for Chad to join the profession. Chad was recruited by Teach for America and fell in love with the organization's mission. During his tenure as an English teacher, Chad discussed his experience as the youngest member of the English department and the power that he held being a Black male teacher. Reflecting on his decision to leave the profession, Chad discussed the “oppressive nature of the institution of education” which led him to seek a master’s program in the field of psychology.

Osi. Osi was a former middle-school English teacher, who taught for three years. Osi's journey to teaching included initially interviewing with Teach for America, but deciding to pursue performing music instead. Eventually, Osi returned to the field of education after working with a park and recreation center which led to a teaching position. During Osi’s teaching career, he was one of the few Black male teachers in his building. Although he enjoyed “connecting with black and brown boys on a different level.” Osi decided to pursue music as a professional singer. Osi’s personal decision to leave the field of education alleviated him from being a distraction to his students. At the time of study, Osi was working in the field of technology as a manager.

Coding Results

This study utilized the parameters of phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994) to assist in understanding the lived experiences and career decision making process of Black male teachers. As mentioned, the purpose of phenomenological reduction is to lead the researcher back to each experience noted by the participants and reflect. The findings related to this study are based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews (Appendix A & B). Recordings were uploaded to a professional transcription service,

Temi, and transferred to a qualitative software, MAXQDA for further analysis. Important statements, reflections, and key points were placed into categories based on the research questions. The labeling process resulted in the application of codes in MAXQDA which led to the process of sorting and labeling key thematic experiences shared by the participants. The process of labeling and sorting the data resulted in nine emerging themes. Nine themes emerged from the data as responses to the research questions in this study. Table 2 provides an overview of research questions, themes, and assigned categories.

Table 2

Overview of Findings

Research Questions (RQ) and Sub questions (SQ)	Theme	Categories
RQ1: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?	Exit: Black male teachers lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences.	○ Personal and professional respect ○ Limited decision making
	Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models.	○ Servitude ○ Support to school community
SQ1: In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?	Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession.	○ Pigeonholed responsibilities and roles ○ Unspoken Expectations
	Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to work as their authentic self, influence their decision to stay in the profession.	○ Impact on students and making a difference ○ Ability to be their authentic self.
SQ2: In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?	Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity	○ Racial stigma about instructional abilities ○ Isolation & mistrust of colleagues

	and retention decisions of Black male teachers.	
RQ2: What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?	Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers.	○ Interactions with school leader ○ Weak relationship
	Retention: Respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions.	○ Recognition and respect ○ Validation
SQ1: What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?	Exit: School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions.	○ Lack of support ○ Limited decision making
	Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention.	○ Empowerment and Support ○ Transformative leadership practices

Findings

Findings are also thematically divided into two themes, retention, and exit. In the following section retention themes will be analyzed first, followed by the analysis of exit related themes.

Theme 1 Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models

The opportunity to serve as role models for students and the school community increased satisfaction levels for current Black male teachers. Two sub-themes emerged as a result of participants reflecting on their professional identity and lived experiences. Participants regularly discussed how they identified and valued serving as a role model within their school community as they were eager to expose their students to a professional Black male teacher. Additionally, participants discussed how their presence

and positive influence benefitted their school community. Finally, the desire to serve and do whatever it took to see their schools flourish influenced their fulfillment as teachers.

Servitude: "*Serving as a role model to benefit students"*

Black male teachers valued serving as role models for students. This was a factor that helped shape their professional identities. More specifically, participants desired to serve as positive role models in their school settings, and often noted the importance of their presence and representation. Representation, coupled with a genuine care for the wellbeing and future of their students, drove their passion towards the profession, and fulfilled their longing to influence and impact their school communities.

Christopher described being a "symbol" or "beacon of hope" for others, specifically his students, to emulate. Christopher stated:

> I try to be a symbol or a beacon that others look to emulate, even if I am not necessarily the focal point of the school, I still try to give that same reputation and action.

For some participants, being a positive role model and having an impact on their students included modeling their perspective of high expectations for themselves and others, and working to be the best version of themselves. Participants expressed feeling a sense of responsibility to be an example for their students, and acknowledged that this was a necessary component of their daily work as Black male educators. They were aware of society's deficient perspectives of Black males, such as lack of education, aggression, and lack of motivation. This enhanced their desire to change this narrative. Enrico specifically discussed his attire and availability to his students as his way of showcasing what it means to be a Black male. He elaborated by stating:

> You know, the kids to see a man with his briefcase, coming to work every day, or, you know, a man with his shirt and tie or coming to work every day or his suit

> and stuff like that. Those positive images really help those kids see that, you know, there's more for me than what, you know, the naysayers are saying.

Black male teachers tend to feel like they are being watched, and that, when they show up in their spaces, all eyes are on them. This is due to the fact that society tends to have low expectations for Black males, and participants shared that they sensed their colleagues and students were closely paying attention to their every move. Their goal was to ensure that they are debunking negative stereotypes, while also showing their students positive depictions of Black males. Coming to work each day in professional attire and his commitment to presenting his best self was Enrico's way of demonstrating what a Black male professional looks like for his students. Serving as an inspirational, motivational, and positive example enhanced participants' purpose as educators within their school communities.

Participants shared additional factors that increased their desire to serve as role models. Connecting with students who have life experiences that mirrored their own increased their commitment to the success of their students, as they worked to help them navigate through challenges. Participants felt a sense of satisfaction in their jobs when they could be the resource for students that they could have benefitted from when they were growing up. They were even more invested when they could support students as they navigated life's circumstances, while staying on track towards reaching their goals. Participants were invested in pouring into students who remind them of themselves. Joshua, who was raised in a single parent household, was invested in supporting students who grew up in similar circumstances. Joshua described this impact as "keeping it real" with his students. Joshua shared:

> Just trying to show them a positive role model, show them somebody there that cares outside of their family, you know, when they're at school and again, just having an impact that's what I'm supposed to do.

Ultimately, the data presented above indicates that serving as a role model helps shape the professional identity of Black male teachers. They were intentional in how they showed up in their professional setting to ensure that their students felt supported. These educators stayed in the profession because they valued serving as role models, setting positive examples for their students, and contradicting the negative stereotypes society places on Black men. Additionally, they recognized the importance of students of color having representation in their schools, and having role models who remind them of themselves. Students benefit from having Black male teachers who are intentional about setting positive examples, and who work hard to help shape their students' vision of success, especially students of color. As participants stated, their students benefit from a daily portrayal of Black males that challenges societal stereotypes. Taking on this responsibility was important to Black male educators and gave them a sense of satisfaction in their roles.

Support to school community: "*Whatever it takes to succeed"*

The desire to help the community succeed was noted by multiple current Black male teacher participants. Participants revealed a willingness to serve and take on multiple responsibilities to assist their school communities when asked what role they played within their school community. As participants reflected on their experiences, many participants discussed feeling motivated to do whatever it took to make sure their school communities felt their presence and support.

An important theme supported by interview data was participant's eagerness to support their school communities. Black male teachers appreciated opportunities to assist the school in all aspects, and were willing to jump in and take on tasks that helped lead their schools towards success. They especially enjoyed being called on to support their school in ways that drew on their individual strengths and talents.

Dwayne placed high importance on supporting his school through restorative practices because of his personal connection to ensuring a safe, diverse space for all students to show up as their authentic self. Dwayne shared his experience serving as an advisor for the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) in hopes of positively impacting the culture of his school and community. Dwayne's "willingness to serve in whatever area" empowered him as an educator as he was able to align himself to the school community. He states:

> When I'm given the chance to help the school in a way I feel passionate about it means a lot and I'm always here to do whatever needs to be done. Making sure students feel safe and understood is a priority for me in my own classroom, so why not support the wider school community in this effort.

Aekeam, Damien and Joshua shared that operational and building managerial tasks were examples of how they would go above and beyond to support their school community. There was a sense of satisfaction in being called to step outside of their role to assist with fixing the power in the building, troubleshooting tech concerns, and assisting with arrival and dismissal duty. Joshua suggested that these additional duties and responsibilities "make the school day go" and are "pivotal to the school's productivity." Participants appreciated being called on to support their schools, and in these moments, their sense of belonging and overall feelings about their existence in their schools was impacted tremendously. Joshua stated:

> When I'm asked to do stuff like helping at dismissal duty, even if it's not my responsibility, I see it as a good thing. Like they trust me to handle it, or they recognize that I have strengths in other areas and I'm willing to do whatever the school needs to be successful.

Black male teachers felt their schools viewed them as vital members of their community when they were called on to support the school's success. They felt acknowledged as talented professionals, a sense of satisfaction for being needed in their schools, and trusted to help the school succeed.

As Chase reflected on his role within the school community, he shared:

> I'm a team player and I give them my best and I'm very knowledgeable about my subject matter. I'm teaching the kids to be future leaders and to me, that's the role.

Chase further explained how his role within his school not only impacted his students, but their families as well. He described collaborating with parents during after school sessions to provide strategies that allow them to support their child's mathematical development. Like many of the participants, serving as a role model outside of the classroom was a positive source of motivation to continue to go above and beyond their normal duties and responsibilities.

Overall, the participants described how supporting their school communities outside of their official duties aligned to their purpose and identity as Black male educators. Participants showcased a high level of commitment through engaging in duties outside of their job description such as organizing and leading school wide initiatives, collaborating with families, and supporting the overall operations of their buildings. Participants willingly took on these additional roles, which they viewed as necessary to support the success of the school. Additionally, they expressed how essential it was for

their students to see them supporting the school in various ways which aligned with their mission to set positive examples for their students.

Theme 2 Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to collaborate and work as their authentic self influence their decision to stay in the profession

During semi-structured interviews, participants were asked what factors caused them to stay within the profession of teaching. Two sub-themes emerged as participants reflected on their lived experiences. Participants regularly discussed enjoying working in environments where students were put first coupled with increased levels of collaboration. Additionally, participants valued environments that placed an emphasis on supporting student learning. Finally, the opportunity to exist within their workplace and embody their true identity proved to be of major importance for participants.

Impact on students and making a difference: "*United working towards a common goal"*

Black male teachers preferred working in a supportive environment that centered the work and decisions around the achievements and well-being of students. Participants preferred work environments that were collaborative, and collaborating with their colleagues tended to be a key component of the core values and personal teaching philosophies of these educators. Working in schools where collaboration was the norm provided participants with a sense of belonging in their schools, as they were surrounded by others who were willing to work together towards a common goal: doing what is best for students. These environments energized teachers and increased their motivation to go above and beyond for their schools and students. Wendell shared:

> I collaborate all the time with two different grade levels in my school because I mentor a group of students from both grade levels. We all work so well together

> and I've seen so much growth with those kids. It keeps me going, I don't mind staying late or making myself available outside of my work hours because I see how this work is helping these kids. Without that collaboration with the teachers it would be difficult for me to achieve these results on my own.

Participants shared similar stories of witnessing growth in students as a result of collaboration in their schools. Observing students achieving their goals as a result of their efforts led to teachers feeling successful in their work.

Brian shared:

> During my student teaching my mentor was big on collaboration. I saw firsthand how this collaboration impacted the students so I vowed to make that a core value of my own when I had my own class. Working in a school where everyone else actually wants to collaborate is key. It also feels good to be in a place where everyone is really there for the kids.

Collaboration served as an influential factor towards job satisfaction for participants. Furthermore, participants preferred environments where collaboration was infused throughout the entire school to provide the support necessary for student achievement. Participants appreciated being in schools where they were surrounded by colleagues who were focused on supporting students in various ways. A common desire was the ability to work in schools where decisions were centered around students. This included school settings where internal and external resources were sought after and provided to support the needs of the students.

Jordan shared:

> I am in awe of the resources, they are staggering in my building. If a child has challenges, you know, there are probably five therapists, five counselors, and so many different other structures in place to support that student. I appreciate that we all work together.

Additionally, participants valued environments where they were supported in their requests for resources that would support their students. Participants discussed the

importance of being comfortable making such requests, and having their requests honored. Christopher shared, “I don’t ever feel alone because I know if there’s something missing, my school has my back.”

Overall, Black male teachers valued collaborative and supportive work environments, and felt successful when they saw growth and progress in their students. Participants felt a level of achievement that motivated them to stay in their schools to continue to make a lasting impact.

Ability to be their authentic self: “*Showing up as their true self*”

The ability to show up in a professional space as their authentic self was a theme that emerged as participants were asked to reflect on how their identity aligned to their current school community. Participants emphasized the “joy” of being able to bring different aspects of their identity authentically to their school community. They reported the relief they felt when they did not have to disguise parts of themselves in order to make others feel comfortable. Additionally, participants expressed high levels of enjoyment and satisfaction with working in spaces where they truly could remain themselves.

Maurice’s ability to be himself, without the pressure of carefully crafting his words to appease others, allowed him to not only be a champion for students, but to be his true authentic self within his work environment, increasing his satisfaction and staying power. He shared:

> So when there are times that I feel strongly about something, I don’t have to think about how everyone will receive me. I don’t have to hold my tongue or walk on eggshells when proving a point.

The opportunity to highlight other aspects of their identity inspired many participants to remain in their current school placements. When their self-identity was affirmed and utilized in their schools, they felt acknowledged and valued. Chase elaborated that he was able to share his passion for technology with his school community, which allowed him to streamline structures in his building to tech-based platforms. He shared that by highlighting his strengths in this area, his school community "let's me be me."

When participants were encouraged to be themselves, and to voice their ideas and opinions, their sense of belonging was reinforced and they felt empowered to show up as their authentic selves. Joshua specifically shared receiving "a little motivation" from his team to be more vocal during team meetings that were focused on math due to his success with supporting students struggling in math. He shared that having the full support of his school community encouraged him to speak up more often.

Overall, participants acknowledged the importance of working in environments where they could show up as their true self, void of judgment and criticism. The participants experienced a feeling of relief when they found school settings that empowered them to be themselves and accept them for who they are. Additionally, they were drawn to environments that celebrated and highlighted their strengths and talents, while having opportunities to use them to improve the school community.

Theme 3 Retention: Networks of support, respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions

Two sub-themes emerged as participants discussed the value of working in an environment fostered by school leaders that acknowledged, celebrated, and supported

their efforts not only as educators but as Black males. Participants discussed leadership practices that affirmed their personal and professional identity as educators. Additionally, participants discussed how their school leaders affirmed and supported their identity as a Black male. Finally, leadership practices such as validation, support and mentorship facilitated by school leaders influenced their retention decisions.

Recognition and respect: "*School leaders attitudes and admiration"*

Numerous participants discussed how their school leaders provided them with recognition and respect in their school placement. As a result, participants appreciated the efforts of their school leaders increasing their pledge to remain in their school placements. Chase shared how his school leader respected his approach to teaching by encouraging him to take risks while celebrating his progress. Chase discussed how he was highlighted in a staff meeting for creating a modified schedule for his grade level that allowed more time for reading. The recognition, according to Chase, fueled him to continue to be an innovative educator as he felt that his work was appreciated by his school leader. Chase's school leader fostered an environment that celebrated the Chase's achievements, which allowed him to grow and lean on his strengths as an educator, ultimately influencing the level of importance he placed on his school leader's feedback.

Commonly noted was an appreciation for school leaders that included teachers in the decision-making process, especially when the decisions directly impacted their work. When school leaders involved participants in these discussions, they demonstrated how much they valued their voices and input. Wendell worked in the music department at his school. He discussed how his school leader didn't have a background in music, and

always made sure to “bring him in the loop” when making schoolwide decisions related to his department. Wendell stated:

> I think my principal’s willingness to learn has kept me here. She values my opinion and respects my feedback. I think that it is great that we can both learn from each other.

Wendell’s experience with his school leader contributed to him staying, as he was given the opportunity to provide input while working with his school leader. The opportunity for teachers to participate in decision making and problem solving processes provided them with an added sense of purpose in their positions. When participants had experiences with school leaders who fostered environments that cherished and acknowledged their expertise, they felt a deeper commitment to their schools and were more inclined to stay, as they felt valued and appreciated by their leader.

Validation: “*School leaders validating the work of Black male teachers”*

Several participants identified specific actions executed by their school leaders that validated their work and identity. More importantly, the confirmation and support provided by school leaders positively influenced their experiences within their school buildings. Damien shared his experience with his principal supporting him as a first-year teacher. He discussed the challenge of juggling teaching, grading, and communicating with families as a first-year teacher. He further explained that his school leader was patient with him and saw his struggles as an opportunity to grow. Damien shared:

> So, for a black man I feel she gave me a chance. She's given me multiple chances to redeem and better myself year after year. So, she's definitely done that.

The non-punitive actions cultivated by this school leader instilled a sense of drive and determination for Damien to improve, which furthered his commitment to remaining in the profession and to becoming a more effective teacher. In this case, the school leader

took into consideration the challenges first-year educators faced and supported him by allowing him to develop and grow in the profession at a reasonable pace. As a result, the individual was motivated to cultivate their commitment to their role as an educator.

Additionally, participants shared the importance of school leaders affirming their identity as Black males, and expressing awareness of the cultural differences within their school buildings. Maurice discussed how his leader was adamant about taking a stance regarding issues related to police brutality towards Black males. To him, this was an act of solidarity and support to his identity. He shared:

> So, when a lot of situations occurred with black males and the police, she sent out an email to the community about that, and she took a hard stance on that. When a lot of stuff was happening with the Asian hate, she sent the email out to the community and she took a hard stance on that as well.

Ultimately, Maurice felt seen due to his school leader supporting and acknowledging the societal factors that influence the experiences of Black males.

Many participants referenced the validation of their identity in some capacity while discussing their professional experiences. They appreciated when their school leaders were intentional about making sure they made it clear that they were valued and important members of the school community. Having personal connections with school leaders was a factor that influenced retention. When describing his relationship with his school leader, Clark shared:

> So she gives me energy and reminds me how important I am because when her and I are talking in the hallway, it's identifiable.

Participants felt supported in their schools when their school leaders checked on them, took the time to connect with them, and genuinely asked them about the challenges they were facing as educators and how they would feel best supported as they navigated

such challenges. When participants were able to identify with their school leaders or make genuine connections, they felt more comfortable sharing their true authentic concerns and experiences. The ability to be open and transparent with their school leaders in a relaxed manner proved to be a source of satisfaction for participants. Ultimately, the ability to work under school leaders who communicated the value of their role and impact raised the level of satisfaction for participants.

In summary, the majority of participants shared that school leaders who acknowledged, celebrated, and supported their efforts influenced their decisions to remain in their current placements. Participants perceived respect, recognition, and validation as an influential factor to their positive lived experiences. Essentially, the ability to work in an inclusive supportive environment facilitated by their school leader prompted them to continue their efforts to impact and influence change within their school communities.

Theme 4 Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention

Two sub-themes emerged as a result of the reflection on workplace environments that caused participants to stay within the profession of teaching. Participants regularly discussed that supportive, transformational work environments fostered and sustained by their school leader influenced their decision to remain as teachers. Additionally, participants valued how their school leader created conditions that maintained networks for support, mentorship, and resources to develop their effectiveness and success. Finally, being empowered and supported by their school leader motivated them to remain in their current placements

Empowerment and Support: "*School based supportive conditions"*

One overarching theme shared by all participants included the word "support" when describing the action steps school leaders implemented that influenced their retention decisions. Several participants expressed what support specifically meant to them. Statements such as "mentorship", "receiving resources", and "quality training" were used when describing their definitions of "support." As mentioned, a salient sub theme amongst many of the participants focused on school leaders fostering networks of support for Black male teachers. Jordan shared that intentional support systems that match the needs of Black male teachers are of great importance. He shared that he had challenges interacting with his colleagues and interacting with his families when he first started as a teacher, but was provided with support by his school leader on navigating his challenges as a Black male teacher. This resulted in him staying within the profession. He advocated that targeted support for Black male teachers should exist across all schools within his district. He shared:

> Although we have our own set of challenges. There needs to be a support system within schools and then on a larger level within the school district.

This type of support from a school leader can alter the experience of educators, and can specifically benefit Black male teachers by meeting their needs.

Participants shared the importance of this support being offered sooner rather than later when they began their careers. During their first year, they were navigating the normal challenges of the profession, along with specific challenges that come with being Black males. Educators were often overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks and responsibilities placed upon them. Many described their experience as keeping their heads above water because they felt they were always behind. Chase found himself in

this situation and shared that he reached out to his school leader for help. His leader walked him through some time management techniques to assist him with prioritizing and completing tasks in a timely fashion. He shared:

> I was drowning and I said to the principal, I'm trying to dog paddle, man. I'm trying to keep my head above water because It's just so much work. And she's like, you're going to be okay.

The support cultivated by Chase's leader validated his concerns while equipping him with the means to be successful. He benefited from the supportive nature of his school leader to arm him with individual strategies that eliminated a significant barrier for Chase.

Another way support from school leaders was defined by participants involved school leaders listening and supporting initiatives they were interested in putting into place at their schools. When an idea that could improve an aspect of the school was taken seriously by school leaders, participants found themselves feeling empowered and validated as professionals. Enrico's leader was supportive when he suggested a weekly collaborative planning structure that involved various grade levels. Enrico's school leader connected him with another school to serve as thought partners, as this was an initiative the school had applied the previous year. Enrico appreciated this level of support provided by his school leader, as this was a new concept, and his school leader assisted him with trying something new, while also allowing him the opportunity to grow. Enrico reflected on his own experience and shared that "it's worth going the extra mile" to support Black male teachers as his school leader supported his goals. When school leaders actively supported Black male educators and empowered them to lead, they confirmed not only their purpose, but the value added they believed they brought to their

school buildings. The actions of school leaders in these instances fostered an environment where educators could take risks while being supported by their colleagues and peers.

Similarly, Jordan described how his school leader supported his specific needs and wants not only as an educator, but as a Black male as well. Jordan discussed having goal-setting conferences with his school leader where they would informally check in throughout the school year. The opportunity for Jordan to ask his school leader questions, while discussing his needs and aspirations, increased his level of self-assurance, as he was able to have genuine and authentic conversations with his school leader.

As mentioned before, empowerment and support from the school leader proved to be a common theme amongst participants. In addition to direct support from the school leader, participants discussed school leaders creating a supportive community and workplace for Black males to thrive as educators. Participants described diverse environments where Black males were acknowledged for their capabilities and talents while building their instructional capacity through a collaborative network of support to include school leaders and colleagues. Damien and Maurice discussed the value added of working in an environment where there were opportunities for Black males to provide their own ideas on how to improve the curriculum. Damien shared,

> Allow us to be more open to teaching class how we want to…But allow us black males to give our own ideas as to how we can as to how we can better the curriculum.

In addition to empowering Black males, Maurice discussed the value of serving in a diverse environment where the school leader supported and acknowledged the challenges that Black male teachers face. He categorized challenges that Black male teachers face as “baggage” and appreciated when the school leader created environments

for him to “release the baggage,” an action that improved his teaching. The “baggage” as discussed by Maurice included the lived experiences that shift Black male teachers identify to be authentic. As mentioned, Black males enter spaces where they have to be present themselves in an elevated manner while processing their challenges within society as a Black male.

Ultimately, participants voiced a sense of pride and validation when they were supported by their school leaders. The support provided combatted the deficit views of others and empowered them to become change agents within their buildings. School leaders’ support also influenced their longevity and satisfaction in their jobs as participants discussed how their school leaders believed in their capabilities as educators which strengthened and sustained their positive experiences within their school buildings.

Transformative leadership practices: “*Transformative leadership factors that support retention”*

Participants were asked to reflect on specific leadership practices that influenced their decision to remain in the profession of teaching. Several participants identified transformative leadership factors that impacted their lived experience as current Black male teachers. School leaders’ actions that fostered advocacy, accountability, collaboration and support were deemed significant to influencing their retention decisions.

Joshua shared how his school leader’s “clear cut-vision and expectations” inspired him to remain at his current placement as he desired to work with someone who has a resilient aspiration to impact marginalized communities. Joshua shared:

> She's been nothing but open, honest, and just willing to help, willing to try to take everything under consideration and put us in the best positions to do our job. And I really commend and applaud her for the job that she has done so far.

When the mission and vision of educators aligned with the practices of school leaders, the result was a greater impact on how they operated in their roles, and a stronger persistence to improve the lives of their students. Christopher felt this alignment with his school leader when she went above and beyond to secure additional funding to ensure there were quality instructional materials throughout the school. The procurement of funds supported Christopher's instructional delivery and aligned with his vision of providing a quality education for all students, which was of great importance to him. When the practices of school leaders supported the goals of educators, there was a positive influence on their decision to remain in their school buildings.

Numerous participants identified honesty, transparency, and collaboration along with support as factors that they deemed important from their school leader. More specifically, participants described the importance of open lines of communication and visibility. The opportunity to witness and engage with their school leaders on a consistent basis provided participants with a model to follow. Participants valued when their school leaders worked alongside them, which created a sense of closeness and community. Jordan specifically described his caring hands-on leader:

> She is extremely hands-on, she's out there, first thing in the morning, opening car doors, she's out there at the end of the day, opening car doors and everything in between.

A source of satisfaction for educators was being able to identify and connect with the actions of their school leaders. Transformative practices increased job satisfaction and heavily influenced participants' decisions to stay and work with their leaders. A transformative practice that was widely appreciated was a school leader's willingness and ability to challenge biased assumptions and beliefs that existed within the school

community. Damien, who was the only Black male teacher on his team, perceived that his colleagues challenged his capabilities and undermined his decisions and input. Damien's school leader advocated on his behalf to the English department, while setting the expectation for an inclusive and respectful environment for all members of the team. The accountability actions conducted by Damien's school principal created an environment where he wanted to continue to work, and increased his loyalty and commitment to the vision of the school and school leaders. Damien shared:

> This is why I place a lot of importance on her because I believe in her vision. I felt like my principal really had my back in that situation. And knowing that I came in as one of her people, you know, there's a sense of loyalty that I don't want to just up and leave, because I think her vision is very important.

Overall, the leadership, support, and coaching identified by participants added value to the experiences of the current Black male teacher participants. The perceptions and impact of school leaders' actions influenced participants to self-reflect, and examine their commitment and decision to stay in the profession of teaching.

Ultimately, the factors mentioned within this section influenced participants' retention decisions. Supportive, respectful, and collaborative work environments fostered by school leaders proved to be components that increased the satisfaction levels while promoting Black male teacher retention. However, interview data revealed specific factors that influenced Black male teachers to leave the profession, which will be discussed throughout the next five themes.

Theme 5 Exit: Black male teachers' lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences

During semi-structured interviews former Black male teachers were asked to reflect on their lived experiences with an emphasis on factors that led them to leave the

profession of teaching. Two sub-themes emerged as participants discussed a lack of professional autonomy and respect, and limited opportunities to contribute to decision making in their schools. The absence of these factors accelerated their decisions to leave the profession. Teachers left schools when they found that their ideas and input during conversations with colleagues and leaders were constantly met with criticism and censorship. These educators found that the respect they were extending to their colleagues was not often reciprocated. Examples of respect included actively listening to others during meetings, collaborating on new ideas that their colleagues felt passionate about, being willing to learn from others, and maintaining professionalism in their interactions with their colleagues and school leaders. When these actions were not reciprocated, teachers felt that those around them did not respect who they were as individuals and professionals.

Experiences of being overlooked when it came to making curricular decisions created environments in which teachers perceived that their knowledge and expertise were not valued, as well as environments in which they were silenced as educators by being excluded from critical conversations in their schools. Feeling trusted and valued was important to participants, and when they found themselves constantly left out of important conversations, feelings of being undervalued were increased, ultimately influencing their decision to leave the profession.

Personal and Professional Respect: "*Devoid of personal and professional respect*"

Feeling respected in their roles was essential for Black male teachers. Educators found that when their school communities respected them as professionals, the impact they had was greater because their ideas and unique perspectives as Black males were

considered. Teachers who felt a lack of respect in their schools did not feel trusted, valued, or appreciated. Educators found that, when their school communities did not show respect for them personally and professionally, their ability to impact their schools was negatively affected.

Each former Black male teacher discussed longing for personal and professional respect from the school community in multiple ways. Many believed that positive working relationships could exist when colleagues maintained professional interactions with one another. Peter explained what he perceived as professional interactions, saying colleagues should "be respectful to one another, talk to each other professionally, and address issues in a professional manner." Peter shared that when interactions were respectful and professional, he felt empowered to voice his opinion and share his ideas. When this professionalism and respect did not exist, he was much less willing to be vocal with his ideas, as he preferred to avoid hurtful and confrontational responses from his colleagues.

Chad defined respect as "being willing to learn from and listen to others." Osi explained further that he perceived respect as active listening from his colleagues when he shared his ideas or presented new information. He left the profession because he found that he often did not experience respect when collaborating with his colleagues. He shared:

> Every time I tried to speak up during a team meeting, or even when I was presenting something to the whole staff, no one would listen. People would even interrupt me in the middle of what I was saying. They didn't want to hear my opinion. They didn't want to hear from me.

When teachers had repeated experiences where they felt a lack of respect from their colleagues, especially in situations where they were attempting to voice their ideas

and opinions, it became more and more difficult for them to extend that respect towards others. Educators left their schools because they knew that their decreased motivation to show others the respect that was not being shown to them would ultimately impact their work as educators, as well as their ability to truly serve their students.

Teachers described "respect" as being willing to support their colleagues and supporting team efforts when new initiatives, programs, or plans were suggested and put in place. It was considered a lack of respect when teachers made suggestions of their own that they believed would lead to school improvement and they were constantly met with resistance or even ignored. Alonzo shared his experience with having his ideas ignored, and explained that when he wanted to try something new, he was often on his own. He was frustrated that when his teammates wanted to take a risk and try something new, he was always willing to support the team in these efforts; however, when he was the one making the suggestions, he didn't feel trusted by his peers to make good decisions for the school. When teachers' ideas were not taken as seriously as those of their peers, they second-guessed their effectiveness as instructional leaders. The lack of respect took a mental toll on professionals who were always trying to prove themselves in spaces where others were unwilling to recognize their worth.

Overall, the reflections provided by the participants added a deeper understanding of how former Black male teachers framed respect. When they are silenced, the unique perspectives that come from their experiences as Black males are not considered, leading to a narrower view as school leaders make decisions on behalf of students. This silencing is perceived as a lack of respect, and led to teachers to leave the profession. Ultimately, participants' perception of respect became significant in understanding how former Black

male teachers' professional identities were shaped. In the next section, I will discuss how the lack of decision-making autonomy shaped former Black male teachers' lived experiences and professional identity.

Limited Decision Making: *"Exclusion from decision making conversations"*

A lack of autonomy in their classrooms was a major circumstance that pushed Black male teachers out of the profession. Many teachers reported entering the profession with an excitement about using their expertise, creativity, and passion to improve the lives of their students and to lead their students to academic success. They were often stunned by how little autonomy they actually had in their own classrooms. Teachers expressed a desire to have the freedom to make decisions that supported what was best for students, including differentiation and creativity regarding how their content was delivered and assessed. They were discouraged by how often they received pushback from their teammates and school leaders when they attempted to make adjustments to their curriculum and teaching strategies based on the needs of the students in their class. Rather than having autonomy as educators and planning learning experiences that would best benefit their students, teachers found that they were constantly being told exactly what to do and how to do it. For instance, Chad, who frequently discussed how he enjoyed creating exciting learning experiences for his class, recalled being mandated to stick to the curriculum. Chad discussed an English lesson that he planned to use to meet the needs of his students. Initially eager to showcase his creativity, Chad found himself second-guessing why he was in the profession. Chad shared:

> I lived off creativity and being able to make new lessons, and that was an experience that really kind of got me to fall in line, and I lost a lot of energy. I had lost the energy I had been trying to muster for a year and a half, because it was an uphill battle.

Teachers constantly battled between the desire to take control of the learning experiences in their classrooms and following the guidance of their school leaders, which often led them to go through the motions just to survive in their jobs. Levar had a similar experience when his teaching style was challenged. He described feeling offended and confused when he was told to stick to only one instructional method when teaching a particular math strategy. Levar shared that the feedback provided to him during an evaluation conference limited his power to do what he felt was best for his students, and showed a lack of respect for his work as an educator. Levar shared:

> That was the straw that broke the camel's back for me. When, all this time you keep telling me, well, no, just do your lesson plans, but not differentiate your instruction. What about, you know, performance based learning.

Educators acknowledged the importance of creating learning environments that were inclusive to the varying needs of their students. Unfortunately, many experienced consistent resistance when they tried to restructure the learning experiences for their students, leading them to do what they needed to do to be compliant in their jobs. They were limited in their ability to cater to their students, and often felt undermined as the experts that they were in their classrooms. Peter stated that this "fizzled the spark" he had going into the profession. His excitement for changing the lives of the students dwindled away over time, as he realized the little power he actually had in his own classroom.

The findings showed that teachers entered the profession with the intention to improve teaching and learning. Being denied the ability to make curricular decisions and improvements took away a very important aspect of the job for teachers. They were left frustrated and discouraged when their schools and school systems were unwilling to make adjustments to a system and curricular structures that were clearly broken. Alonzo

recalled having a discussion with a colleague about instruction, and thinking of other approaches that could be used to reach students who come from varied circumstances. Unable to implement any of his ideas, Alonzo grew agitated and decided to transition to another career. He shared:

> So you know, it was more so ignorance to try new strategies of teaching, and incorporating new ideas and sticking to the whole system, even though it was broken, which pushed me out.

Ultimately, reduced input and voice regarding curricular decisions influenced teacher dissatisfaction. Some of the other former Black male teacher participants also shared similar experiences related to having a role in making decisions while reflecting on their tenure as educators. A source of frustration was often the number of hoops teachers felt they had to jump through to bring their own ideas and perspectives to their work. Anwar shared:

> I came into this profession to make a lasting impact but at times, I feel as if my opinions are constantly put to the side. I know that I bring a different perspective, but it would be nice to be able to make a decision without having to schedule another meeting to discuss my plans.

Similarly, Osi sought out more autonomy as an educator. He explained, "I understand that there are decisions that are above my pay-grade, but I am the CEO of my classroom."

Overall, former Black male teacher participants were displeased with their experiences as educators due to having limited opportunities to make decisions. Their feedback and ideas were shelved on multiple occasions. Participants reported making multiple attempts to engage in conversations and be included in decision making processes in their schools in order to improve teaching and learning, but were consistently met with resistance. Participants lacked the freedom to make decisions based on the diverse needs of the students that they served, and were typically instructed to

stick to the policies and procedures outlined by their school districts. As a result, participants conformed to the norms of their school buildings and became compliant educators until their departure from the profession.

In summary, many of the former Black male teachers in this study experienced a lack of respect and power as educators, which accelerated their decisions to leave the profession. Participants found that neither their content knowledge nor expertise provided substance in their daily work, given that they were consistently silenced as educators. This led to a major lack of motivation and willingness to go above and beyond for their schools, and teachers found themselves engaging in their profession in ways that went against who they wanted to be as educators. They found themselves doing the bare minimum just to get by each day, and staying compliant with the policies in the school. Ultimately, they were unable to fulfill their duties as educators in the way they had set out to do when they pursued their careers, and thus decided to leave the profession.

Theme 6 Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession.

During semi-structured interviews, former Black male participants were asked about factors that influenced their decision to leave the profession of teaching. Two sub-themes emerged as a result of reflecting on workplace barriers that they experienced during their tenure as educators. Participants regularly discussed their frustrations at being pigeonholed to certain roles and responsibilities due to their race and gender. Additionally, participants discussed unspoken expectations placed upon them from their school environment. Finally, being perceived as the authoritative Black male within the workplace influenced their decision to leave the profession.

Pigeonholed roles and responsibilities: "*Resenting marginalized roles and responsibilities"*

Teachers experienced being pigeonholed to roles that others assumed only a Black male could fill. These roles were often assigned without any input from the teachers or before an interest in taking on these roles was ever expressed. At times, the roles assigned did not align with the personal identity of these educators. Many shared examples of being expected to help discipline the tougher students. Others shared experiences where they were strategically assigned to certain classes or groups of students that their school community and leaders believed "needed a male figure." They found that their school community constantly turned to them to fill a role and accomplish tasks that others in their communities were also capable of taking on.

Levar was a teacher who grew up without a father. A guidance counselor in his school changed the schedules of Black males who needed to be mentored and assigned them to his class. This put Levar in a very uncomfortable position and he resented having this responsibility placed upon him. He knew that his experience growing up without a father did not make him the best fit for the role that was being assigned to him at the time. He intentionally avoided "father-like" roles, and disliked when he was marginalized into such a role. Levar shared that he felt labeled and marginalized because he was a Black male, and was expected to be able to easily identify with and mentor Black students. Levar recalled:

> They figured I could identify with them, and I would answer why you think I can identify with them? I'm not a role model. I don't have a father at home so I can't really relate to that.

The misalignment of the expectations placed on Levar due to his gender and race was an important concept linked to the identity of this particular Black male teacher. Although Levar identified as a Black male, he did not identify with assuming the role of a father figure due to his personal experiences.

Another assumption that was consistently made about Black male teachers, which impacted the roles they were assigned, was that students who were behavior concerns would be more successful in their classes, and that Black teachers would be better at disciplining the tougher students. Alonzo experienced this during his first few years as a teacher. He shared being "frustrated" by having a tougher caseload than his team members and he wondered why he was chosen, as he was a novice teacher. Alonzo shared:

> I never understood why I received a tougher class. I was still learning my content. This was something that happened to me a lot which is something that I did not care for.

Consequently, Alonzo's resentment negatively impacted his experience as he perceived himself as an educator first and not a disciplinarian. The responsibility placed on him weighed heavily because his focus was on increasing his content knowledge, not dealing with classroom management. When teachers in this situation began to realize that they were being assigned this role because they were Black males, they got discouraged and eventually left the profession. Many mentioned that assuming the role of disciplinarian was not why they signed up for the job, and that it wasn't an aspect of the job that they enjoyed.

It was clear that teachers understood the impact and presence they had on their school communities, but they also had individual reasons for entering the teaching

profession, and in many cases had their own view of what they hoped that impact would be. When they were pigeonholed to certain roles because of their race and gender, they found that they often missed opportunities to grow as instructional leaders, due to being assigned roles and responsibilities focused solely on mentorship and discipline. Anwar shared:

> I didn't grow as much as I thought I would. There were many days where all I did was put out fires in my building and didn't get the opportunity to teach.

Overall, participants recognized that the roles and responsibilities placed upon them within their schools were a burden, as they attempted to engage in teaching learning. As mentioned, participants frequently shared resentment towards their roles, due to the daily pressure of meeting the expectations others had placed on them based on their own assumptions.

Unspoken Expectations: "*Unrealistic beliefs and opinions"*

Many participants expressed feeling and noticing hidden agendas within the workplace regarding their roles and responsibilities. The unspoken expectation of serving as a disciplinarian was a common theme shared among former Black male teacher participants. Some found that they were asked to spend more time than their colleagues correcting student misbehavior. At times, participants found that they were called away from their own classrooms and planning time to help have disciplinary talks with students who they didn't teach, or who misbehaved in the presence of other teachers, who had witnessed the behavior and could have addressed the issues. The expectation to be on call at all times to help address situations that came up throughout the school day put an extra strain on these teachers, causing them to burn out more quickly. They were pulled away from time they had for planning, to eat lunch, and even time they had with their own

students. This unspoken expectation became a very unrealistic burden for many to bear, and eventually led them to exit the profession.

Osi specifically recounted an experience in which he was expected to take on the role of a disciplinarian. He shared that he was asked to provide security at some school events, and to correct student behaviors during these events, even though many other teachers and school faculty were present and could also help manage the students. Osi courageously had a conversation with his school leaders in an attempt to restore his role within his building. Osi shared:

> I had to make sure that I made it clear that that's not necessarily why I am here. So, that was kind of becoming my experience a little bit and I had to make sure that that wasn't the understanding.

Chad, who was one of the few male teachers in his building, started to notice that he would be called down to the office during his planning periods to assist with discipline. Chad discussed being "drained" at the end of his work days due to the added responsibility of serving as what he described as a, "behavior management specialist." Chad recognized that there was an unspoken expectation that he could do it all every day, and having the weight of varying responsibilities left him feeling "burnt out" as an educator.

For some teachers, the unspoken expectations were placed on them based on others' perceptions and assumptions of their abilities. Peter shared that he had a pretty good handle on using technology in his classroom. Many teachers came to him for technology support, and it became a norm in his school to come to him if anyone had technology-related questions or concerns. He had a difficult time understanding why this role became his responsibility, especially because there was a technology coordinator in

his building. Peter's greatest concern was being able to effectively juggle all of the responsibilities placed upon him while managing his daily responsibilities. Peter shared that due to his young age and gender, there was an expectation that he could be superman and be the hero for all. Peter grew tired, worn out and eventually left the profession because of the unrealistic expectations within his school building.

Due to the many challenges that former Black male teacher participants faced, most participants expressed lower levels of satisfaction as a result of marginalized roles and responsibilities. All participants expressed second-guessing their effectiveness as teachers due to being asked to step outside of their roles and handle unrelated tasks on a daily basis. The former Black male teacher participants acknowledged that the roles and responsibilities assigned focused more on student discipline and classroom management. Although participants assisted their schools in various capacities, they resented their assignments as they believed it was the result of their gender and race rather than their instructional capabilities.

Theme 7 Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity and retention decisions of Black male teachers.

Two sub-themes emerged as a result of participants reflecting on their interactions with their colleagues. Participants discussed feeling out of place while combating the perceptions their colleagues placed on them, leaving them feeling out of place and alone. Additionally, terms such as "I'm on an island" and "I feel out of place" were used as they reflected on their experiences as educators. Ultimately, the shared negative experiences discussed by participants was one of the main factors that influenced their decisions to leave their school placements and the profession of teaching.

Racial stigma about instructional abilities: "*Negotiating the perceptions of others*"

The theme of being seen as having limited instructional capabilities due to race was a topic that emerged during the semi-structured interviews. The feedback that participants received from colleagues impacted their day-to-day experiences as educators. Participants shared experiences of being treated differently in comparison to other colleagues during team meetings. They found that their teammates were hesitant to accept their ideas or to trust their decision making as educators. Some reported being spoken to in a condescending manner during meetings, and being made to feel less valuable than their teammates. As a result, the perceptions of their colleagues influenced their job satisfaction, leading them to leave the profession.

Anwar shared a specific experience during a team meeting where he noticed a difference in how his colleagues responded to him in comparison to his white female colleague which made him second-guess his instructional capabilities. The two suggested using the same data collecting tracking tool to monitor a student's progress at different times during the same meeting. He recalled how his suggestion was shut down, but was celebrated 15 minutes later when suggested by his white colleague. Anwar, who was an effective teacher, eventually began to feel that his colleagues perceived him as being less qualified due to his age and race. He began to question his own abilities and was less vocal during meetings. Anwar further explained that:

> Having these different sort of factors and microaggressions in a sense to sort of take you, take you all off your game.

Ultimately, the racial stigma about the abilities of Black men impacted how they interacted with their colleagues. They found that their colleagues had preconceived notions that Black men were less capable core-content teachers. This perception impacted

their personal lived experiences. Due to the perceptions of others, participants were limited in what they were able to accomplish in their schools.

Occasionally, these experiences were the result of more overt actions that highlighted the biased opinions of members of school communities. Participants found that certain jokes with racial undertones were directed towards them. At times, the comments made by their colleagues emphasized the negative stereotypes they worked so hard to negate. These detrimental interactions with their colleagues left participants feeling devalued and marginalized.

Chad recounted a specific experience where his colleagues called him “raggedy.” Chad thrived off creativity and, at times, took risks that others were unwilling to take. Although this usually led to success for Chad, he often received pushback and criticism for going against the norm. His colleagues claimed that he was not a team player. He shared:

> They would call me raggedy. They're like, man, you raggedy…and this is because I would do what I want. I kind of work off this creativity and so they would call me raggedy as far as a team member. I wasn't always the best team member in their eyes.

Chad’s experience with his team members furthered his awareness that he was perceived as an educator with limited abilities. Ultimately, the perception of others fueled him to remove himself from a space where he felt marginalized as a professional educator.

The perceptions of colleagues impacted the day to day workplace environment, as well as the ability for participants to feel supported in their work environment. These experiences shaped the way participants engaged in their schools. No longer were they willing to speak up and freely share their ideas. They lowered their expectations and

ultimately, their motivation to make a difference in their schools. As a result, their desire to stay, was diminished.

Isolation & mistrust of colleagues: "*Moving in isolation"*

Participants shared how the lack of trustworthy relationships in their schools led to feelings of isolation. On multiple occasions, teachers shared interactions with teammates, school leaders, and other colleagues that decreased their ability and willingness to trust others in their school. As a result of being in positions where trust was broken, participants often secluded themselves within their buildings as a means to survive in their workplace environments. Trust was lost when their colleagues were not honest or willing to speak up, especially when inaccurate accusations were made. The surface-level relationships amongst their teams influenced how participants existed within their school building. When their colleagues did not make an effort to get to know them or build genuine relationships with them, participants were left with very few individuals that they could trust.

Alonzo shared that he began isolating from his colleagues and keeping to himself while he was at work after being labeled as being "intense" and "aggressive." He wanted to avoid any opportunity to intensify the negative preconceived notions about him as a black male. Alonzo shared that after being labeled this way, he felt pressure to be very mindful about his interactions with others and he no longer trusted that his colleagues would allow him the same grace that they allowed one another.

Peter also found himself internalizing the perceptions of others as it related to his professional identity, which resulted in him isolating himself to evade ridicule. He shared:

> I started to move a little different in my building. I knew people were talking behind my back about my work so I decided to lay low and figure out my next plan, because enough was enough.

In some cases, lack of trust stemmed from lack of close relationships with others. Teachers shared experiences with being isolated because their colleagues did not show any interest in getting to know them or developing genuine relationships. Anwar specifically described how his colleagues did not believe in his work as a Black male educator. According to Anwar, he entered the profession to work with a team to positively impact students and was constantly met with opposition. Anwar specifically recounted:

> The fact that they didn't even try to get to know who I was at the core of who I am is a little frustrating and very disheartening. And it was saddening most days to know that you had a target on your back.

Lack of trust occurred when there was a lack of personal relationships at work. Participants also found that at times, the actions of their colleagues led to mistrust. In many cases, their teammates had the opportunity to speak up for them, or to defend them, and they chose not to. Teachers found that their colleagues were more willing to speak up for, and defend each other, but did not have this same courage when it came to supporting Black men.

Levar discussed an experience where he was “thrown under the bus” by a colleague who wanted to cover up a grading and reporting mistake they made. Rather than taking ownership of their mistake, they allowed Levar to be reprimanded. Levar discussed never being able to recover from this situation where he was chastised for a mistake he didn’t make. He shared that he felt his integrity was questioned, and he could not understand the actions of his colleague. Experiences similar to Levar’s formed how

teachers interacted with their colleagues. When trust was broken, teachers did not pursue meaningful connections with others in their buildings, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Overall, the former Black male teacher participants' reflections about their experiences with colleagues shed light on how Black male teachers navigated their work spaces when trust was lacking. The workplace environment shaped the professional identities of participants, which at times caused them to isolate themselves in their school buildings. It is important to note that many participants changed their attitude and actions to mitigate the negative comments and perceptions of their colleagues. Their daily work as educators began to include working to create an environment where they could survive and sometimes to their own detriment, make those around them more comfortable. These additional stressors often led to teachers making the choice to leave the profession.

Theme 8 Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers.

Former current Black male teacher participants described their level of dissatisfaction as it related to school leadership. During semi-structured interviews, participants honed in on the negative interactions and relationships that they had with their school leaders. The spoiled relationships shared by participants impacted their experiences as teachers, raising their level of resentment towards their school leader while weakening the working relationship with their school leaders. Participants believed that the school leader was responsible for the negative workplace conditions that influenced their decision to leave their current placements and the profession of teaching.

Interactions with school leader: "*Devalued by school leader"*

The interactions with school leaders deemed to be a common theme as many participants shared their challenging interactions during their tenure as educators. Participants spoke about how their school leaders shaped the conditions in their schools that influenced their personal experiences. Increased workload, lack of accountability, high expectations and unclear communication were some of the examples provided by participants that adversely influenced levels of satisfaction. Peter specifically recounted an experience where he was expected to work outside of school hours as directed by his school leader. Initially, Peter discussed understanding that there would be times where he needed to put in extra hours but felt that his school leader had no regard for his work-life balance. Peter recalled that his school leader's dismissive response about his concerns added to his stress level, as he was given unrealistic deadlines to complete various tasks. Peter discussed being "turned off" by his leader due to him feeling as if he worked in a "pressure cooker" that only focused on results and not people. Peter yearned for grace and understanding from his school leader, which she was not willing to extend, and which ultimately led him to rethink if this was the profession for him.

Teachers found that toxic work environments that were made worse by the actions of school leaders heavily influenced their level of dissatisfaction. This included environments where leaders were rarely open to feedback or input from the school community. Teachers also disliked work environments where there was a constant lack of support from their school leaders, or where they would reach out for assistance or mentorship just to be ignored. Levar stated that his decision to leave the profession was never a result of the kids' behavior, but rather his school leader:

> So, you know, I bring something to you and then you kind of push it aside thinking it's going to work itself out and you know, that bothered me.

This theme demonstrated the level of importance school leaders' practices have on shaping the Black male teacher experience as participants discussed communication styles, structures for accountability, and workload/expectations, all experienced in ways that led them to exiting the profession. Levar, who was in search of support from his school leader, did not receive what he needed to combat successfully some of the challenges that he faced, and ultimately made the decision to leave the profession. Teachers' workplace experiences were negatively impacted when their school leaders ignored major issues, and refused to support their staff in improving aspects of the school that were toxic and needed to be addressed. When a leader had the power to positively impact the school environment and chose not to, the result was, more often than not, teachers choosing to leave the profession. Alonzo shared frustrations about his school leader "putting pressing issues on the back burner." In this case, there were major issues with student behavior that were not addressed by his school leader. Alonzo's inability to effectively collaborate with his school leader to solve a schoolwide issue negatively shaped his experience.

Weak relationship: "*Unhealthy relationship with school leader*"

Participants identified strained relationships with their school leaders as a factor that influenced their career decisions. Teachers found it difficult to work in schools where leaders were inconsistent, unreliable, and combative. Teachers were often frustrated when their school leaders were not open to the opinions and ideas of others and when communication was a challenge. All of these elements were described as essential for healthy relationships with colleagues and school leaders, and when they were lacking, it became difficult for teachers to feel successful and supported in their jobs.

Chad shared an experience where he tried a new teaching approach he learned during a professional development, and received feedback from his school leader that contradicted what he learned from the training. He shared this concern with his school leader, and asked for help navigating her expectations, while also implementing new techniques the district was sharing with educators. His leader criticized him for questioning their feedback. This combative response lead to him feeling less comfortable approaching his leader with courageous conversations.

Teachers shared that when they are unable to voice their true feelings and opinions as professionals, their experience as educators were negatively impacted. Their ideas become insignificant and they feel forced to align their thinking with their leaders, which does not always benefit them as professionals. Unhealthy communication, or lack of communication, amongst leaders and teachers was often a major influence on the decision to leave the profession. It was essential for teachers to have opportunities to have meaningful conversations with their school leaders, and to feel safe in these discussions, especially when their point of view was not the same as their leader's. When they were constantly met with criticism and combative responses, they found that they lost their ability to take risks and to challenge any thinking that went against what was best for students.

Many former Black male teacher participants discussed how the impact of their fragile relationships with their school leaders crushed their identity as Black male teachers. Participants initially entered the profession valuing the role of the school leader, but negative experiences colored how they interacted with their school leaders before exiting the profession. Participants craved a workplace environment facilitated by the

school principal that supported and valued their expertise as Black males. Overall, participants contributed negative workplace environments as a direct reflection of school leaders' inability to foster an inclusive environment that valued the knowledge and capabilities of Black male teachers. Workplace environments that challenged the acceptance of diverse voices, more specifically the input from Black males, influenced their decision to leave the profession.

Theme 9 Exit: School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions

Former Black male teacher participants discussed the impact that their school leaders had on their experiences as educators. Participants reflected and elaborated on the inability of school leaders to foster supportive environments where teachers were included in decision making and encouraged to take risks in their classrooms. These factors influenced participant's decisions to leave their school placements, and eventually the profession of teaching. Two sub-themes emerged from the data: lack of support and limited decision making.

Lack of support: "*Supportive environments fostered by school leaders"*

The lack of support from their school leaders influenced their levels of dissatisfaction within their school building. Participants shared a yearning to develop relationships with others, and would have appreciated having a safe space to discuss the challenges and successes they were experiencing in their buildings. An inclusive, supportive environment was essential for teachers to feel they had a genuine professional network to rely on. Without these networks, teachers often found themselves navigating challenges alone.

Chad described that his school leader's leadership style was "passive and not inclusive." Chad elaborated by stating that due to his principal's leadership style, he didn't feel that his leader could properly have his back. For example, Chad discussed dealing with a difficult parent and reached out to his principal for advice on how to come to a resolution. Chad further described how his principal dismissed his concerns stating that it would all just work out, which provided Chad with no clarity. Chad shared:

> I think a principal you can at least speak to what should be happening and I don't feel like he could, um, effectively do that. I think that took me to not necessarily take him that seriously like as authoritarian or anything of that nature.

A common issue teachers found with leaders who were not supportive was that they offered nonchalant and passive responses to requests that felt urgent to them. School leaders often pacified the concerns of teachers and often encouraged them to solve their problems on their own. Rather than feeling empowered, teachers walked away feeling uneasy and alone. The lack of interest from their school leaders sent the message that their concerns were not significant, and that their leaders did not care about their wellbeing.

Levar shared that he rarely reached out to his school leader for support, and only reached out during very urgent situations. He described a time when he did reach out for support, and received a very casual response. He resented this response from his school leader, and explained that the actions of his school leader lowered his commitment to his school building. Levar shared:

> Since, you're not able to support me and I understand that don't ask me to do anything extra. Now you might want to ask your colleague to ask me, but you can't because since you feel like things are okay, then to me, you are just the nine to five administrator. I'll do whatever is needed from nine to five, nothing extra.

Levar's sentiments, like many of the former Black male teacher participants, represented how the lack of support from school leaders negatively shaped their experiences. Ultimately, the lack of support from school leaders proved to be a challenge for participants to navigate. Participants were discouraged when their questions and concerns were dismissed. When teachers are in settings where they are lacking encouragement and confirmation from their school leaders, they often make the decision to leave.

Limited decision making: "*Lack of support when making decisions"*

When asked what barriers, the participants encountered during their tenure as teachers, the data highlighted that certain practices of school leaders prohibited them from making decisions as instructional leaders. Participants frequently pinpointed challenges with their school leaders that lessened their sphere of influence as Black male educators.

Teachers reported being reprimanded or scolded by their leaders for making minor decisions to improve experiences in their classrooms. When educators were chastised for making decisions that they believed should have been within their power to make, they felt their leaders did not trust or respect them as professionals. Anwar discussed a time when he made a change to how he dismissed his class at the end of the day, making a "simple adjustment." He was met with opposition from his school leader and was directed to immediately revert back to the original dismissal routines, which weren't working well for his class. Anwar felt this overreaction from his school leader was unwarranted, and showed him the lack of trust his leader had in him to make good decisions for his students.

Levar explained that his school leader constantly questioned his choices and decisions inside and outside of the classroom. Levar shared:

> At every turn, there was always an email with feedback about what I should be doing. I never felt like I had the freedom to do what's best for kids. I feel like I wasted time having to run things by my school leader before I could implement something.

Levar further explained that he had to think consistently about his school leader's response before making a decision. He wished that he had the autonomy to truly make his own decision without constantly having to obtain verification from his school leader.

Alonzo provided insight into how the authoritative culture fostered by his school leader provided a barrier for him when it came to making decisions for his students. He shared:

> And I felt like there was another approach that needed to be taken as far as, like I said, you got a lot of kids who are coming from circumstances where they can't focus inside the classroom because of environments they're coming from, but yet they're being punished for like, just kind of being them.

Overall, the inability to take ownership of their decisions demonstrated a source of discomfort for many participants. Participants felt that they were unable to express their talents and creativity as educators because their school leaders were constantly challenging their decision making. This discomfort influenced them to leave their placements, as they grew weary of battling and confronting their school leaders and the assumption that they lacked the capacity to effectively make decisions effectively.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the nine themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. As mentioned and discussed the nine themes are:

Theme 1 Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models

Theme 2 Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to work as their authentic self, leverage their decision to stay in the profession

Theme 3 Retention: Respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions

Theme 4 Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention

Theme 5 Exit: Black male teachers lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences

Theme 6 Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession

Theme 7 Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity and retention decisions of Black male teachers

Theme 8 Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers

Theme 9 Exit: School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions

Current and former Black male teachers identified specific factors, such as organizational and school leadership factors, that helped or hindered their lived experience as educators. The themes that emerged from the data reveal how school environmental structures and more specifically school leaders, make a substantial impact on the lived experience and identity of Black male educators. Chapter five will present the conclusions from the findings and the study's implications for theory, research, practice, as well as suggestions for future research and concluding remarks.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussions, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences and identity of current and former Black male teachers in relation to perceived leadership practices implemented by school principals that influence their career decisions. Two main research questions informed this study:

- **RQ1**: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?
    - In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?
    - In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?
- **RQ2:** What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?
    - What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?

Thirteen current and six former Black male teachers participated in phenomenological semi-structured interviews. Transcripts were coded in MAXQDA and data was analyzed to understand the lived experiences of each participant and how their school leaders and work environment influenced their decision to stay or leave the profession of teaching.

Nine themes emerged from the data collected:

Theme 1 Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models

Theme 2 Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to work as their authentic self, leverage their decision to stay in the profession

Theme 3 Retention: Respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions

Theme 4 Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention

Theme 5 Exit: Black male teachers lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences

Theme 6 Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession

Theme 7 Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity and retention decisions of Black male teachers

Theme 8 Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers

Theme 9 Exit: School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions

Based on the nine emerging themes this chapter will discuss the major findings of this study connecting them to existing research. Table 3 provides an overview of research questions as related to the findings of the study. Additionally, this chapter will discuss implications, including, policy, research, and recommendations.

Table 3

Findings Related to Research Questions

Research Questions (RQ) and Sub questions (SQ)	Findings
RQ1: What are the professional identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers?	Exit: Black male teachers lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences.
	Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models.
SQ1: In what ways do their lived experiences as Black male teachers (if at all) impact their exit and retention decisions?	Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession.
	Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to work as their authentic self, influence their decision to stay in the profession.
SQ2: In what ways does the context of their school shape their identity, exit or retention decisions?	Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity and retention decisions of Black male teachers.
RQ2: What do Black male teachers consider as the contribution of school leadership as it relates to their exit or retention decisions?	Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers.
	Retention: Respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions.
SQ1: What aspects of school leadership are salient in influencing their exit or retention decisions?	Exit: School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions.
	Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention.

Discussions

Theme 1 Retention: Black male teachers identify as serving as role models

Several studies (Brown, 2009; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018; Hayes, Juarez & Escoffery-Runnels, 2014) assert that there are positive effects of having a same-race teacher in elementary school on Black students' educational attainment. Black male teachers serving as role models, according to the literature, means opportunities for mentorship, modeling, and supporting student learning (Brown, 2009). Findings revealed that serving as a supportive role model within their school communities increased job satisfaction for current Black male teachers. This ultimately influenced their staying power as many acknowledged the importance of taking on the responsibility of setting positive examples for their students. Participants thrived off of supporting school-wide initiatives, collaborating with families, and supporting the overall operations of their buildings. The ability to support various areas of the school community debunked the stereotype that Black males are lazy and unqualified for their students of color (Goings & Blanco, 2016). Ultimately, the opportunity and ability to act as a role model for students and assist their school community shaped the professional identity of participants. Lastly, being viewed as vital members of the school community proved to be a driving force to remain in their current roles.

The responses and experiences shared by participants were centered primarily around their perceived impact on their students. Participants held themselves to higher expectations as they understood how their actions aligned to their student's success. The shared lived experiences of the participants were consistent with the literature that

suggests that, in addition to providing instructional support, Black male teachers identify and serve as role models (Bristol, 2015; Brockenbrough, 2012; Wilder, 2000). Many participants felt compelled to conduct themselves in a manner that supported the needs of their diverse communities. These behaviors stemmed from their personal beliefs to make sure their students felt supported.

Existing research validated these findings, as Black male teachers work through and employ a variety of practices based on personal beliefs that address and improve the educational and social conditions of Black students (Hayes et al., 2014). Congruent with Brown's (2009) study Black male teachers identify with engaging students in learning through a variety of culturally based rhetorical strategies to engage student learning. Participants often shared connecting with their school communities on a deeper level by engaging with them outside of school hours. Additionally, the data indicated that serving as a role model proved to be a vehicle for participants to improve the educational experience for their students. Participants were aware of the positive value that they added to their school communities and leveraged their influence to positively shape the lives of their scholars. Wilder's (2000) study noted the positive impact and influence that Black male teachers had on Black students which aligns to the findings. Overall, the findings show that participants' heightened awareness of the needs of their community influenced them to actively serve as role models, which in turn created deeper connections aligned to their personal identities.

Theme 2 Retention: The ability for Black male teachers to work as their authentic self, leverage their decision to stay in the profession

Findings revealed that workplace conditions that allowed participants to work as their true authentic self-influenced retention decisions. Additionally, the data indicated that workplace environments that valued and celebrated participants' strengths and talents heightened their commitment to their school communities. Participants were eager to utilize their unique skills to support student learning when called upon by their school community. Participants acknowledged that working in supportive collaborative environments was key to influencing their satisfaction levels. Existing literature supports these findings as workplace conditions and environments influence retention decisions of Black male educators (Brown, 2009; Kholil, 2018; Meidl, 2018).

Collaboration within the workplaces proves to be an influential factor of job satisfaction for Black male teachers. Working on teams that valued their opinions and prioritized supporting students was essential for teachers who decided to stay in their schools. Existing research validated these findings as Black male teachers desire to work in strong collaborative networks within their teaching spaces (Scott & Alexander, 2019). According to Bristol's 2015's study, Black male teachers reported positive attachments to organizations due to the positive working relationships with colleagues. More importantly, participants described that the acknowledgement of their voices heightened their sense of commitment and camaraderie amongst their colleagues. Harris and Davis (2008) noted that internal systems of support influence retention of Black male teachers which aligns to the findings. Overall, the findings show that supportive collaborative environments empowered participants to be themselves, which in turn influenced their retention decisions.

Theme 3 Retention: Respect and recognition fostered by school leadership influences retention decisions

According to the literature, school leadership practices drive retention decisions for teachers (Bristol, 2019; Campoli, 2017; Kraft et al., 2016; Stauffer & Mason, 2013) Teachers who perceive that they work with a more supportive administrative leadership and within a stronger culture of collegiality are less likely to move from their schools (Campoli, 2017). Validation, support, and mentorship facilitated by school leaders influenced the retention decision of participants. More importantly, school leadership practices were identified as influential factors that increased participants pledge to remain in their school placements. School leaders who were perceived by participants as supportive and inclusive positively shaped the experiences for many participants, as they felt affirmed as Black male educators. This shared lived experience revealed by participants aligned with Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2011) study as supervisors are significant predictors of teacher's sense of belonging. More importantly, findings revealed that when school leaders recognized the efforts of the participants, their motivation levels increased, resulting in a desire to impact and influence change within their school communities. Multiple studies (Bristol, 2019; Campoli, 2017; Kraft et al., 2016; Stauffer & Mason, 2013) claim that strong supportive leadership teachers are more likely to remain in their schools.

Additionally, findings revealed that participants' responses and experiences were centered on the perceived leadership practices implemented by their school leaders. School leadership practices, such as celebrating their success and incorporating their ideas when making schoolwide decisions, proved to be positive shared experiences

discussed by many participants. Existing literature validates the role of leadership in increasing teacher organizational commitment, as Stauffer and Mason (2013) assert that, in order to increase organizational commitment, leaders must incorporate teachers in shared decision-making to gain teacher support. Teachers who perceived more supportive administrative leadership and a stronger culture of collegiality were less likely to move from their schools (Campoli, 2017). Secondly, the examination of the SASS data showcased that Black teachers will stay at schools where there is a shared mission and there is collaboration among the faculty (Bristol, 2019; Campoli, 2017).

The data indicated that leaders who involved participants in the decision making process proved to be an important factor that influenced participants retention decisions. Congruent with Kraft et al.'s (2016) study, teachers who perceive that school leaders incorporate them within the overall mission of the school, are more likely to remain in these schools. Overall, the findings show that participants valued the support, respect, and recognition fostered by their school leaders. Additionally, school leaders' supportive actions validated the experiences of Black male teachers, which ultimately influenced their decision to remain in their current placements.

Theme 4 Retention: Supportive, transformational work environments led by school principals promote Black male teacher retention

Findings revealed that Black male teachers placed high importance on transformative leadership practices. Shields (2012) defined transformative leadership as an approach to leadership that impacts organizations as a whole with a goal of transformation through deep and equitable change. Congruent with Mancuso et al.'s (2010) study, transformative leadership exhibited by school leaders promotes teacher

retention. Black male teachers appreciated school leaders who assisted them with navigating difficult situations that decreased and eliminated their workplace barriers. A specific example of transformative leadership that emerged from the data was a school leader's willingness and ability to support a Black male teacher by setting high expectations for an inclusive and respectful environment for all team members. According to Mancuso et al. (2004), transformative leaders are individuals who support their staff in difficult situations by incorporating others in problem-solving while treating staff fairly.

Additionally, Black male teachers remained in environments where they could authentically collaborate with their school leaders on a consistent basis to combat challenges within their building. Congruent with Thomas et al.'s (2020) study, transformative school leadership has a statistically significant relationship with professional collegial support while increasing intrinsic motivations to teach. Similar to the findings of this study, the alignment of Black male teachers' mission and vision to school leadership practices resulted in a stronger persistence to transform the lives of their school community. Shields (2012) asserts that transformative leadership acknowledges the power and privilege of various stakeholders that impinge on success.

The data also indicated that participants appreciated school leaders who were able to advocate on behalf of their instructional decisions, which may be challenged by the school community. The act of school leaders challenging biased assumptions and beliefs increased Black male teachers' job satisfaction and decisions to stay and work with their leaders. Existing research validated these findings, as Black male teachers remained in environments where school leaders exhibited tenets of transformative leadership

(Mancuso et al., 2004). Similar to Hulpia et al.'s (2011) study, Black male teachers valued supportive relationships with their school leaders as their actions equip them to be successful instructional leaders by providing a clear school vision, quality professional development, and shared decision-making; thus, reinforcing the theme that Black male teachers require supportive school leadership practices to thrive and remain in the field of education.

Overall, the perceptions and impact of school leaders' actions influenced participants to self-reflect and examine their commitment and decision to stay in the profession of teaching. The findings mentioned support the literature that suggest that effective transformative leaders are better able to retain teachers (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Gomba, 2015; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Ingersoll, 2011, Ladd, 2011).

The four themes discussed shared factors that supported the retention of Black male teachers. Black male teachers identified serving as role models while working in environments as their authentic selves. Additionally, school leaders who fostered transformative workplace environments grounded in respect, recognition, and support positively influenced the lived experiences of Black male teachers. The next section will discuss the five themes that influenced Black male teachers' decisions to leave the profession. More specifically, the lack of autonomy, workplace barriers, and negative interactions with colleagues and school leaders were factors that negatively influenced their retention decisions.

Theme 5 Exit: Black male teachers lack of autonomy and school placement shape their professional identity and lived experiences

Several studies (Bristol, 2015; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014) assert that the lack of freedom, empowerment, and autonomy leads to mixed feelings about being a member of an organization, thus increasing career transitional decisions. Black male teachers' lack of autonomy and workplace environments negatively impacted their lived experiences as former educators. Participants yearned to work in environments where they were respected and could contribute to decision making within their school placement. More specifically, participants framed a lack of respect being silenced and unable to provide curricular input as a major limitation of their lived experience. Lastly, the limited influence and impact on student learning accelerated their decision to leave the profession while decreasing their motivation as educators.

Former Black male teacher participants' responses and experiences were centered around the perceived lack of power and autonomy. The lack of control according to participants took away a very important aspect of their job as teachers. Findings revealed that when participants were unable to offer their expertise or feedback regarding instructional decisions, they perceived their roles as educators insignificant. Participants perceived that the lack of input became a source of frustration as many entered the profession with the goal to improve teaching and learning. The experiences shared by participants align with current literature that suggest that the empowerment of teachers to make meaningful changes within their school community motivates them to feel in control at work (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014).

Existing research validates this particular theme, as Black male teachers value being respected and having their voices heard within their school communities.

Congruent with Bristol's (2015) study, Black male teachers have a strong desire to have their voices heard within their school communities. According to Bristol (2015), not having one's voice heard in a formal or informal setting increases feelings of social isolation for Black male teachers, while negatively impacting their retention decisions. Participants often shared entering the profession seeking to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning, only to frequently experience their voices being silenced and disregarded by their colleagues and school community. As a result, participants' motivation levels decreased, and they became compliance-driven due to being challenged about their teaching practices and decision making. Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) study noted the lack of freedom and control to make curricular decisions, along with their inability to participate in a school-wide decision-making process, causes teachers to abandon the profession, which aligns to the findings. Ultimately, the findings show that participants' lack of control and respect as Black male educators influenced them to remove themselves from environments where their professional opinions were devalued and ignored.

Theme 6 Exit: Workplace barriers for Black male teachers influence their decision to leave the profession

Several studies (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brockenbrough ,2015; Lynch, 2012) assert that the organizational factors and school characteristics impact and predict the attrition of teachers. Marginalized roles and responsibilities along with unspoken expectations placed on Black male teachers negatively impacted their lived experiences. According to the literature, Black teachers are burdened with the expectation to relate to every Black child and minority students which lowers satisfaction levels (Kholil, 2018;

Will, 2016). Targeted roles and responsibilities such as managing students' behaviors impacted the job satisfaction for many participants. More specifically, participants perceived that their roles were associated with their race and gender, as participants felt labeled and marginalized to support mainly Black students. Ultimately, the misalignment of expectations placed on participants influenced their decisions to leave the profession of teaching.

Workplace barriers, according to participants centered around their daily assigned roles and responsibilities that deterred them from providing quality teaching and learning. Findings revealed that most participants expressed lower levels of satisfaction as a result of being called to assist with discipline and serve as the authoritative figures instead of growing as instructional leaders. More specifically, the burden of serving as a disciplinarian first and an educator second proved to be an aspect of the job that fostered higher levels of resentment and frustration for participants. The experiences shared by participants align with current literature that Black male teachers are positioned as disciplinary agents within the teaching profession. Additionally, Black male teachers struggled to adopt disciplinarian personas as the study discovered strong links to stress and anxiety (Brockenbrough, 2015). Feelings of isolation, pressure, and balancing unofficial disciplinarian responsibilities impacts the experiences of Black male teachers (Bristol, 2015; Kholil, 2018; Will, 2016).

Additional research validated the findings that pigeonholed roles and responsibilities aligned to student discipline negatively influenced the lived experiences of Black male teachers. Lynch's (2012) study noted that workplace conditions such as student discipline influence attrition factors for teachers. Congruent with

Brockenbrough's (2015) study, Black male teachers are frequently positioned as disciplinary agents in predominantly Black urban school districts. Participants often shared immediately being assigned to roles that did not align with their actual strengths and talents. More specifically, participants shared being labeled and marginalized due to the biased expectations placed upon them as a Black male educator. As a result, participants resented their roles as they did not showcase their instructional capabilities but focused more on student discipline. Overall, the findings show that the marginalized roles and responsibilities placed upon Black male teachers proved to be a source of pressure and frustration for them to thrive as dynamic instructional leaders, influencing their decisions to leave the profession. Due to the pigeonholed responsibilities placed on Black males they lack the opportunity for transformative change as educators. Essentially, they are not allowed to make any sustainable growth and change due the limited experience as a result of their marginalized roles.

Theme 7 Exit: The perceived roles and expectations from colleagues negatively pivot the professional identity and retention decisions of Black male teachers

Several studies (Burke et al., 2013; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Scott & Alexander, 2009) assert that teacher collegiality is an important retention decision making factor for educators. Negative and limited relationships with colleagues and peers influenced Black male teachers' decision to leave their school placements. Participants described working environments where they had to combat the negative perceptions of their colleagues. Specifically, participants shared the challenges of having to navigate working in their school placements due to being unable to interact with colleagues in a productive manner. Additionally, participants shared the challenge of creating trustworthy working

relationships, which led to feelings of isolation, which in turn influenced them to leave the profession.

Negotiating the perceptions of others lowered levels of job satisfaction for participants, as they struggled working in environments where colleagues diminished their instructional capabilities. Congruent with Bristol and Mentor's (2018) study, Black male teachers believed that their colleagues and administrators viewed their role as disciplinarians first and educators second. More specifically, the responses and experiences shared by participants centered primarily around surviving in spaces where they felt alone and isolated due to the consistent negative interactions with their colleagues, and such survival mentality negatively influenced their ability to make a difference. The survival mentality expressed by participants was consistent with the literature that suggest that teachers are more likely to stay in schools that are perceived to have high levels of order and teacher collegiality (Burke et al., 2013; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Participants preferred supportive collaborative environments, which aligned with Scott and Alexander's (2019) study that noted how strong networks bolster the satisfaction of Black male teachers.

Existing research validated the findings that the perception of colleagues impacts the daily workplace environment for teachers (Bristol, 2015). Consistent with Marinell and Coca's (2013) study, high levels of support, trust, and respect amongst colleagues influence job satisfaction and retention of teachers. The findings of this study show that Black male teachers value working in environments where there are high levels of collegiality coupled with authentic trust and respect amongst colleagues. Additionally, the data indicated that working in environments that lacked the characteristics mentioned

above causes stressors for Black male teachers, as the perceived lack of support from their colleagues resulted in participants to isolate themselves. As noted by Marinell and Cocoa (2013), teacher collegiality influences the retention decisions of educators. Overall, the findings show that workplace conditions, specifically interactions with colleagues, influence the retention decisions of Black male teachers.

Theme 8 Exit: Negative workplace conditions created by school leaders impact the lived experiences of Black male teachers

Black male teachers' negative interactions with school leaders impacted and shaped their experiences as educators. Participants associated their unhealthy relationships with their school leaders due to increased workload, lack of accountability, high expectations, and unclear communication. More importantly, participants attributed negative workplace environments as a direct reflection of their school leaders practices. Research corroborates the findings of this study as Ladd's (2011) study noted the connection between school leadership and working conditions. More specifically, Ladd (2011) asserts that principal leadership influences workplace conditions, which aligns to the lived experiences shared by participants in this study. Multiple participants described work environments that provided limited opportunities to collaborate and provide feedback to better the needs of the entire school community. The lack of support along with lack of autonomy within the classroom align with what the literature noted as influential factors for increased teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Glennie, Mason & Edmunds, 2016; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

The responses and experiences shared by participants were centered around perceived school leadership practices that lowered job satisfaction and influenced their

decision to leave the profession. Participants noted being met with resistance from their school leaders when seeking advice regarding curriculum and instruction. The lack of support frustrated participants and lowered their commitment to their school community as their main goal was to improve aspects of the school through quality instructional practices. These findings are consistent with studies (Devos et al., 2014; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011; Shaw & Newton, 2014 Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Thomas et al., 2020), as leaders who provide instructional support increase the organizational commitment for teachers who want to improve.

Furthermore, the findings within this theme pinpoint how school leaders have the power to positively impact the school environments which is directly linked to job satisfaction of teachers and their career transitional behaviors. Ultimately, Black male teachers' inability to receive instructional support, coaching, and mentorship from their school leaders negatively shaped their experiences causing them to leave the profession. The shared lived experience of the participants was consistent with teacher retention literature, according to Allensworth et al. (2009), in which working together with school leaders to design and coordinate instructional programs influence retention decisions Overall, the findings show that participants' negative relationship and interactions with school leaders influence their decision to remove themselves from their current school placement and ultimately the profession.

Theme 9 Exit School leaders inability to support, and foster authentic decision making environments influence Black male teacher retention decisions

School leadership has the potential to negatively correlate with the probability of departure (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Ladd, 2011). More

specifically, teachers are more likely to quit when there is a lack of support from school leaders (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Thus, school leadership is an important factor that determines working conditions and attrition (Ladd, 2011; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Black male teachers' interactions with their school leaders negatively shaped their experiences as they noted a lack of support, encouragement, and confirmation from their leaders, which influenced their decisions to leave. Several studies (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019) assert that there is a strong correlation to teachers leaving the profession and school leadership.

Participants shared having to navigate challenges within their school environment without the guidance and support of their school leaders. The passive and nonchalant stances demonstrated by leaders left participants with the burden of problem solving on their own. This lack of support aligns with the literature that notes that a lack of recognition and support from school leaders influences teachers' decisions to leave their schools (Boyd et al., 2011). Within this study, the lack of support shared by participants influenced their levels of dissatisfaction within their school buildings. As a result, participants sought additional spaces where a professional network existed outside of the profession of education.

Overall, existing research validated the findings within this study as Black male teachers placed a major importance on school leader support (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019), Consistent with Ladd's (2011) study, the quality of school leadership influences the development of teachers while influencing their retention decisions. The shared experiences discussed by participants, such as unsupportive environments, align with the

literature that assert the negative impact school leaders have on teacher retention. (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Ultimately, the findings show that Black male teachers place a greater emphasis on working in supportive environments facilitated by school leaders that foster a network of support.

Revised Conceptual Framework

Findings from the current study further expand the lived experiences of Black male teachers and the leadership practices facilitated by school leaders that influence Black male teacher career transitional behaviors. Additionally, the conceptual framework for this study established a relationship between transformative leadership practices and Black male teacher retention through the intersection of CRT and transformative leadership theory. Existing research indicates that when school leaders act as transformative leaders they are able to create deep and equitable change for marginalized communities which positively influence school work environments (Shields, 2012).

As mentioned before, the conceptual framework consists of multiple factors that influence Black males. The top of the conceptual framework represents CRT which were reflected in the responses of participants. Participants shared positive and negative schooling experiences as examples that initially hindered them from entering the profession while shaping their identities as Black male educators. All participants were able to express how their experiences as kids and young adults influenced their teaching styles and vision for education. Ultimately, their responses indicated that Black males historical lived experiences influence their decisions to enter the profession of teaching.

Within the conceptual framework, arrows from CRT extended to factors that influence Black male teachers, workplace conditions, and the school principal.

Participants in this study expressed the influence their school principal had on their workplace conditions as educators. The presence or lack of transformative leadership according to participants, influenced their working conditions. Additionally, participants discussed the direct connection between workplace conditions and perceived school leadership practices. School leaders who advocated for change influenced the retention decisions of many participants. Participants valued the systems and structures facilitated by school leaders that promoted collaboration, support, and accountability.

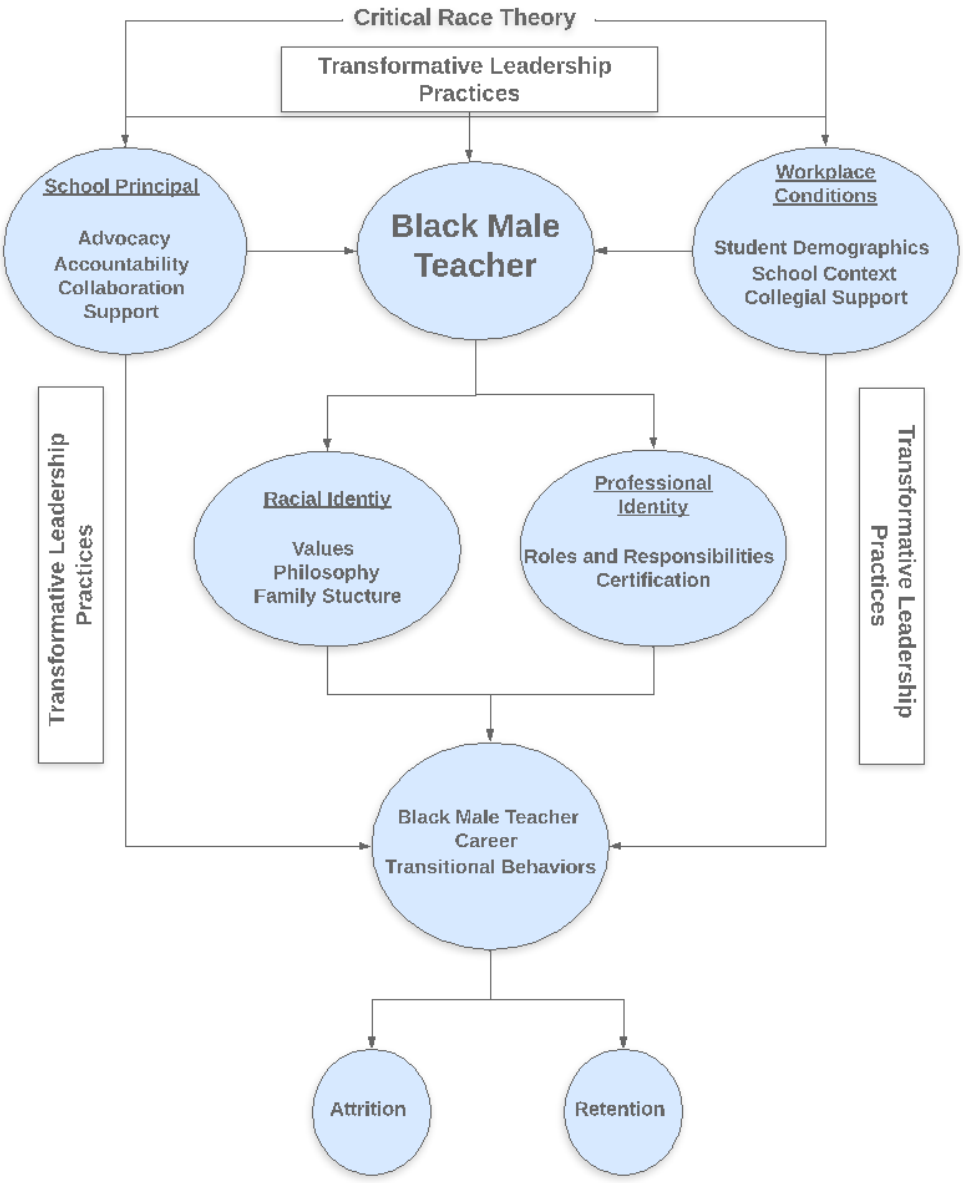
Findings from the study elevated the interaction between the racialized identity and professional identity of the Black males in relation to career transitional decisions. Participants remained in their placements where the environment, school leadership practice, and workplace conditions aligned to their personal values. Participants shared feelings of affirmation and validation when their school environment aligned with their identity and values. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities proved to either positively or negatively influence job satisfaction, as participants embraced or rejected the roles assigned. Participants embraced roles that allowed them to connect to their personal identity, and rejected roles that reduced their capabilities to managing student behaviors. Ultimately, the intersection of the two identities impacted and influenced the career transitional decision for participants.

The next section of the framework, the workplace conditions structure, represented how the context of a school impacts the lived experience of Black male teachers. Additionally, the findings for the current study furthered evidence that, in addition to school leaders demonstrating transformative leadership practices, collaborative workplace environments were valued by participants. More specifically,

participants valued leaders who fostered conditions that created spaces for participants to work collaboratively with others rather in isolation. Participants in this study recognized the importance of feeling inspired and empowered to support student achievement as a result of their school leaders action. One interesting aspect that surfaced from the data that was absent from the original conceptual framework was the impact and influence of colleagues on the lived experiences of participants. Participants shared instances where negotiating the perceptions of their colleagues lowered job satisfaction, while influencing them to leave their school placements. Additionally, participants reported being treated differently by colleagues who did not believe in their instructional capabilities, which led to isolation and distrust within their school placement. Based on the findings from participants in this study, a modification in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2 was revised to include collegial support within the workplace conditions structure.

Figure 2

Revised Conceptual Framework



Conclusion

This study sought to identify the factors that influenced Black male teacher retention decisions. The research shows that work environments and leadership practices largely impacted a teacher's decision to leave or stay in the profession. Through structured interviews with both former and current educators, findings demonstrated an appreciation for feeling valued, understood, and respected. Alternatively, findings

showed that teachers left the profession when they were assigned roles that did not align with their identities, or when they were not given opportunities to contribute to their school communities in meaningful ways that highlighted and utilized their talents.

Black male teachers who stayed in the profession shared stories of working in schools that valued them as talented educators. Serving as role models in their schools was of high importance, as they reported feeling a sense of obligation to dismantle societal stereotypes about Black men, and to be a positive presence and example in the lives of their students, especially their students of color. Teachers were fulfilled in their roles when they made connections with students who needed guidance as they navigated challenges they were facing in their lives. Their sense of fulfillment was heightened when they were able to support students who had life stories that reminded them of their own. Additionally, showing up to work as their authentic selves was key. Teachers appreciated being accepted and celebrated for who they were, and being called on to support the school in ways that allowed them to utilize their skills and tap into their passions. Furthermore, Black male teachers wanted to feel valued and needed in their school communities. In a society where they constantly felt pressure to prove their worth and their ability to be successful, teachers hoped for work environments where they felt a sense of belonging. They yearned for school communities where their colleagues and leaders demonstrated a genuine desire to make meaningful connections and build relationships, and to give them opportunities to demonstrate their skills and expertise as educators. When school leaders were supportive, and fully understood and acknowledged the challenges that Black male teachers encountered each day, teachers felt safe and

protected. Supportive leadership and welcoming school communities tended to lead to teacher retention amongst Black males.

Black male teachers who left the profession described work environments that lacked support and the ability to recognize them as talented educators who brought a unique perspective to their schools because of their race and gender. Some teachers struggled to connect with their colleagues, and often experienced feeling isolated and misunderstood. Their colleagues did not welcome their ideas, and they were often put in positions that did not align with their identities. Black males who left found themselves burdened with responsibilities, such as being called on to help discipline students or to mentor students who were struggling behaviorally. When their colleagues and school leaders made assumptions about them based on their race and gender that did not align with their identities, teachers felt undervalued. There was a perceived lack of trust when their ideas and input were ignored or when their voice was excluded from conversations that informed decision making in their schools, or when they were denied the ability to have any autonomy in their assigned roles. Environments that did not support or acknowledge the value of Black male teachers influenced their decisions to exit the profession.

To retain Black male teachers, school communities need to be intentional with their actions. By improving workplace conditions, such as environments where Black teachers are valued as professionals, the education system unleashes their creative energies, improving satisfaction and retention. When schools address the biases that exist in their communities, and work to build inclusive environments for all, they create opportunities for Black men to use their voice and contribute to school improvement.

Ultimately, acknowledging their talents and unique perspectives, and removing barriers that prevent teachers from being their authentic selves at work, school leaders can construct environments where Black men feel a sense of belonging. When schools work to meet the needs of these dynamic educators, not only are they able to retain Black male teachers at a higher rate, but they reap the benefits of cultivating a diverse educational workforce that is necessary for the overall growth and achievement of students.

Recommendations and Implications

Based on the study's findings, there are several recommendations for practice, policy, and research.

Practice. One question posed to current and former Black male teacher participants was, "What advice would you give to school principals regarding retaining Black male teachers?" The creation of support systems and mentorship within the school setting emerged as recommendations for school leaders. Participants commented on the need for school leaders to create opportunities to connect with other Black male educators to discuss a variety of topics. Participants from this study acknowledged the importance and need for supportive networks to meet their social and emotional needs as educators. Providing programs throughout the academic school year to Black male teachers could potentially provide them with a comfortable space to mitigate the unique challenges that they face while growing as instructional leaders. Existing literature supports the recommendations mentioned, as Stuaffer and Mason (2013) assert that school leaders should reduce the isolation of teachers by setting aside specific blocks of time to interact with them periodically throughout the academic year. Additionally, Tillman (2005) asserts that a transformative leadership approach to mentoring would

benefit novice teachers with providing them with a network of support on a consistent basis. The moral courage of school leaders who enact transformative leadership practices will influence the satisfaction level of Black males. Black male teachers who reaming have toolkits and support systems to navigate challenges. Therefore, it is important that school leaders address the inequitable distribution of power that negatively influences Black males.

Policy. Findings within the study outline action steps for policymakers to create programs and initiatives that support the retention of Black male teachers. The literature asserts that there are positive effects of having Black male teachers, as their presence drives student achievement (Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018). Therefore, districts must create policies and procedures that tailor to the authentic and diverse needs of Black male teachers. More importantly, districts must understand the historical context that hinders Black males from entering the profession of teaching while examining current workplace conditions that discourage them from staying. It is important to shift hiring practices that allow Black male teachers the opportunity to be placed in school settings that empower them to be their true authentic self. School district must create opportunities within Black male teacher school placements to assist them with navigating their unique set of challenges. Lastly, the findings support additional trainings and revised school leader preparation programs on how to coach, mentor, and support Black male teachers. School leaders need to be equipped on how to acknowledge, celebrate, and empower Black male teachers to grow as instructional leaders so that they experience success as educators. School leaders must realize the Black male teachers bring equity and a unique perspective to their school buildings. Their talents must be acknowledged,

celebrated, and supported. To support Black male teachers, policies must be based on the voices of Black males to facilitate change. School districts must secure and elevate the voice of the Black male to avoid creating systemic policies and procedures that hinder their growth.

Research. There is limited research on how school leaders can specifically support Black male teachers. The current study provides insight on the lived experiences of Black male teachers and how specific school leadership practices such as transformative leadership influence their retention decisions. However, additional research is needed to deepen the understanding of what it means to be a Black male educator in a variety of school settings. How can additional leadership theories be applied to Black male educators to examine their effects on teacher retention? Additionally, more research is needed to understand how school leaders support the retention of Black males. Findings from this study revealed that participants valued collaborative supportive work environments. Additional research is needed to better understand how school leaders create and sustain supportive work environments for Black male teachers. More specifically, what aspects of support do school leaders consider to be the most effective and how do they impact job satisfaction for Black male teachers. Lastly, this qualitative study considered the perspectives of Black male teachers. Further research is needed to examine the retention of Black male teachers through school leaders perspectives. Due to the nature of this study, school leadership practices were only shared through the perspective of Black male teachers. Research that includes the perspectives of Black male teachers, coupled with school leaders is needed. Additionally, future research

should specifically address leadership perceptions of Black male teachers to provide an in-depth analysis of what it means to support Black male educators.

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Appendix A. Interview Protocol (Current)

Semi-Structured First Interview Protocol – Current Black Male Teachers

Greetings _____,

Thank you for scheduling time to speak with me today. I will be conducting this interview for my dissertation research. The information shared today will assist in understanding the lived experiences of Black Male teachers. I would like to remind you that all information shared throughout this interview will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity. You have the option to end this interview and withdraw from the study at any time. The approximate timeframe for this interview will be 60 to 90 minutes. I would like to record the audio of this interview so that I can transcribe our discussion. Please let me know if that will be ok? Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Please share with me your current position, how long you have been teaching including level (Elementary, Middle, or High school).
2. Could you share about some of your greatest motivators to become a teacher? Describe your process of joining the teaching profession in terms of interest or recruitment. Probe: Describe your schooling experience. How did these experiences impact your decision to become a teacher?
3. Describe some of your early experiences as a Black male teacher? Probe: How would you describe your overall level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction during this time? Probe: Can you recall a specific experience that stood out to you?
4. What factors have caused you to stay in the profession of teaching?
5. Describe your experience as a Black male teacher in your current school building? Probe: How does your current school building align with your identity? Probe: What role do you think you play within your school community?
6. How would your colleagues perceive you and how does that make you feel?
7. What level of importance do you place on the school leadership, specifically the school principal and why? Probe: How much importance do you place on your relationship with your school principal?
8. Can you recall any meaningful experiences related to your school principal that has influenced you to stay or leave your current position? Probe: What leadership factors influenced your decision?

9. Describe your support systems as a Black male teacher. Probe: How does your school principal support you as a Black male teacher? What leadership qualities does your school principal possess?
10. What advice would you give to school principals regarding retaining Black male teachers?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences? Any additional comments?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and for sharing your lived experiences as a Black male teacher. I will share the transcript of our discussion for your review. Please reach out to me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Appendix B. Interview Protocol (Former)

Semi-Structured First Interview Protocol – Former Black Male Teachers

Greetings _____,

Thank you for scheduling time to speak with me today. I will be conducting this interview for my dissertation research. The information shared today will assist in understanding the lived experiences of Black Male teachers. I would like to remind you that all information shared throughout this interview will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity. You have the option to end this interview and withdraw from the study at any time. The approximate timeframe for this interview will be 60 to 90 minutes. I would like to record the audio of this interview so that I can transcribe our discussion. Please let me know if that will be ok? Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Please share with how long you were employed as a teacher including level (Elementary, Middle, or High school).
2. Can you share about some of your greatest motivators to become a teacher? Describe your process of joining the teaching profession in terms of interest or recruitment. Probe: Describe your schooling experience. How did these experiences impact your decision to become a teacher?
3. How would you describe your overall experience as a Black male teacher? Probe: What role did you think you played within your school community? Probe: What challenges or opportunities have you experienced as a Black male teacher?
4. What factors led you to the leave the profession of teaching? Probe: What was the critical moment that influenced your decision to leave the profession? Probe: Can you recall any meaningful experiences related to your school leader that influenced you to leave the profession of teaching?
5. How would your former colleagues perceive you and how did that make you feel?
6. What level of importance did you place on the school leadership, specifically the school principal and why? Probe: How much importance did you place on your relationship with your school principal?
7. Can you recall any meaningful experiences that influenced you to leave your current position? Probe: Where there any experiences with you principal that influenced your decision?

8. What advice would you give to school principals regarding retaining Black male teachers?
9. Reflecting on your experience as a teacher, what would have kept you in the profession of teaching? What is your current position now?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences? Any additional comments?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and for sharing your lived experiences as a Black male teacher. I will share the transcript of our discussion for your review. Please reach out to me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Appendix C. Informed Consent

Exploring The Experiences of Black Male Teachers and School Leadership Practices That Influence Retention

Principal Investigator Abebayehu Tekleselassie, Ph.D., 202-994-0132

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Dr. Abebayehu Tekleselassie (Principal Investigator), faculty member at the George Washington University in the Department of Educational Leadership.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a current or former public school Black male teacher. Please read this form and ask us any questions that will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Taking part is completely voluntary and even if you decide you want to, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Your employment status will not be affected in any way should you choose not to take part or to withdraw at any time.

You must be at least 18 years old to take part in this study.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to understand the lived experiences and identity of Black males teachers. In addition to understanding the identity and lived experiences of Black male teachers, this research will focus on perceived leadership practices employed by school principals that influence the attrition and retention of Black male teachers.

PROCEDURES

All participants will take part in 60-90 minute interviews. The interviews will be audio recorded.

Participants will also be contacted after the interviews are completed and transcribed in order to ensure that the researcher accurately reflected their comments.

RISKS & CONFIDENTIALITY

The study has the following risks:

You may feel some emotional stress/discomfort answering the interview questions. You are free to skip any questions or stop participating in the interview at any point.

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IRB APPROVAL DATE: 10/16/2020