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BRIAN HARMON

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EXAMINING THE "JUST-US" LEAGUE: A HEURISTIC INQUIRY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

BRIAN HARMON

Under the Direction of Jennifer Esposito

ABSTRACT

There is a continuing low number of Black male teachers in the public school system nationally and they are often employed in urban, low-income, high minority areas where students are considered most "at risk" (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017). Some have argued that Black male teachers' presence is a benefit in numerous ways (Irvine, 1988; Bristol, 2015). When a Black male teacher leaves a low-income school, their attrition is arguably more harrowing considering that Black male students in these areas often have lower achievement scores, higher dropout rates, higher disciplinary referrals, and higher special education demarcation than other ethnic groups. For this study, ten Black male content teachers, who left urban, disadvantaged school districts to teach at a more advantaged, predominantly White school district (PWSD), were interviewed. The aim of the study was to discover, among other things, why they left these disadvantaged districts to teach in a more affluent county. This study was completed using

Heuristic Inquiry, a methodology that includes the experiences of participants as well as the transformation of the researcher during the study as evidence. Findings suggest that Black male teachers left their previous positions because of issues with the structure and climate of their previous schools seeking reprieve in a more academically nurturing environment. Findings also suggest that Black male teachers seek employment in schools within PWSDs that have the most diversity. Participants desired to be in these more diverse schools because of their commitment to their communities, their own experiences in school, and the desire to use these experiences to help other young Black males. All participants wanted to amplify their impact on students and the school culture by moving out of the classroom into a more administrative role. This study adds to the literature that addresses the attrition and migration of the few Black male content teachers in this country.

EXAMINING THE "JUST-US" LEAGUE: A HEURISTIC INQUIRY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

BRIAN HARMON

A Dissertation

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Degree of

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in

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in

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in

the College of Education and Human Development

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Atlanta, GA
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to those who came before; namely my mother, whose voice is always in my ear telling me to reach a little higher, do a little better, achieve a little more, grow a little wiser. Hope this signifies as progress mom.

And to those who will carry on; namely my children, I have five that are blood who I try to cultivate and rear, and about 2,200 hundred and counting who I have and continuously will try to teach and inspire in school. Hope this gives you inspiration to go further.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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See, black youth drop out, get suspended at higher rates. Schools react about that fact, so they hire a black face. Black male went through hell, dodged a cell, got a degree. School is excited he got hired. They gave him some mentees.

Now, these mentees breeze through P.E. with ease, but at best see C's if the course talks degrees or ratio, proportions, because math is boring, the language is anguish. They languish in their performance. Frustrated, they updated their thug image, stuck in the sewage cultural irrelevance created.

Poor instruction, boring structures. Then I'm called in to rupture. And I'm overwhelmed.

Yes, I'm black. And the kids are black, too, but what I know is right to do means breaking the school's rules. So we leave the profession in every major city, 40 percent in Chicago, 19 in Philly, really. We can't stand being the teachers that we hated, but they made us suspend them and punish them with bad grades.

The school system is more diverse than ever, but I never see myself amongst the faculty. And whether I do or not doesn't make much of a difference if you hire me, retire me, and do not change the system.

Listen, like 50 percent of public school students of color, right? Eighty-two percent of those teachers are, the other, white. Less than 2 percent of those who teach are black males. One in 15 of those same males end up in jail.

Schools criminalize, and society despises us. For the black male teacher, frustrations rise in us. Now, students respond in anger and hate schools. Then the teachers respond and start tightening up the rules.

Test prep begets yet even more frustration. I prep them for a test they detest, so they fail it. Then I get blamed and nailed to the cross, as if I'm the cause of it. So, of course, I feel I'm forced to quit.

The source of this often sits at the precipice of pessimists who get to spit a less legit hypothesis about my grit, when it's obvious that I am forced to fit in a system.

So, I quit.

-Chris Emdin

Chapter 1: The Problem
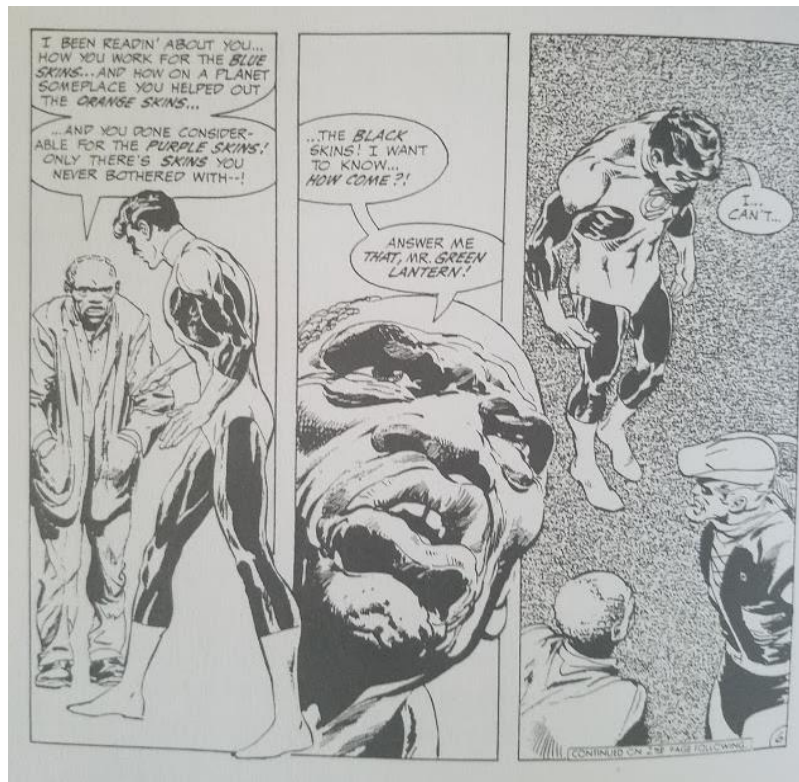
Figure 1: Green Lantern Excerpt

Introduction

One of my favorite scenes in comic books is from an old Green Lantern comic in the 1960's. This downtrodden, older Black man gets a second to ask Green Lantern a serious question. He asks him, "You've saved aliens and species from galaxies all over the universe but what about your own people who are suffering everyday down here? What about them?" Green Lantern hangs his head in shame and has no answer to give him. I felt the same way when I left from teaching in a predominantly Black school district to go to a predominantly White one. I was scared every day that someone would call me out for abandoning my own people. I became a

teacher to help young Black males with whom I went to school and befriended, but who constantly made bad choices, lacked guidance and understanding, and ultimately did poorly in school. In Green Lantern's case, he had no answer for the man's question. Green Lantern's powers come from the amount of will power he has. For a super hero whose power is fueled by will, nothing could be more devastating than to be questioned on one's motivation to act: or is the problem the lack of ability to act?

I was going to be their "superhero," flying back into the same type of school system I attended, to save them. I use the term "superhero" because it would take more than the typical heroes we often witnessed on television and in movies to help. I assumed that they needed saving because of the feelings of a lack of teachers who looked like me: both Black and male. In fact, teachers are much like superheroes: myths and legends, both good and bad, are formed around them; they are often overworked and underappreciated with little compensation in comparison; they have secret identities, or personas, that they must maintain around their students; and they have super powers, or at least the ability to teach. Also, just as Green Lantern's ring chooses him, many teachers subscribe to the belief that teaching is a calling; i.e., their profession chose them not the other way around. So when I say I feel guilty like Green Lantern, there is more bundled into this comparison than what is on the surface. The question I pose to myself is did I leave this type of district because of the lack of will power? More importantly, and for all teachers to ask themselves, is it the students that need saving or the system that they are in?

The lack of proverbial superheroes and the plight of my closest friends and classmates is not unusual. Males only make up 23% of all teachers (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017) while Black people make up 8% of all teachers in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some estimates put the number of Black males at less than 2% of the total population of

teachers (Bristol, 2015a). Ingersoll, May, and Collins (2017) report that minority teacher numbers have increased substantially over the past 25 years, even outpacing minority student growth and their White counterparts, including urban, disadvantaged areas; however, there is a substantial rate of attrition among minority teachers compared to non-minority teachers. This attrition is even higher among Black male teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Furthermore, Black students, namely males, who make up 16% of the total population (Kena et al., 2015), underperform, under-achieve, and based on disciplinary records "under behave" when compared to their peers in public schools. Some scholars surmise that the increase of Black male teachers could have a positive effect on student achievement (Bristol, 2014; Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2014; Irvine, 1988; Lynn, 2002; 2006; Milner, 2005; 2007; 2010; Thomas and Warren, 2017), while other studies show that the lack of Black males in education can have a negative effect on their achievement (Bryan, 2017). Nevertheless, Black teachers are choosing to teach in areas with a higher concentration of Black students (Ingersoll et al., 2017): especially Black male teachers (Wimbush, 2012). Additionally, research shows that student behavior is not the major determining factor in Black men leaving the classroom; many reported that "organizational and working conditions," including problems with administration, were the main reasons for their departure (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Though the research suggests that although Black male teachers are choosing to teach in areas where they are needed most, there is still an alarming rate of those who leave.

If one simple solution to help Black male students is to increase the number of Black male teachers, it is therefore important that researchers discover the factors that lead to this high attrition rate (Ingersoll et al., 2017). This study addresses the gap in the literature concerning the reason for Black male content teacher attrition, namely the subset of teachers who migrate from

high minority, disadvantaged areas, to teach in more affluent school districts. In an era of a growing number of minority students in urban and suburban areas (Kena et al., 2015), and the research showing the positive impact Black male content teachers have on these students, it is important to explore these teachers' backgrounds, characteristics and the perceptions of their experiences to better understand the conditions which lead to their exodus.

The context of this study comes from my own experiences. My experience in school had a huge impact on my career choice. Studies show that early experiences of Black male students have a huge impact on their choice in becoming a teacher (Brown & Butty, 1999; Graham & Erwin, 2011). My mother moved me into a predominantly White school to escape many of the cultural pitfalls rampant in urban, low-income schools. There were few if any Black male teachers at either school where I attended. In high school and college, I developed a desire to give back to my community and wanted to help students who, like me, had to navigate an educational system that had little in the way of role models who looked like me and who could better understand me. After becoming a teacher and teaching in urban, predominantly Black and low-income school districts for several years, I left to go to a predominantly White school district (PWSD) to escape an overwhelming culture of academic underachievement, weak discipline structure, and unsupportive administration. The irony is not lost on me. As I said, I felt guilty leaving my people behind; that is until my first day of school in my new county...

In this study, I examine the experiences of the only other Black male content teachers, in the same county, each with backgrounds similar to mine, to see how their experiences influenced their career choice. Why had they left their previous positions in urban disadvantaged areas to seek employment in a more affluent PWSD, and did they share my commitment to fostering the success of Black male students? I call us the Just-Us League, not because we are superheroes, or

are committed to saving the day, but because it is "just us"-we are the only Black male content teachers in one county in metro Atlanta. Who are we? Who is this eleven-member league of *Just-Us,* in an otherwise alien world? Why are we here, and what can be learned from our experiences? And, what are the underlying implications of the racial inequalities that contextualize this situation of migration from disadvantaged school districts to a district in relative abundance? This qualitative study is aimed at answering these questions.

Background Problem: African American Males and the Crisis in Education

Pedro Noguera said, "All of the most important quality-of-life indicators suggest that African American males are in deep trouble" (2003a, p. 431). Before beginning this section, as well as the background literature that follows, it is important to put some information in context. In one of the more popular Batman versions, Batman is fighting the crime that is rampant in Gotham City. He is merciless in his onslaught and punishes criminals brutally being sure not to cross the ultimate line of taking a life. Towards the end of this story he discovers that one of his more formidable adversaries is the cause of not only his current plight, but the overwhelming and systemically crippling issues that plague Gotham. Ra's al Ghul admits to a young, idealistically naïve Batman that he and his organization used different types of weapons in their arsenal, including economic warfare: he states, "Create enough poverty and everyone turns to crime." I liken this to the plight of many predominantly Black, low-income, urban areas; this is a result of crimes committed against people of color through a convoluted villain known as systemic racism. This point becomes an important motif that permeates the entire study.

As stated earlier, Black male teachers have the lowest percentage of representation in education among just about all other demographics (Ingersoll et al., 2017). In order to understand

these kinds of statistics concerning Black male teachers, we must first explore the Black male crisis in education. Black male teachers were all students first, and their experiences started in the United States school system. It is important to explore the racial climate of the education system and the broader society in this country to contextualize the experiences of the participants in this study.

Black male students suffer from a host of issues in the educational system in this country. These issues include: lower achievement scores compared to their racial counterparts and female counterparts (Kena et al., 2015), higher suspension rates and dropout rates (Musu-Gillete et al., 2016), underrepresentation in gifted programs (Grantham, 2004a; 2004b; Whiting, 2006), and an overrepresentation in special education programs (Kunjufu, 2005), as well as many more. These alarming problems have led many researchers to view the educational system as a pipeline to prison (McGrew, 2016; Noguera, 2003a; 2003b). Additional research shows the negative perception White teachers often have of Black male students and how this negative perception leads to dire consequences (Bryan, 2017; Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016; Whiting, 2006). This research culminates into the idea that the issues prevalent among Black students in the educational system are merely a reflection of the issues in the broader society (Jackson et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Black males have responded to the pitfalls in education in a variety of ways. Many have developed a cultural mask or "cool pose" in response to oppression and pressure in the educational system (Majors & Billson, 1992). This coping mechanism is often misinterpreted by authority figures, teachers, and administrators leading to a misunderstanding of student behaviors in class (Whiting, 2006). Some scholars have surmised that a majority of Black males see their peers, who deviate from this "cool pose," and attempt to excel in their academics as

"acting white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) or selling out (Noguera, 2003b). Historically, others have viewed it as a manifestation of a history of racism and oppression that has led to the disillusionment of self-worth, self-pride, lack of knowledge about culture, and of themselves (Clark & Clark, 1939; 1947; 1950; Du Bois, 1989; Woodson, 1990). Regardless of how scholars have interpreted the phenomenon, one aspect remains constant: there are myriad perils to which Black male students fall victim in education.

Many scholars also suggest that one of the more obvious solutions, especially considering that many Black male students live without a father (Martin et al., 2012), is increasing the number of Black male educators in the school system. This solution is far from a panacea, however, various studies have shown the positive impact male teachers can have on the achievement of not only Black male students but also other students as well (Bristol, 2014; 2015; Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2014; Lynn, 2002; 2006; Milner, 2005; 2007; 2010; Thomas & Warren, 2017). The argument is that Black male teachers share a kinship with their Black male students and possess distinct skills that may be effective in helping Black male students who are underperforming and labeled as "at risk."

Finally, Black male teachers are a key component in Black male students developing a "scholar identity" (Whiting, 2006; 2009a; 2009b). Development of a scholar identity includes nine characteristics: masculinity, racial identity, academic self-confidence, need for achievement over need for affiliation, self-awareness, internal locus of control, willingness to make sacrifices, future orientation, and self-efficacy (Whiting, 2006). Whiting (2006) expresses the need to develop a scholar identity as early as possible, as well as perpetuating the process indefinitely to foster a lifelong scholarly state of mind. Furthermore, Whiting (2009a) provides a simple syllogism for solving the issues plaguing Black males: "If educators can nurture a scholar

identity with these otherwise capable students, then more Black males will achieve their potential in school and life" (p. 227). According to Whiting (2006) Organizations like fraternities, Boys and Girls Clubs, 100 Black Men, National Urban League, YMCA, and others show that even one person can make an impact on a child's life (Whiting, 2006).

There is a dire need for educators who are able to help Black male students who face academic and social challenges in school. Black male teachers seem to agree with this logic which is evident in their choice of schools. Research shows that demographics are a major contributing factor for minority teachers' choice of the type of schools in which they want to teach: overwhelmingly urban, high minority, and disadvantaged (Ingersoll et al., 2017). However, Black males have the lowest growth rate among an increasing number of minority males in education, and they also left the aforementioned schools at a 50% higher rate than their female counterparts (Ingersoll et al., 2017). The practices of the few Black male teachers in education, who are committed to bettering the lives of not only Black males (Milner, 2006; Whiting, 2009a) but all students (see Dee, 2004), have been explored in numerous studies, but there is a paucity of research conducted on Black male content teachers who left these high-minority, disadvantaged school districts to teach at a more affluent PWSD. For the most part, Black male teachers believe the research that shows that educators must be proactive in developing initiatives that help Black male students develop the attitudes, behaviors, and values that are important in their functioning in school and in society (Lee, 2006); however, the high levels of Black male teacher attrition from schools with the highest concentration of Black students suggests that something is causing these instructors to renege.

Framework and Methodology

Foster (1995) separates studies on Black teachers into three distinct categories: 1. Policy oriented research focusing on attrition of Black teachers; 2. Personal narratives of the lives and experiences of Black teachers; 3. "Anthropological and sociological analyses of the practices and characteristics of culturally relevant Black teachers" (as cited in Lynn, 2006). The purpose of this study is to discover the reason for discover the reason for the attrition of Black male teachers who left predominately Black school districts to teach at a predominantly White school district (PWSD) and explore their experiences in this district. Using principles of Critical Race Theory, along with Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Model of Teacher Retention, these frameworks were combined to help investigate (See appendix B) and became the lens through which the analysis was filtered.

The theoretical framework for this study is Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Model of Teacher Retention. This model was created because of the rampant issue of teacher attrition that is a cause for concern nationally and globally. Studies have focused on attrition for beginning teachers (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017), teachers in rural, low-income areas (Lochmiller, Sugimoto, & Muller, 2016), in English language development classrooms in the southwest (Heineke, 2018), in urban school settings (Dunn & Downey, 2018) and in classrooms all over the world (den Brok, Wubbels, & van Tartwijk, 2017; Kaden, Patterson, Healy, & Patterson, 2016; Mason & Matas, 2015; Wushishi & Baba, 2016). The Four Capital Model of Retention acknowledges the different forms of capital that impact teachers' decisions to leave or stay in the educational field.

However, Mason and Matas' framework was created from a more global standpoint, namely retention issues for language teachers in Australia (2015). Given that Mason and Matas'

context was quite different from the circumstances and context of the participants in this study, I adapted their model using Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT proponents subscribe to the following propositions: first, "racism is ordinary, not aberrational" and endemic to American society, and, second, the system of white supremacy serves "important purposes, both psychic and material" (Delgado and Stefanic, 2001, p. 7). Starting as a legal framework, CRT was soon applied to education where it has been used to explore racial hegemony in the education system in this country. CRT in education focuses on issues of racial inequalities in the school system stemming from the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, highlighting and valuing the often marginalized voices of students of color, and critically examining the curriculum and instruction of school systems around the country (Taylor, 2009). Because of the low retention of Black males in U.S. K-12 classrooms, this framework is an important tool in contextualizing the causes for teachers leaving the classroom. I discuss CRT in education further in chapter three.

Whereas a primary focus of CRT in education is to focus on the experiences of minorities who are often overlooked, Mason and Matas (2015) sought to move away from individual factors that inundate the research and take a big-picture or "holistic" approach. In doing so they were able to formulate four major forms of capital that help determine why teachers choose to stay or leave. These different forms of capital include: human capital or the knowledge that teachers amass through experience and educational programs; social capital or the connections teachers have with other people; structural capital or the educational system including the rules, practices, directives, etc.; and positive psychological capital or the individual personality traits that teachers possess (Mason & Matas, 2015). Likewise, one purpose of Critical Race Theory is to move toward a more equitable educational landscape by examining the racial injustices in the school system (Taylor, 2009). Whereas Mason and Matas provide an apt taxonomy for

organizing experiences and other data, Critical Race Theory provides a filter through which these experiences and data can be analyzed. The participants of my study represent a troubling trend of attrition among Black male teachers and the combination of these frameworks should help specify some of the reasons why they left one type of school district for another.

Furthermore, the methodology used for this study is heuristic inquiry. Heuristic inquiry is a phenomenological approach which situates the researchers and their transformation as a central piece in the research (Hiles, 2001). The aim of phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of individuals' everyday experiences through asking, "what is this or that kind of experience like?" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Heuristic inquiry takes this process one step further by adding the researcher's experience and their transformation throughout the study into the research as well. Hiles (2001) explains, "the heuristic inquiry paradigm is an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the *researcher*, to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research" (p. 19). This provides the reader with a better understanding of not only how the researcher frames the research but also how the research transforms the researcher. The overall aim is to discover why these Black males became teachers, why they remain in the classroom, and why they chose to teach in a majority White county.

Significance of the Study

Several studies have been conducted on Black teachers in various topics: elementary (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Mancus, 1992), secondary including: math (Clark, Frank, & Davis, 2013), social studies (Pang & Gibson, 2001), pre-service programs (Berry & Hirsh, 2005; Guyton, Saxton, & Wesche, 1996), female (Dixson, 2003), male (Brown & Butty, 1999; Bristol, 2014; Bristol, 2015a; Bristol, 2015b; Emdin, 2016; Lynn, 2006a), in urban areas (Haberman,

2000; Esposito, Davis, & Swain, 2012), gay males (Brokenbrough, 2012a), and in affluent districts (Lynn, Johnson, & Hassan, 1999); however, there is a paucity of research done on the experiences of Black male teachers who leave a predominantly Black school district to teach at a PWSD. Because of the increase of minorities into more suburban areas (Stroub & Richards, 2017), it is important that researchers focus on the perception of the experiences of Black male teachers who teach in racially mixed PWSDs. This study is especially pertinent because it focuses on Black male teachers who left predominantly Black, urban, disadvantaged areas to teach at a PWSD. An examination of these individuals' educational experiences and desire to teach may provide insight as to why Black male teachers have the lowest representation in education. Furthermore, many researchers believe that the issues plaguing Black male students in the educational system can be lessened with an increase in Black male role models and teachers (Bristol, 2014; 2015; Easton-Brooks, 2014; Irvine, 1988; 1989; Lynn, 2002; 2006; Milner, 2005; 2007; 2010; Thomas & Warren, 2017). Therefore, also exploring why the individuals in this study became teachers could give insight into how school systems can recruit and retain more Black males in education.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of Black male content teachers in a predominantly White school district?

The sub questions include:

1. Why did they come: What contributed to these Black male content teachers seeking employment in a PWSD?

2. Why do they stay: What motivates these Black male content teachers to remain in the classroom?

3. How do they stay: What challenges do these Black male content teachers face in a PWSD?

This exploration begins with the nature of the experiences that led Black male teachers into the profession. Johnson et. al (2013) posed the question of whether Black teachers in predominantly Black schools, "along with teaching academic lessons, continue to teach hidden lessons and maintain the same kinds of connections with their students as suggested by the descriptions of pre *Brown* Black teachers" (p. 3). Similar studies have looked at the importance of positive psychological capital, in the form of commitment with the students and community as a major factor in Black male teachers choosing predominantly Black school systems and staying there (Ingersoll et al., 2017). The question to answer in this study is why do Black males leave this particular type of school? By using a heuristic methodology to explore this phenomenon, I am able to analyze the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994) and gain a better understanding of their motivation and commitment.

Findings from this research can not only be used to help us better understand some of the reasons that Black men become teachers and stay in the profession but also, why they are leaving predominantly Black areas. Findings may also provide policy makers and pre-service education programs, as well as school districts, tools to hire, retain, train, and mold young Black men into a profession that is both rewarding and impactful. This is especially important in a post *Brown* era considering: the lines of integration are blurred more and more frequently in the advent of economical segregation (Ladson-Billings, 2009); there is a reported growth of a minority population of children in public schools (Musu-Gillete et. al., 2016); the dismal statistics of

Black male prison rate (Harrison & Beck, 2006); the graduation rate and literacy rate of Black

male students (Haddix, 2011); and the number of Black male teachers in the profession

(Ingersoll et al., 2017). These statistics are inexorably linked, as Brown and Butty (1999) states:

> The relationship between African American students and African American male
>
> teachers is a symbiotic one-that is, the number of African American males who go into
>
> teaching is influenced by the number of African American males who attend college,
>
> which is in turn influenced by the number of African American high school graduates and
>
> so on. (p. 282)

If it is possible to analyze the perceptions of the experiences of Black male teachers, what are

some important factors in their lives that lead them into teaching, and what could motivate them

to stay in these disadvantaged, predominantly Black schools, researchers may be able to provide

policymakers and administrators with a better understanding of how to usher more Black men

into schools that arguably need them most and keep them there.

Conclusion

The lack of Black male teachers and the issues affecting Black male students in education

are linked. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to discover the reason why the

participants in this study left predominately Black school districts to teach at a PWSD and

explore their experiences in this new district. Findings from this research could serve as an

examination into the reason for a lack of Black males in education as well as inform policy

toward increasing their numbers, thereby helping to serve the underachieving Black males in

school systems around the country. The focus of the next chapter is the background literature

surrounding the issues in education including the history of the continuous plight of Black male

teachers. In order to better understand the Black male teachers in this study and the atmosphere

of the educational system in which they teach, it is important to explore the past policies and

issues of Black teachers in this country.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The declining number of minority teachers, particularly African American male teachers, is of concern as the nation's public school student population becomes increasingly diverse.

-Joan Wilson Brown

Introduction

Discussing the experiences of Black male teachers first begins with the history of Black males in this country; thus, an examination of Black male teachers must first begin with their history upon first arriving in this country. Researchers have examined the issues Black people have faced in education, in this country from as early as slavery (Gundaker, 2007), to beyond reconstruction and the Great Depression (Taylor, 2005; West, 1979), into Brown vs. Board (Ladson-Billings, 2004), into present day. The current crisis plaguing Black males includes: high failure and dropout rates (Noguera, 2003a; 2003b), frequent special education labeling (Kunjufu, 2005; Allen & White-Smith, 2014), discriminatory disciplinary action (Tajalli & Garba, 2014) and the way these forces feed into the school to prison pipeline. These issues are not only rampant in urban and low-income areas, but Black males are struggling with the same issues in middle class, suburban, and/or predominantly White districts (Akom, 2008; Ascher & Branch-Smith, 2005; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Sohn, 2011). Because of this, it is believed that income and environment alone cannot be the sole reason for Black male underperformance (Noguera, 2003). One solution researchers have explored is having more Black male educators present to serve as role models (Brokenbrough, 2012, 2015; Lynn, 2002; Milner, 2007; 2016), which arguably could benefit all students (Dee, 2004). Brown (2012) notes, "The call for more Black male teachers is

often part of policy discussions addressing the academic underachievement of black male students" (p. 297). Some areas in the United States have put an emphasis on hiring minorities in education because of the influx of minority students, high number of retirees, gender inequality, and low teacher retention (Brown & Butty, 1999). With the increase of minorities in most areas in the U.S. and an increase of Black students into suburban and predominantly White areas (Stroub & Richards, 2017), the need for Black male teachers throughout education is pertinent now more than ever. However, large numbers of Black males are leaving these critical areas (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Again, the purpose of this study is to discover the reason why the participants in this study left predominately Black school districts to teach at a PWSD, and explore their experiences in this new district.

The goal of this chapter is to review literature that focuses on Black male teachers, from the earliest examples in the era of slavery, to present day observations. This literature review begins with the history of Black people in this country as early as slavery; second, the history of subjugation of Black people from slavery, through the reconstruction era, into the pre Brown v. Board era; and next, the historical educational climate of Black teachers will be explored after Brown v. Board. The focus then shifts to Black male teachers today including: characteristics, positive attributes, and an examination of their struggles in education. Finally, the research on the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers will be explored. Ultimately, the goal of this literature review is to discuss the characteristics of Black male teachers including their history, their motivation to teach, where they choose to teach, and their motivation to stay in education.

History of Black Males in Education

The assumption is that to understand current behaviors, one need only understand the history of racism and to be conscious of contemporary expressions of oppression (Akbar, 1991, p. 110)

Historically, Black teachers have had a tumultuous experience in the education system. Much of this history focuses on research on the south because of slavery, the south's reaction to the Civil War, and the Reconstruction era that followed, as well as salient issues of racism throughout the Jim Crow Era. Researchers such as Anderson (1988) examined the history of education in the south after the emancipation of slavery. Butchart (2010) focused on the ideology of Black education during this time and Gundaker's (2007) research focused on the earliest accounts of teaching in learning during the time of slavery and beyond. The mission was teaching not only how the world was but also how it could or should be: "The world that outsiders control and the one that insiders are continually educating each other to make" (Gundaker, 2007, p. 1591). This makes sense since, as Louis Gates (1987) argues, for slaves there was an undeniable link between education and freedom. In fact, ex-slaves were the first native southerners to advocate for state funded public education for their children as opposed to the agrarian model of education delegated to the southern famers of the time (Anderson, 1988). Anderson highlights one of the main injustices ex-slaves reported was the denial of an education, specifically how to read and right: a skill which they held in high esteem. We see this in many of the more famous narratives during slavery, such as: Frederick Douglass' learning to read and write from his master's wife and even tricking young white boys to help further his education, and using it as a tool to help liberate others; Nat Turner's learning to read and write from informal parochial teaching, like Douglass from the wife of his owner; and Booker T. Washington's story of rising "Up From Slavery" where he used education as a platform to help other Black men find their independence by not being so dependent on others to take care of themselves. Gundaker (2007) discovered three types of overlapping activities during the slavery

era including: hidden and seemingly extraneous forms of education mimicking school-like practices, covert literacy learning, and educational practices that were unknown and unseen by Whites. In fact, Anderson's (1988) research of the sheer number of ex-slave led schools, post emancipation, suggests that many of these schools were founded during slavery times. This would remain the primary way Black people would teach and learn until later in the Reconstruction era during which the earliest funded, Black public schools and school teachers would emerge until they were subsumed by the Whites (Anderson, 1988). Gundaker (2007) expresses the importance of their contribution before this transformation noting, "It seems the enslaved have contributed a more complex theory of education than that which informs much of today's schooling...and have left a legacy of valuable educative skills that schools today often undervalue" (p. 1591). As early as their arrival to this country, Black people saw education as a crucial practice of empowerment and liberation that needed to be passed on through teaching the young.

The Reconstruction era continues a tumultuous atmosphere of racism and dehumanization of Black people even after they are emancipated. Many newly freed Black people longed for education not only for ideal purposes of educational attainment for them and their children but also for more present and pragmatic purposes such as the protection from the unfair clauses many planters put in their contracts (Anderson, 1988). Anderson's study of the educational system in the south after slavery explored the development of an education by former slaves aimed at "restructuring and controlling their lives" (p.3). However, their attempt to educate Black children was met with continuous reprisals by those in power and Black people ultimately lost their ability to control education as their political and economic power dwindled as well (Anderson, 1988). West's (1979) study of Black missionary teachers who went to the

south, found that they differed from their White counterparts in numerous ways. This included

being more entwined and deeper involved in the Black community, and having the ability to

push more liberal political views outside of the school where White northern teachers could not

(West, 1979). Dubois marks the timeline of education after the war:

> In rough approximation we may point out four varying decades of work in southern
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> education since the Civil War. From the close of the war until 1876, was the period of
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> uncertain groping and temporary relief. There were army schools, mission schools, and
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> schools of the Freedman's Bureau in chaotic disarrangement seeking system and
>
> cooperation. (Dubois, 1989, p. 57)

Dubois (1989) further notes the context of the time where people "underestimated the prejudices

of the master and the ignorance of the slave" (p. 57), even from northern Whites who seemed

determined to help. Before the intrusion of White northerners and institutions like the

Freedman's Bureau, which was created in order to help Black people post-slavery, Black people

maintained control of education of their young people and instilled a philosophy that matched

their communal values. Afterward, the schools were subsumed by the Board of Education and

the Freedman's bureau who then initiated curriculum edits, changes for funding purposes such as

using property taxes, and even closing down hundreds of schools (Anderson, 1988). In fact,

Anderson's (1988) research shows that White northerners were taken aback at the continuous

rejection of their services and were surprised that Black people preferred to teach in and operate

their own schools. They also reportedly complained of the lack of appreciation by Black people

of their educational efforts (Anderson, 1988). Butchart's (1975) research furthers this sentiment

where he found that Blacks openly resisted outside control of their schools. Though Blacks were

emancipated and therefore would have no more unlawful ramifications for teaching and learning,

the supposed help from northern White sympathizers led to other issues with which to contend. This trend of Black teachers fighting to regain agency and control over the policies and procedures of the schools where Black students attend is arguably still an issue today.

Though northern supporters aimed to help schools this only led to unintended consequences of the already established school system created by former slaves. Dubois (1989) wrote of the permeation of bigotry and racial prejudice in the south, still manifested in the schools created chartered by White northerners which he contends were "hurriedly founded," poorly equipped, doing little more than "common-school work," suffered from low student enrollment and turnout, and poor education for those who did show up. Anderson (1988) also details the systematic way that education was used to further subjugate Black people. Black teachers would ultimately suffer from the long-term effects of racial dehumanization and lack of self-worth perpetuating this sentiment in their teaching practices; a process Woodson (1990) would later coin as "miseducating" the Negro. He also argued that this pattern of miseducating Black children by Black teachers would perpetuate for generations. Coupled with the unintended consequences of Northern White supporters, one could argue that the education system in the south is still suffering from these issues.

In the early 20th century Black people began to spread from southern cities in a movement known as the Great Migration. Black teachers were more likely to be employed in states where there were larger numbers of Black pupils and where schools were segregated (Foster, 1997). "Before the Civil Rights movement, in the south Black teachers could only teach Black students and of the 63,697 Black teachers in the United States 46,381 were employed in the south" (Foster, 1997, p. xxv). The impact these teachers had on the students was far more important than the numbers. Prior to Brown v. Board, because of the shared living conditions,

these Black teachers formed strong connections with their Black students teaching them not only content from the curriculum but life lessons about being Black in the United States during these dangerous times (Milner & Howard, 2004). This philosophy would carry on with Black teachers today. With regards to race, many Black educators came to a consensus about education and saw their work as an important part of "racial uplift" (Burkholder, 2012). Burkholder's (2012) study of Black teaching journals between 1929 and 1954 shows that teachers focused on an eclectic array of teaching philosophies including spiritual education, virtues like hygiene, morality and punctuality, and racial pride. Teachers and educational scholars during this time also seldom challenged White supremacy openly and instead critiqued racial egalitarianism in more minute ways because of their vulnerability in the Jim Crow South (Burkholder, 2012). Furthermore, in the 1940s, while some White teachers began attempting to alter the way they taught by addressing "racial diversity" and "cultural relativism," Black teachers continued to defy the racial split, challenging the notion of white superiority and promoting black pride and self-worth (Gundaker, 2007). During World War II, Black educators continued their enlightenment crusade. The start of the war gave Black teachers a platform to challenge racial discrimination more by arguing that it threatened American democracy, unity across the country, and social stability (Burkholder, 2012). This period, shortly after slavery and the reconstruction era, continued a legacy of discrimination and inequitable educational attainment, and Black teachers fought for equality for themselves and their students. Black teachers exhibited a strong philosophy of cultivating racial pride in their students while challenging the issues of discrimination and racism. Though the times have changed, participants in this study possessed similar vestiges of cultivating racial uplift in their students.

In the mid-20th century, the Supreme Court ruling in the precedent case, Brown vs. the Board of Education, changed the dynamic of not only Black and White students but teachers as well. Researchers talk about the unintended costs that often came with the passing of Brown v. Board (Lyons & Chesley, 2004), and though it was created from good intentions, the historical and political context from which it was actually born were for reasons other than Civil Rights legislation and helping Black people (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Other issues included problems with desegregation and other harrowing situations for Black teachers continued as well. This legislation had a huge effect on Black teachers and their integration process (Bonds, Hinton, & Epps, 2009). In the Milwaukee Public School system, Black teachers were replaced with White teachers in order to provide quality education for all students (Bonds et al., 2009). Between 1954 and 1965, roughly 38,000 Black teachers were removed from teaching in seventeen states around the country (Milner & Howard, 2004). Through all this turmoil and distress, Black teachers persevered. Even Black teachers in higher education who lived through Jim Crow, the Great Depression, and struggles pre-dating the civil rights era ended up healthy for the most part, after the ordeal (Harel, McKinney, & Williams, 1990). This history shows the underlying issues Black teachers have faced in the educational system in the United States. It is important to note the patterns of inequality in the timeline of Black education as well as the intrusion of Whites: both the hegemonic practices many of those in power purported and the unintended costs brought on by the actions of White sympathizers. This pattern becomes an important context which to compare the situation brought forth in this current study, where much of the surrounding district and those who control it are White, and those in the schools which many of the participants teach are Black. The next section focuses on the characteristics of Black male teachers.

Black Male Teachers

Statistically White women still make-up the majority of elementary, middle, and high school teachers in the United States (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2018). On the opposite end of the spectrum, some estimates show Black males comprise 2% of the total teachers in the United States (Bristol, 2015; Duncan, 2011); while earlier estimates put Black male teachers as low as 1% of the nation's teachers (National Education Association, 2001). There are numerous studies on Black male teachers including their pedagogy (Milner, 2005; Milner, 2016), their resilience (Bristol, 2012; Brown, 2009; Milner, 2007), and their motivation (Lynn, 2002, 2006) however few studies look at the experiences of Black male teachers in predominantly white school districts (PWSD) and why they leave disadvantaged districts. This lack of scholarship may be a result of the lack of Black male teachers in public education on all levels of study especially in PWSDs. In fact, the demographics of the majority of the teaching force, along with the underperformance of minority students, and the rapidly changing demographic of the students in schools across the nations, has led many to believe that this country is facing an educational crisis and that Black male teachers may be a possible solution. "The declining number of minority teachers, particularly African American male teachers, is of concern as the nation's public school student population becomes increasingly diverse" (Brown, 2012, p. 280). Arne Duncan, former secretary of education, began a narrative about a simple and logical solution to the issue of failure among Black boys in school, hire more Black male teachers. John King, his successor, carried this message on in his tenure citing the daunting statistic that only two percent of the nation's teachers are Black men (Emdin, 2016). This problem is compounded when considering some of the racially motivated issues Black students face in schools. Many believe that increasing Black male presence in schools may have a

positive effect on Black male student achievement and behavior (Brown, Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2016). Milner (2016) breaks the study of Black male teachers into four aspects:

- racial and cultural congruence between Black male teachers and Black male students

- particular effective disciplinary approaches to their work

- assets Black male teachers bring into the classroom such as role modeling for Black and other students

- culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical moves of these teachers.

Each aspect focuses on a dimension Black male teachers bring to education and why these characteristics are beneficial to students. With the exception of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, each of these aspects manifest in the responses of the participants in this study; therefore, each will be discussed except for the culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical moves since this factor was not evident in the data.

Cultural Congruence.

Racial congruence or cultural congruence suggests that Black male teachers have a kinship with Black male students in particular because of their race and culture. Milner's (2016) use of culture suggests that there is a kinship between teachers and students who share the same "culture." In his research he focused on race: specifically, Black male teachers and their Black male students. Irvine (1988) called it "cultural synchronicity" and said it stemmed from Black teachers having "insider knowledge" of their Black male students. Easton-Brooks (2014) calls it ethnic matching or the extent to which the ethnic matching of teacher and students leads to the

latter's success in school. However, the benefit of Black male teachers is not restricted to Black students exclusively or Black students for that matter. Black male teachers are beneficial to all students (Bryan & Ford 2014; Goings, 2015). Dee's (2004) study of "own-race teacher" found that both Black as well White students benefited from having teachers of their own race. This would suggest that the mere presence of Black teachers, helps not only Black students but students of other races and ethnicities as well. Nevertheless, the literature does suggest two theories on why racially pairing teachers and students is effective: one theory is the *passive* teacher effect which includes role modeling and *stereotype threat;* the other is *active* teacher effects or "race-specific patterns of behavior among teachers" (Dee, 2004, p. 197). In both instances, Black teachers use their race to actively reshape the perception of Black people which becomes an important component in the teaching of Black students. For the sake of consistency in this paper, the term ethnic/racial congruence will be used to specify this phenomenon.

Also, studies have shown that Black students, especially Black males, have difficulties with teachers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds (Easton-Brooks, 2014) which has a serious impact on their education in the long run. These impacts include issues of self-worth and self-esteem (Graham & Erwin, 2011), motivation (Byrd & Chavous, 2011), and future goals and plans (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Milner (2007) notes:

> Entrenched in some teachers' thinking (often subconsciously) are stereotypes and misconceptions about Black males that prevent teachers from providing the best learning opportunities for students. In short, if teachers believe Black males are destined for failure and apathy, their pedagogies will be saturated with low expectations; teachers will be unwilling to prepare for their courses and unwilling to provide Black male students in

urban schools with the best. In essence, teachers often think about Black male students

through deficit lenses. (p. 243)

This would suggest that a racial/ethnic congruence between teacher and student could alleviate

this deficit lens perception to help students better succeed. In other words, teachers better

understand themselves in relation to others, as they are evolving and transforming with their

Black male students (Milner, 2007). "Thinking about the self in relation to others means that

teachers think deeply about their own perspectives, privileges, beliefs, and life worlds in

conjunction, comparison, and contrast to their students' and their students' communities"

(Milner, 2007, p. 242). Research has shown that such "congruence" or "matching" has had some

success in academic achievement (Easton-Brooks, 2014). Therefore, students would benefit

from, not only teachers of the same racial/ethnic background but also those teachers with a

commitment to better understand their students and themselves.

Furthermore, several studies have shown the power of the school climate and the

teacher's ability to affect change in students despite family involvement, socio-economic status,

and other factors. This is especially important in a climate where arguably Black male students'

trepidation of succeeding academically stems from a negative perception of "acting white" or

"selling out" (Collins-Eaglin & Karabenick, 1993; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). In fact, it is important

that educators not rely on external factors such as parental involvement, educational level or peer

influence, but focus on their own attitudes, beliefs, and strategies (Milner, 2007). This means that

teachers, just by being sensitive to the failure students experience constantly (Graham 1994),

which research shows is detrimental to the self-efficacy of children in general (Bandura 1986),

can have positive effects on student motivation and achievement (Marchant, Paulson, &

Rothlisberg 2001; Byrd & Chavous 2011). Marchant, Paulson, and Rothlisberg's (2001) study

of middle school students found that although parental factors, as well as other factors, can negatively affect student motivation and achievement, students' perceptions of their motivation and self-efficacy were better predictors of success than any other external factors. In fact, "when the students' self-characteristics were controlled, the influence of the family and school contexts on achievement disappeared" (p. 515). Teachers, therefore, are a huge factor in student motivation and achievement.

Teachers who share the similarities with their students may be able to fill voids where parents are unable or unwilling to do so. In fact, Gutman and Lloyd's (2000) study of low achieving students found that parents expected teachers to be the party to reach out to them if students were doing poorly in school. The study also revealed that even when their parents were involved, the lack of structure and strategy led to little or no change in their performance at school (Gutman & Lloyd, 2000). Regarding a Black male teacher, "Rather than blame Black families for their failure to provide the necessary support for success, he chooses instead to fill a significant and crucial role in the lives of his Black male students" (Lynn, 2002, p.126). Similar studies show how Black males fulfill these voids as mentors, coaches, and even surrogate fathers (Brokenbrough, 2012; Johnson et al., 2013; Milner, 2007). It makes no sense for teachers to sulk over factors they cannot control; they would benefit more from putting that energy into things they can (Milner, 2007). It is no longer viable to link factors like low socioeconomic status and poor parental education, with a student's aspirations, motivations, and personal expectations towards success (Cooper & Davis, 2015). Byrd and Chavous' (2011) study of Black high school students found that one of the bigger issues is the huge variation of their beliefs about race. They conclude that increasing their motivation may be less about altering identity beliefs and more about ameliorating an environment that is in-line with their positive group beliefs. This suggests

the importance of the teacher's role in fostering a positive environment that promotes students' social awareness. They note, "A more positive school climate may be especially beneficial for youth who perceive racial stigma at the societal level, because the school may function as an oasis of positive support in an unsupportive society" (Byrd & Chavous, 2011, p.857). Teachers who can foster this positive self-image in Black students, through reinforcement of cultural identity, despite challenges other teachers tend to use as the basis for negative perceptions, can succeed in better serving Black students. Pringle et al. (2010) in their study found three aspects relating to the importance of racial identity:

> First, the majority of the 48 students in this study believed that race or ethnicity was a factor in the way that teachers treated them. Second, many of the respondents indicated they perceived that some of their teachers have lower expectations for African American students. In particular, many students reported that they were either not encouraged or blatantly discouraged from taking advanced or honors classes. Also, they reported that some teachers had demonstrated, by word or deed, not expecting as much in terms of high quality work from African American students in comparison to what they expected from White students. Third, many of the students indicated that the most challenging and fair teachers tended to be in the disciplines of the languages and mathematics. (p.38)

This perception from students on the salience of their race and how it affected their experience in school would suggest that racial congruence is crucial to Black students' success.

The literature seems to suggest that it is not just the pairing of Black male teachers with their Black male student counterparts that leads to more success of Black students but the using of their race or blackness to do so. Black male teachers using their background and experiences

to foster an interaction with students who share not only the same skin color, but possibly other similar characteristics, qualities, and experiences as well, presents a dilemma. However, it is important to examine the dynamic of using Black male teachers as models without ensuring that these teachers are committed to the right kind of educational fostering.

Furthermore, as these teachers become managing agents of the oppressed (i.e. wayward Black students), instead of liberating these students they may be simply reinforcing the ideology of those who hired them. The Black teacher teaching the Black student therefore becomes a convenience of those who see Black male students as a problem and those who see Black male teachers as the solution. This is especially relevant when examining one of the main reasons Black males are hired in urban school districts which is to be disciplinarians (Brokenbrough, 2015; Bristol, 2014). The current study provides a different context of this issue considering that these are Black males teaching primarily Black males in a predominantly White school district. Their experiences as disciplinarians in this space as opposed to the predominantly Black and urban districts that most Black male teachers are in, becomes an important focus of this study.

Disciplinarian Approaches.

The school to prison pipeline, higher rates of Black males being labeled under special education, lower rates of Black students in gifted programs, higher suspension rates for Black males, lower reading comprehension in early years, lower test scores, etc… are all dire issues in the current educational landscape (Kunjufu, 2005; Noguera, 2003; Allen & White-Smith, 2014; and Tajalli & Garba, 2014). Some administrators and other teachers believe the obvious solution to "unruly" Black boys is a firm disciplinarian who is imposing, strict, and no-nonsense. The Black male body is already perceived as more violent, more aggressive, and more dangerous,

than their White counterparts (Washington, 1996), it logically follows that these individuals would make the best agents to police allegedly "unruly" Black male students. Unfortunately, many schools use Black males as a tool to control Black male students, sacrificing their humanity for control. Bristol's focus group on Black male teachers admitted that colleagues often asked them to "redress the challenges presented by boys of color" (Bristol, 2015b, p. 39). The answer to both the drought of teachers and the stigma of the "unruly" label of Black male students seems to be the hiring of more Black male teachers. This, of course, is done without a deeper understanding of the systemic inequities that led to this negative perception of Black male students and an attempt to correct the root cause instead of simply trying to solve a condition of it.

Though the solution of including more Black males into schools seems viable, research has shown that the trend to hire Black males can be an asset so long as they are used in a capacity that is not hinged on being the aggressive disciplinarian (Bristol, 2014; Bristol, 2015a; Brokenbrough, 2015; Emdin, 2016). Bristol (2014) found that some of the participants in his study were assigned to administrative duties involving monitoring or "policing" the school door at the end of the day. Bristol (2015) further attests these individuals believed that "administrators and colleagues saw [them] as behavior managers first and teachers second (p. 37). Emdin (2016) cautions policymakers and stakeholders against rushing to fill schools with Black male educators to deal with "troubled" Black boys. He also stresses the danger of the added burden of extra disciplinary and relationship-building work that Black teachers do on top of their teaching duties (Emdin, 2016). Some teachers even developed their own philosophy centering around disciplining, though it would come with setbacks. Brown (2009) found that some teachers in dealing with Black male students developed an "enforcer style" of performance where there was

a strict adherence to the standards and behaviors expected in class; however, this was one of several performance styles and none proved to be more or less effective than the others. Some teachers attempted to be soft disciplinarians. Bryan and Williams (2017) found that Black male teachers use alternative structures other than typical punitive actions like office referrals or putting children out of the room. Others, however, found themselves in situations that made this method difficult. Hornstra et al. found an unfortunate pattern of teachers instructing at risk students (unmotivated, low ability, from disadvantaged backgrounds etc…) relying on more controlling strategies rather than the more beneficial autonomy supportive strategies even though they knew the latter was more effective (Hornstra, Mansfield, van der Veen, Peetsma, & Volman, 2015). This monolithic perception becomes a problem as Emdin (2016) states:

> Black male teachers are not just expected to teach and be role models; they are also tasked with the work of disciplinarians. The stereotype is that they are best at dispensing "tough love" to difficult students. Black male educators I work with have described their primary job as keeping black students passive and quiet, and suspending them when they commit infractions. In this model, they are robbed of the opportunity to teach, while Black male students are robbed of opportunities to learn. (p. 2)

One theme that emerged in Brokenbrough's (2015) study of Black male teachers was their struggles to embody the authoritarian and disciplinarian that was expected of them from colleagues and administrators. Black teachers also expressed the disproportionate assignment of disciplinarian duties (Brokenbrough, 2015). In fact, many Black male teachers admitted that their teacher preparation programs had not prepared them for them for these unique challenges (Bristol, 2015). Placing Black males in roles exclusively as disciplinarians is counter-intuitive

and erroneously assumes that all Black males are strict disciplinarian teachers. Brown (2012) furthers this notion suggesting that administrators tend to think that Black male teachers can easily work with Black male students or that Black male teachers possess this burly and abrasive manliness that equips them with the tools needed to handle "unruly" Black boys. Brokenbrough (2015) highlighted his participants' reluctance to "perform the authoritarian disciplinary personas that were expected of them as African American male teachers in Brewerton schools" (p. 516). Brokenbrough further details the need to study this trend of inserting Black males into urban areas:

> As the desire for more Black male teachers cuts across numerous urban districts where strict disciplinary cultures reign supreme, future research could tap into potentially rich and relatively unexplored terrains by further unpacking the constructions of Black masculinity that inform perceptions of Black male teachers as stern disciplinarians for Black youth. (Brokenbrough, 2015, p. 516)

Also, Bristol (2012) explored Black male teachers at various New York City middle schools and found that male teachers of color were more likely to work in special education classrooms which had a majority of "Black and Brown" males. Bristol (2015b) further notes, "these teachers believed that they were disproportionately saddled with the responsibility of improving the learning outcomes of the school's most challenging population from both academic and behavioral perspectives" (p. 57). This culminates into a melting pot of Black male educators who either are not disciplinarians and are unequipped to handle tough situations, or those who burn out from being used as tools to police "unruly" students and maintain order of Black male students.

This part of the literature study suggests two things: one; the repetition of "unruly" and "troubled" as a label for Black young males in the school systems examined, stresses the importance of the perception of their behavior rather than an objective phenomenon. The need for Black male disciplinarians may come from the perception of young Black males as "unruly" and "troubled" not by their actual actions. Second, this part of the literature review would suggest that the experiences and perceptions of Black male teachers needs to be further explored. Do they agree with these labels and more importantly the policies initiated to handle arguably typical educational problems faced by schools of any demographics? The aim of this current study provides the opportunity to view the perceptions of Black male teachers who teach Black male students and examine their views on the supposed issues of these students and the labels that are attributed to them. Furthermore, Black male teachers being used simply as disciplinarian rods to whip "unruly" students into shape is arguably dehumanizing to both the students and teachers. One aim of this study is also to discover, upon further examination of experiences of the Black male teachers in this study, revelations that could help foster a change in policy and a shift in the way we view Black males: both teachers and students.

Role Modeling.

The troubling statistic cited in chapter one, the dismal statistics of the percentage of Black boys growing up without a father (see Musu-Gillette et al, 2017), suggests that there is a drought of male fathers and therefore a need for more father figures. This simple reasoning, again, highlights issues of perception of the role of a father figure from a more Afro-centered view of a communal rearing to the more Eurocentric view of the father as being "the" best and only model. Like the perception of the "unruly" and "trouble" label of young Black males, the

idea of "fathering" and "role modeling," in the wrong context, leads to possible inaccurately implemented solutions. Nevertheless, I would argue that the demand for Black male role model becomes increasingly important, not because a lack of traditional father figures in the house but an abundance of distorted images of Black males in the media. Oliver (2004) found that negative images of Black people in the media fosters a negative image of their self-image as well as the decision making of employers, teachers, police officers, etc… The promulgation of negative Black male imagery, makes the need for Black male teachers as role models in schools even more important. The scope of this study falls short of examining the effect, if any, that these participants have on Black male students as role models; however, some of the interview questions asked were aimed at uncovering the reason why Black males teach including examining the participants' beliefs and views of role modeling, both in their educational experience as students and as teachers.

Many Black male teachers attribute role models, regardless of their demographic, as reasons for their becoming teachers. Almost a fourth of the participants in Bristol's study (2014) attributed their desire to teach to role models, second only to early teaching experience:

> Not only did teachers in this study talk about the significance of having a male of color as a role model on their decisions to become a teacher, participants also spoke of themselves as a type of their mentor. References to the male role model of color arose mostly when participants described their work and relationships with students. (p.104)

This is central to the proposed study since logically all Black teachers were once students and this interaction may become important when exploring why they became teachers.

Consequently, role modeling can also help change false perceptions of Black males. The lack of engagement between Black students and tangible Black males in the school could lead to misconceptions of Black males that pervade the media. Both Black and White children develop "white bias" by the time they enter kindergarten (Banks, 1995). "These biases and assumptions need to be problematized in order to help students develop more appropriate lenses for thinking about self, others, and society" (Milner, 2005, p. 392). Also, many of these role models are placed not because of the potential for academic success but more out of desire to "prevent crime and/or antisocial behavior" (Sternod, 2011, p. 286). Brown (2012) cautions against the assumption that all Black male teachers can work with all male students, essentially mitigating both to one dimensionality. Brown (2012) further stresses the importance to realize the myriad facets of Black male teachers as well as students including: "knowledge, beliefs and practices" and "particular behavior, habits, and knowledge needed to succeed in school and society" (p. 311), instead of lumping all Black males in one category.

However, in the interplay of role modeling, Black male teachers' cultural identities become more useful tools than dimensions of their character. Agee (2004) explains the Black teacher's ability and desire to construct a unique "teacher identity (p.749) to connect with their students is a highly valued commodity. A majority of the men in one study saw themselves simply as "agents of change, role models, or father figures" (Lynn, 2002, p. 126). In fact, one of the central themes in Lynn's (2002) study of Black male teachers in L.A. centered around role modeling. He notes about several of the participants:

> Their race and gender identities brought on feelings of racial obligation and responsibility
> to the Black community at large. Teaching was, as they saw it, a contribution to the

greater good of the community. For example, these men saw themselves as father figures

with a responsibility to provide leadership in the lives of young Black men. (p. 126)

Lynn's (2002) study puts the Black male teacher's identity front and center as the conduit to

connect and cultivate Black male students, which they see as a responsibility. Other studies

center around this mission rhetoric. The teacher in Milner's (2005) study felt a "professional and

moral obligation" to educate students and prepare them for the diverse society, not being

colorblind or in denial about the differences in society. This is important considering "Black

male children who matriculate through K-12 public schools without engaging with a Black male

teacher means the students are denied perspectives, guidance, and an understanding that may

only come from a Black male teacher" (Scott, 2016, p. 42).

In conclusion, Black male teachers bring a plethora of techniques and benefits to students

in the classroom. Much of the research on Black male teachers focuses on what these men can do

for Black male students. Furthermore, their presence along with their practice may be a step

towards helping not only Black male students but all students to learn to value others. Clearly the

research is suggesting that Black teachers, specifically Black male teachers, may alleviate many

of the issues plaguing Black boys in school systems. Each of these aspects also helps to

underscore a fundamental question this particular study was done to discover: if Black male

teachers choose to teach in predominantly Black school districts at higher rates, have the tools to

help students with a similar culture and similar experiences, and are for the most part successful

in their craft, why are so many leaving these areas that need them most? The last section of this

literature review will therefore focus on the reasons young Black males are choosing not be

teachers, retention and attrition of Black male teachers, and the Four Capital Framework Model

that is used to frame this study.

Retention and Attrition of Black Male Teachers

As cited earlier, there is a substantially low number of Black male teachers. Of the 20 participants of Foster's (2005) study of Black teachers, only five of them were male matching that decade's proportion of Black male teachers numbering 91,026 out of 439,176 Black teachers (or 21 percent) (p. xxiii). This phenomenon of a drought of teachers was not new late in the 20th century. Literature at the time seldom focused on the factors that affect Black male teachers' goal aspirations (Brown & Butty, 1999). Likewise, today there is a paucity of research on Black male teacher attrition rates and the reasons thereof. Even individuals on the path to teaching face obstacles, yet are committed to preserving their cultural identities that many use in their practice (Berry & Hirsh, 2005). Studies show that Black males sometimes lose interest in teaching as early as high school (Bristol, 2014; Goings & Bianco, 2016) and that Black males have one of the highest rates of turnover in the profession (Sealey-Ruiz & Lewis, 2011). Gordon (2002) reported that the Black teacher shortages are prevalent because of economic, education, social, and cultural factors: the economic reasons were low pay, too much education for the return, and a wider range of career choices than what was available for previous generations of Black people. The educational reasons for the shortage were associated with inadequate K–12 schooling, negative experiences in the school setting, and a lack of emotional and intellectual mentoring; the social and cultural reasons were related to experiences of racism and lack of encouragement (Gordon, 2002). Gordon's findings are not unlike other findings of myriad, wide ranging reasons for attrition in the educational field (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2018). This focus of this section is to better explain the framework being used in this study; define attrition and other similar terminology; as well

as give background to the issue of attrition, migration, and retention of experienced Black

teachers especially from disadvantaged areas.

Turned Away in High School.

Research has shown that many Black male students are turned away from becoming

teachers as early as high school. Goings and Bianco's (2016) study of Black male high school

students in a future teacher program found that black males felt: "One recurring theme from the

participants revolved around their belief that their teachers had low expectations for them as

students...and how they were adversely impacted by these low expectations" (p. 634.) More

specifically the young men "did not believe their teachers had their best interests at heart" or had

a "negative racialized encounter with a teacher" (p. 635). This, of course, led to a lessened appeal

toward the teaching profession. As a result, the low expectation set by teachers limited the

appeal for the teaching profession" (p. 635). A few participants remarked:

> Steve explained this impact when asked, "Why do you think students of color don't
>
> consider teaching?" Steve replied, "[Black males] have probably had negative teachers
>
> and then like they probably don't know it but [this] influenced [them] subconsciously not
>
> to become teachers because they never seen teachers like them." Delasean also shared
>
> Steve's belief as he stated, "[Black males] have probably had bad teachers [which]
>
> influenced [them] subconsciously not to become teachers because they've never seen any
>
> male teachers like them." (Goings & Bianco, p. 636)

Furthermore, Goings and Bianco's (2016) study surprisingly found the opposite phenomenon to

be true as well. Black male students from the study did not feel like their Black teachers had a

direct impact on their decision to become a teacher. Goings and Bianco (2016) reported one possible reason provided by some of the participants was that they did not desire to go into the teaching profession because they seldom had access to teachers of color; therefore, these young men had a hard time considering teaching as a viable option because:

> They had limited access to teachers of color to discuss the benefits of teaching, negative schooling experiences (e.g., facing stereotyping, racial micro aggressions, low expectations from teachers, etc.), and poor messaging of those who constitute as a teacher by the media, family, and community. (p. 642)

Graham and Erwin's (2011) study of high achieving Black males in high schools in a large urban school district found that students observed negative perceptions of teachers and the occupation of teaching, which made them feel like schools were oppressive institutions which forced Black men to conform to a certain mold in order to teach. Students in Graham and Erwin's (2011) study also felt that teachers were essentially selling out if they failed to challenge the "egocentrism of oppressive schools" (p.411). This research shows a strong link between negative attitudes about the teaching profession and the lack of Black males choosing teaching as a career.

Turned Away in College.

The pattern of attrition starts with the lack of Black males choosing education in college. Most Black teachers' biggest predictor of career choice is their undergraduate major (Brown & Butty, 1999), it is therefore important that policies be focused on undergraduate recruitment to obtain more Black male teachers. Prospective teachers hold steadfast to cultural and educational beliefs extracted from their personal experiences. These beliefs are often in contradiction with skills and knowledge acquired in pre-service teacher programs (Berry & Hirsch, 2005).

Furthermore, even though the number of bachelor's degrees conferred to Black students increased by 54% (Musu-Gillete et al., 2016), there was a decline in individuals who majored in education. Also, disadvantaged school districts have a difficult time hiring and retaining qualified teachers (Berry & Hirsch, 2005). These factors become extremely important when looking at policies to recruit into teacher education programs and retain more Black male teachers in the profession. Su's (1997) study of teacher candidates found that White and minority potential teachers differed heavily because of the contrast in their background demographics, perspectives of their program, and other prior schooling experiences. This was not the only hindrance; dismal teacher salaries aided in the attrition rate among all teachers including Black teachers (Gordon, 2002). In fact, "minority students are more affected than their White counterparts by the low status and poor compensations of the profession, both in making their decisions to enter teaching and in developing their plans as career teachers" (Su, 1997, 337). A case study conducted by Ndemanu (2014) showed a Black male elementary education student's apathetic attitude towards a multicultural course because it had a white-centered curriculum, inaccurate definition of Black culture, minority status and silence, and absence of praxis. Even when college professors attempted to diversify the curriculum in teacher education programs to prepare students for diverse populations, the effort was less than successful. Agee (2004) explained that educational texts assigned in the class had suggestions for using diverse texts and teaching diverse students, however these were based on the assumption that the education students are white. However, there are some programs that have been established in order to recruit more Black male teachers including numerous state and national programs that focused on combating low numbers of Black males in education (see Bristol, 2015a and Boswell, 2010); however, many of the participants in the current study became teachers largely based on their

experiences, both inside and outside the educational system. Focusing on these individuals shifts the focus from the deficit of Black male teachers and the proposed causes, to the focus on these individuals becoming teachers and the motivation behind their choice.

Attrition and Retention.

The only way to combat Black male teacher attrition is to obviously increase retention. Even though teachers of color are being hired at a higher rate in proportion to their White counterparts, they are also leaving the profession at a higher rate and usually they leave out of frustration (Mitchell, 2016). One of the number one predictors of Black males desiring to remain in education, pursuing a graduate degree in education was the motivation to teach or "desire to impart knowledge" (Brown & Butty, 1999, p. 289). Could this suggest that not being able to impart knowledge to their students led to their departure? Lewis' (2006) study found that the most important recruitment mechanism offered by their school system was "helping young people succeed" (p. 238). This suggests that Black males have a strong desire to help young people succeed and being able to do so may aid in their retention. The participants in this current study, though at the time of this study taught in a predominantly White school district, had a strong desire to impart their content knowledge and expressed frustrations in the districts where it was difficult to do so. Imparting knowledge therefore becomes a major determining factor in the retention of Black male teachers.

Furthermore, Bristol's (2014) study of Black male teachers found that "groupers" or those who belonged to a group of teachers of similar characteristics remained longer than "loners" who were often the sole Black teacher in a school. Bristol (2014) also found that

these "groupers" tended to stay longer because of the sense of camaraderie and connection they had to their colleagues. Lewis' (2006) study of Black males found that 60% of them stated that a family member was the most influential in their decision to become a teacher. Black males become teachers for different reasons including a desire to help their community and influence from others but why are so many leaving the profession, especially from urban school settings like the ones the participants in this study left?

As Black males are being recruited with hopes of giving back to their community and helping to mentor young males, the situation is often romanticized. Emdin (2016) notes:

> The new crop of Black male teachers being herded into schools this fall as saviors of the same Black children that schools have failed need to be told that teachers are not heroes; they do not need to save children, they just need to educate them. (p. 4)

Some of the expectations from this romanticized view of Black male teachers may lead to unintended consequences. Bristol (2014) also found that Black male teachers had a sense of "heightened social distance" due to the lack of acknowledgment by their colleagues which led them to not participate or withdraw from the school altogether. Furthermore, teachers of color reported leaving for reasons including dissatisfaction with administrators, issues with accountability and testing, and student discipline issues (Ingersoll et al., 2017). So though minority teachers are being hired at a higher rate, Black males in particular are leaving the profession at higher rate than ever before as well (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Mitchell, 2016). These factors culminate into the argument that Black males become teachers for numerous reasons and are motivated by a variety of aspects yet are leaving for different reasons as well. Still,

Lewis (2006) recommends the following strategies to increase the Black male teacher representation in schools:

> • Recruit teachers from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
>
> • Provide better benefits, higher salaries, and better working conditions.
>
> • Allow African American male teachers [who] are currently employed by school districts to be recruiters at job fairs.
>
> • Use the media (i.e., television, radio, and Internet) to better recruit African American males.
>
> • Provide equal opportunity based on true qualifications and not 'who you know.' (p. 237)

When considering the issues of Black males in schools and the attrition rates of Black male teachers, it is important to discover the reasons why they leave. This section of the literature reviewed the different circumstances that lead to Black male teachers leaving and staying. In the case of this study, the reason Black male teachers left their previous assignment and why they stay in their current one, could give insight into the attrition rates of Black males who are largely employed in predominantly Black, urban school districts. The next section details two frameworks that help to better contextualize the conditions under which these teachers leave or stay.

Finding a Theoretical Framework

Creating the 4-Capital Theoretical Model for Teacher Retention.

In order to better organize the reasons why the teachers in their study chose to leave their former school, Mason and Matas (2015) created the Four-Capital Theoretical model while trying to better understand the wider implications as to why teachers leave their career. This model takes a step back from the individual factors teachers report as the reason for their leaving education by combining and analyzing myriad responses and their correlating studies, categorizing them into four main forms of non-economic capital. Non-economical capital is salient primarily because there are numerous studies that acknowledge that money is a main source of contention among teachers in general but does not play a significant role in teacher attrition (Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2017); however, few studies have focused on non-monetary reasons for Black teachers to migrate from disadvantaged areas, which most prefer, to teach in PWSDs. Considering that larger urban districts in mostly disadvantaged areas, like the ones these participants left, fill many positions with uncertified and underqualified teachers (Ng, 2003), the higher rate of attrition of minority teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017), and the idea of cultural synchronicity or the benefit minority students gain from the "insider knowledge" of the minority teacher (Irvine, 1988 & 1989), are all part of the underlying issue of this study. Even though Mason and Matas (2015) have come up with a systematic model for categorizing potential reasons for why teachers leave the profession, there are some limitations to their framework when applying it to study.

First, the terms attrition, retention, and migration need to be defined because of how they will be used in the rest of this paper. Subtle inconsistencies in the way terms like attrition

are defined can have substantial impacts on conclusions found in research (Billingsley, 2004).

Kelchterman (2017) defines attrition as referring to "qualified teachers, leaving the profession,

for reasons other than having reached the age of retirement" and retention as "keeping teachers

in teaching" (p. 962). She contends however that attrition and retention both have inherent

issues of definition because of the myriad reasons teachers leave the profession, including

their being potentially poor teachers; in this case, attrition may potentially be beneficial

(Kelchterman, 2017). Attrition and retention are arguably two sides of the same phenomenon

which dominate the literature focusing on the statistics of teachers. The focus of this study is

more closely tied teachers leaving or migrating from one type of county to another,

Migration is difficult to define as well. Hahs-Vaughn and Scherff (2008) define

mobility or migration as "teachers changing schools" also calling them movers (p. 23).

Though it would seem that a more complete definition is the lateral movement of a teacher

from one school or district to another; however, like attrition and retention, there are many

subtleties in the definition. Teachers migrate to different districts for several reasons including

involuntary moves from the elimination of positions, enrollment decreases, budgetary

constraints, etc… and voluntary moves for higher salaries, better working conditions, location,

or better opportunities for professional development and advancement (Beaudin, 1998).

Beaudin's (1998) study found that eight out of ten "migrants" who left disadvantaged districts

went to an "advantaged district" and this trend increased over the five years this study was

conducted, though most of the migrant groups were composed of younger, less experienced,

White females (p.15-16). However, few studies cover the topic of migration of Black teachers

from disadvantaged areas to more affluent suburban areas as this study does. Also, one study

of teacher migration, aimed to address the question "Will students in disadvantaged districts

have the same access as students in schools in other districts to the well-qualified, experienced teachers who are essential to achieving improvements in public school education" (Beaudin, 1998, p. 4). This is also why one of the criteria for the participants in the current study included being a content teacher because of academic subjects being tied to school and student success. Both issues, the demographics of teachers and what they teach, become the primary focus of this study to add to the canon of literature addressing teachers who migrate from predominantly Black, urban districts.

Moreover, a more recent study of new English teachers migrating found that salary had more of an impact on teacher mobility than other non-capital factors like teacher demographic, school characteristics, and school activities in which teachers are engaged, though salary was not a factor for teachers from all content areas (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). Other studies have found that greater participation in the number of activities and the inclusion of mentoring programs were directly related to increase in teacher retention (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) found similar results of induction ceremonies reducing attrition and migration of first year teachers. Ryan et. al (2017) found that greater teacher experience was directly related to a decrease in teacher mobility. In a literature review of 40 studies that focused on teacher migration, none of them could adequately account for the myriad reasons and factors for teachers' choices to change schools (Vagi & Pivovarova, 2017). These all become important references considering that the participants for this study left one type of school district for another, supposedly for some of the same reasons.

The first step in addressing the issues with Mason and Matas' Four Capital Framework of Teacher Attrition and Retention was the verbiage: i.e. attrition and retention in the context

of this study. Next, to understand Mason and Matas (2015) Four Capital Framework, the four

different forms of capitals they use must first be defined. Each of the different forms of capital

in the framework (human, social, structural, and positive psychological) represent a sum of

reasons teachers admitted to leaving from an amalgamation of different studies (Mason &

Matas, 2015). Human capital is the sum of a person's accumulated experiences (both formal

and informal) in the form of abilities, skills, and professional knowledge (Pil & Leana, 2009).

More specifically in education, Matas and Mason (2015) focus on three particular themes

related to human capital including: quality of pre-service education; professional knowledge

and skills, including pedagogical knowledge and classroom management; and continued

professional development. Second, social capital which is the quality of relationships with

students, other teachers, and members of the community, as well as the nature of the school

culture and climate, the quality of the leadership, and how the teachers are valued (Mason &

Matas, 2015). Third is structural capital which Mason and Matas (2015) define as the physical

infrastructure, including buildings as well as the physical teaching resources and technological

equipment. Structural capital is not limited to just the building and its components:

> It would incorporate the school-based procedures, processes and policies put in place to
>
> manage teachers' schedules, subject appointments, and to manage classroom routines and
>
> student behavior. It also includes the procedures and processes for the appointment,
>
> movement, compensation and promotion of teachers, as well as curriculum frameworks
>
> and administrative procedures which in some cases may be implemented at a school level
>
> and others at a departmental or organization level. (Mason & Matas, 2015, p.57)

This seems like one of the more controversial capitals considering that numerous studies seem to cite structural capital as the reason for teacher attrition and migration (See Ingersoll, et al., 2017). Also, Ryan et al (2017) found that test based accountability led to increase in teacher stress, teacher burn-out, and ultimately teacher turnover. Lastly, positive psychological capital which pertains to the personality of the teacher. Mason and Matas (2015) focus on three major factors when studying positive psychological capital: grit, commitment and resilience. Simply stated, positive psychological capital is the personality and psychological factors of the teacher (Mason & Matas, 2015).

Adding a Critical Lens.

Exploring the life experiences of Black male teachers in PWSDs is only half of the equation, we must first explore the context these teachers are in and the lens being used to explore these phenomena. Much of the research on race and education comes after Brown v. Board of Education. Though at the time, activists viewed the decision as a success, years later researchers would find that Brown came with a cost. As Taylor (2009) notes:

> Following the remarkable advances of the 1950s and 1960s dismantling discrimination in schooling, hiring, and housing, there arose a backlash against progressive racial reforms. From the Supreme Court to the lower courts unfolded a general hostility towards policies (such as affirmative action) that took race into account in redressing historic and contemporary racial discrimination. The legal requirement to prove illicit to reverse. The firing of faculty of color at leading educational institutions stalled. School integration, a promised by *Brown v. Board of Education*, did not materialize. White flight from newly integrated neighborhoods re-established familiar social and racial separations. Entrenched

hiring and lending practices further cemented underclass status from many families of

color. (p. 2)

In response to these issues, legal scholars including Derrick Bell, Charles Lawrence, Richard

Delgado, Lani Guinier, and Kimberle Crenshaw, began to "openly criticize the role of law in the

construction and maintenance of racially based social and economic oppression" (Taylor, 2009,

p. 2). Critical Race Theory emerged from this bold renunciation of injustice in the law. Critical

Race Theory (CRT) is a movement spurned by a collection of activist and scholars who focused

on researching and changing the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado &

Stefanic, 2001). The movement carries the torch from the civil rights movement, sharing the

"emancipatory hopes of these forebears whose moral compass led their efforts towards the call

for human freedom and equality" (Taylor, 2009, p. 2). The movement would later include ethnic

studies, however these issues are situated in a wider perspective including "economics, history,

context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious" (Delgado & Stefanic,

2001, p. 3).

Critical race theory began as movement in legal studies however it has spread to other

fields of discipline. Education is probably one of the more popular promulgations of CRT. CRT

researchers use the movement to focus on issues of "school discipline and hierarchy, tracking,

controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing (Delgado & Stefanic,

2001, p. 3). Many of these issues parallel those mentioned earlier that plagued black male

students. What sets CRT apart from other disciplines is its activism component: CRT proponents

are interested not only in studying these issues but also changing them for the better (Delgado &

Stefanic, 2001). CRT theorists subscribe to the following propositions: first, "racism is ordinary,

not aberrational" and endemic to American society, and, second, the system of white supremacy serves "important purposes, both psychic and material" (p. 7). These truisms underpin the basic tenets of CRT which are:

Ordinariness - or racism is normal and is difficult to cure or address in this otherwise colorblind society. Matsuda et al (1993) contend that racism is endemic to American life. "Whites cannot understand the world that they themselves have made. Their political, economic, and educational advantages are invisible to them and many find it difficult to comprehend the non-White experience and perspective that White domination had produced" (Taylor, 2009, p. 4-5).

Interest convergence - or material determinism, purports that since racism advances the interests of white elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically) many people have little incentive to eradicate it. Interest convergence has its roots in Marxist theory or Critical theory, that bourgeoisie will allow advances for the proletariat only if this "progress" benefits the former more; conflict is therefore unavoidable and progress is only obtained through resistance (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Taylor, 2009).

Social construction - or the beliefs of race are socially constructed and not "objective, inherent, or fixed" and "correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, are merely "categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient." (they further extend this tenant arguing that the dominant society "racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market") (Taylor, 2009).

Intersectionality - or anti-essentialism which is the belief that no person has a "single, easily stated, unitary identity"

Counter narratives - unique voices of color, told from an oppressed vantage point can articulate experiences and matters that those in power are unlikely to know bringing a "presumed competence to speak about race and racism. "Storytelling is effective as a salve for racial oppression (Delgado, 1989) and may be the bridge connecting students to literature to their own lived experiences.

Matsuda et al. (1993) also included skepticism toward dominant rhetoric including meritocracy, neutrality, objectivity, and colorblindness, and an examination of ahistoricism claims highlighting the notion that racism has influenced the law resulting in the group advantages and disadvantages that still exist today. Matsuda et al. (1993) also stresses the recognition of "experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of color in analyzing law and society" (p. 6). Lastly Critical Race Theory is not only a framework but a call to action with a mission to eliminating racial oppression (Matsuda et al., 1993).

Critical Race Theory in Education

CRT in education focuses this framework onto an educational landscape, looking at ways that critical race issues emerge in schools. It continues to be used as a guide for educators and policymakers, to move toward a more equitable education system (Taylor, 2009). Research in Critical Race Theory has garnished several fields of inquiry since its inception in education. Though many of these were directly carried over from the field of law, CRT in education has generated some new areas of discovery, finding new issues, uncovering age old issues of race relations in education as well as examining these issues from a new critical lens.

Voice

Voice is the "assertion and acknowledgment of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of color as sources of knowledge" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p.35). Voice or counter narratives are essentially other forms of evidence which challenges the positivist notion of inequity and discrimination as well as the "dominant story" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) developed a critical race methodology where the focus is on minorities' accounts, experiences, and stories in school systems to show the inequality, racism, and racial privilege on many campuses. Dixson and Rousseau's (2006) examination of several articles that use CRT as a theoretical framework had the following conclusion:

> Some scholars have focused on the voices of students of color, describing their perceptions and experiences at both the K-12 and university levels. This literature reveals both individual-level 'microaggressions' in the form of lowered teacher expectations and more macro-level forms of institutional racism in which school-wide programs lack the courses and rigor necessary for students to succeed in higher education. (p.37)

Dixson and Rousseau's study shows that these often overlooked microaggressions, may appear small in their moniker, they are however ponderous in their ubiquity. Studies that do not utilize critical race theory as a theoretical framework come to similar conclusion addressing voice. Goings and Bianco's (2016) study of black male students found that they "often experienced racial microaggressions...In the school setting, the young men in this study expressed that their teachers often subtly expressed disinterest in them because they were Black males (p. 635). They also expressed how these microagressions had a negative impact on these young males' desire to be a teacher (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Though voice and counterstories in CRT have focused on students of color, many studies have begun examining the voices of teachers. Brokenbrough's

(2012) explored black male teachers having issues of emasculation in a white female dominated

arena and their tendency to not speak about these feelings. Lynn's (2010) study of Black male

teachers in Los Angeles explored the microaggressions they experienced as students which now

motivates them to be different than the teachers they had. Lynn (2006) notes about one of the

participants:

> He makes reference to a fundamental principle of effective teaching: the issue of
>
> reciprocity that brings to light the need for mutual respect between teacher and student.
>
> To that end, he expresses a class and racial solidarity with students whose daily
>
> experiences living under the constant threat of psychological and physical violence are
>
> consistent with his own. (p. 127)

Another teacher talked about, "having been exposed to another more pernicious form of

psychological violence in school, *I've had teachers tell me I wasn't gon'be a damned thing*" (p.

127).

Curriculum & Instruction

Critical race theory sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to

maintain a White supremacist master script (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Critical Race Theorists

consider the typical curriculum in public education as a culturally unresponsive pedagogy and

uni-cultural direction. Ladson-Billings (2009) sees this as a valuing of one perspective over

another; she notes:

> This master scripting means stories of African Americans are muted and erased when
>
> they challenge dominant culture authority and power. Thus, Rosa Parks is reduced to a
>
> tired seamstress instead of a long-time participant in social justice...Or, Martin Luther

King, Jr. becomes a sanitized folk hero who enjoyed the full support of "good

Americans" rather than a disdained scholar and activist whose vision extended to social

justice causes throughout the world. (p. 29)

Also, CRT suggests that current instructional strategies presume that Black students are

deficient. As a consequence, classroom teachers are engaged in a never-ending quest for "the

right strategy or technique" to deal with "at-risk" students. Cast in a language of failure,

instructional approaches for Black students typically involve some aspect of remediation

(Ladson-Billings, 2009, p.30). Furthermore, assessments used to legitimize Black student

deficiency, "dysfunctional curriculum" and "lack or instructional innovation and persistence"

equates to students performing poorly on traditional assessments which only measure what is on

the test and not what students actually know or are able to do (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Also,

Ladson-Billings (2009) examines school funding arguing that inequality in school funding is a

function of institutional and structural racism. Because many state and local school systems

allocate money based on property taxes, "property is a powerful determinant of academic

advantage" (p. 32). Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) provide three propositions for school

inequity: race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity…, U.S. society is based

on property rights, and the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through

which we can understand [school] inequity" (p.12). When examining Black male teachers in

education, there is a trend of black male teachers being placed in certain schools to police unruly

minority students, (Bristol, 2014; Brokenbrough, 2015). Also, the lack of compelling and

engaging instruction tailored to Black students leads to a number of consequences including an

alienation from education and a steering of black male students from a career in education

(Goings & Bianco, 2016).

Adjusting the 4 Capital Framework.

Critical Race Theory provides a more than adequate framework for exploring the experiences of Black male teachers in PWSDs. Considering the influx of minorities into predominantly white areas, the increase of Black male teachers being hired may not be just for the benefit of the growing population. This means what seems to be an effort of diversity in the staff could actually be something else entirely. One could speculate that this is interest convergence or the seemingly beneficial policies for Black people that are actually put in place to benefit whites (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). In this case, Black male teachers are possibly being hired to "police" the minority students thereby ultimately benefiting the white stakeholders and policymakers for the district. Furthermore, CRT is now being used as a basis for a methodology. Specifically, Solorzano & Yosso's (2002) Critical Race Theory Methodology is an apt guide to use as a model for the proposed study. Though they used the methodology to explore the experiences of students of color, it nevertheless provides a blueprint for examining marginalized voices in education. Using the critical aspect of CRT with the structure of the Four Capital Framework gives me a more complete tool with which to examine Black male teachers, their experiences in a PWSD and their motivation to teach. Even the name frames the problem in terms of "capital" or the needs of the teacher not the broader community. Mason and Matas (2015) are framing the issue in the Eurocentric and individualistic context of the needs of the teachers and not the betterment of the students and broader community (Akbar, 1979). In this section, I address the limits of the Four Capital Framework for Teacher Attrition using CRT ideology.

I have adapted the definition of attrition to better fit the phenomenon in this study. Considering the factors of high teacher turnover and migration from disadvantaged areas (Ingersoll et al., 2017), the importance of cultural synchronicity (Irvine, 1988), and the issue of students in these areas not having teachers as experienced as the more affluent districts, the definition of attrition in this case is the voluntary movement of experienced teachers from disadvantaged areas to less at risk-districts. In this case, Black male teachers are leaving predominantly minority, disadvantaged school systems (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Mitchell, 2016). These are districts that arguably need them most and their leaving could be seen as attrition: i.e. the loss of a teacher from an area in which they are most needed. CRT prompts a further examination of one of the first and most significant patterns that emerge from this study's data, all of the participants leaving disadvantaged school districts to one that is more affluent.

Essentially several factors of influence have resulted in the paucity of Black males in education. This seems to be happening sometimes in the earlier years of a young man's educational experience, through the lack of teachers that look like them, negative experiences in school, and lowered expectations from teachers (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Gordon, 2002; Ingersoll et al., 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2018). Brown and Butty (1999) note that the number of Black males who enter the teaching profession is a domino effect of influence from earlier experiences in college, then high school and so on; therefore, the lack of Black males impacted earlier in the school system leads to a lack of Black male teachers.

First, the ideology of the framework is not only centered around the teacher but also the needs or the capital of the teacher. Though this framework eliminated the focus on economic capital, Mason and Matas (2015) detail "human capital" as a combination of pre-service knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management and cultural awareness. However,

much of this research on the basis of this framework was created from studies dealing with teachers educating students who have a different culture and sometimes a different language (Mason & Matas, 2015). Their framework also fails to acknowledge experiential knowledge inside and outside of the classroom. In this case, the Black male participants in this study share a common experience that links them to the predominantly Black students that they teach which is arguably beneficial to these students (Irvine, 1988; Milner, 2016). Furthermore, CRT theorists focus on the experiences of people of color which are often overlooked and stress the pervasiveness of racism in society (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006) which further gives these teachers a common experience with their students. Analyzing the experiences of these teachers as well as their motivations uncovered their desire to share their experiences outside of the classroom and use them in their instruction to help foster their students' growth and learning: a process Hilliard (1991) coins as socialization or assuming responsibility of teaching of one's ethnic group. To push back on these different Eurocentric elements of The Four Capital Model, I applied Afrocentric ideologies that better reflected the participants such as: Hilliard's (1991) African Socialization, Akbar's (1979) and Fanon's (1963) idea that Black people have adopted Eurocentric ideologies and values as a result of oppressive structures, and Asante's (1991) theory of centralizing educational practices in the cultural perspective of the students that are being taught. These ideologies are added in the analysis process to better address the taxonomy of the participant experiences using The Four Capital Model.

Second, for Mason and Matas (2015) social capital encapsulates the relationships teachers have with other teachers, students, parents, and administration. Social capital also includes the nature of the school climate and student behavior. Though Mason and Matas (2015) stress the importance of "human interrelationships" and its effects on retention of teachers based

on social capital, they fail to acknowledge other important factors. Considering the research on Black male attrition rates being linked to lack of other Black male teachers (Bristol, 2014), and higher attrition rates stemming from issues with administration (Ingersoll et al., 2017), the conclusions from their framework must be examined differently in this particular context. The Four Capital Framework fails to acknowledge kinship shared among Black people because of their race in a society in which racism is an endemic part. For example, though it is important that teachers have positive human relationships, the participants in this study valued their relationships with other Black males for specific reasons. They valued their relationship with students because of the importance of imparting knowledge on young Black males and they valued their relationship with other Black male teachers because they longed to connect with individuals who shared common experiences.

Also, for structural capital, Mason and Matas (2015) include buildings, physical teaching resources, and technological equipment as well as school policies and procedures, that deal with teachers' schedules, subject appointments, and to manage classroom routines and student behavior. Mason and Matas (2015) suggest that a lack of structural capital could be directly related to an increase in teacher attrition. Research also shows that minority males attributed a main cause for their leaving to issues with administration (Ingersoll et al., 2017). CRT however, is an important tool in analyzing some of the issues that permeate throughout school policies and procedures that may lead to discriminatory practices. While the Four Capital Framework addresses the physical and procedural structures of the school system, CRT analyzes and uncovers the possible discriminatory practices and impacts these structures maybe causing on communities of color. Again, the focus here is not just on the participant teachers in this study

but the larger impacts on the student and community: a fact the Four Capital model fails to address.

Lastly, positive psychological capital, or what Mason and Matas (2015) present as personality factors including, grit, resilience and commitment, is probably one of the only branches that does acknowledge the individual experiences and personalities of teachers. The CRT principle of intersectionality speaks to this phenomenon; Though all of the participants in this study are Black males, each has a distinct collection of experiences that make them unique despite their shared racial identity. While the Four Capital Framework addresses the individual characteristics that teachers bring to their position and how these different traits affect the decision to stay or leave, CRT provides the platform for the often marginalized voices and experiences of minority teachers. Here CRT is used as a way of contextualizing the traits and characteristics of these participants to better situate their experiences and motivations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review shows that there is a lack of research on Black male teachers who leave predominantly Black schools to teach in a PWSD. This literature review also explores the history of the oppressive structures in the education system for Black people, both students and teachers, and has implications on how these issues are still evident today. These issues in education have had an effect on recruitment and retention of Black male teachers, which some consider have exacerbated the already daunting conditions negatively affecting Black male students. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black male teachers who left predominantly Black, urban, disadvantaged school districts to teach a more affluent, predominantly White school district. In order to understand why they left, I use Mason

and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Framework for Teacher Attrition and Retention to better organize their responses. I also use Critical Race Theory to put these phenomena in a specific context that addresses some underlying systemic issues that may be an essential part of the analysis. The next chapter details the way this study was organized and conducted, including more information on the methodology used.

Chapter 3: The Methodology

Introduction

Qualitative research is based on the phenomenological position that seeks to make meaning of the perspectives of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The purpose of this heuristic inquiry was to explore the experiences of Black male teachers who teach in a PWSD. The aim is to also uncover their motivation for becoming a teacher as well as the reason behind their leaving one type of school district for another. Qualitative research isolates target populations to gain rich insight regarding participant perceptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In contrast, quantitative research emphasizes the necessity of having a large population sample in order to draw conclusions about phenomena based on statistical data. The quantitative researcher prefers to accumulate facts through careful isolation to test a theory, while a qualitative researcher focuses on participants' experiences (Park & Park, 2016). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) discuss the contribution of Chicago sociologists during this time emphasizing the "holistic" view through examination of where participants' social context intersected with their personal narratives. At the base of this study is an inquiry into the experiences of Black male teachers thereby better understanding the world in which they live. Therefore, the qualitative method was the most applicable method of obtaining the perspectives of participants in an PWSD and uncovering the reasons why they left their previous district.

Qualitative research uses inductive reasoning (i.e., developing explanations from information) rather than the deductive (i.e., using theory to predict outcomes based on information) to draw conclusions from data (Olson, McAllister, Grinnell, Walters, & Appunn,

2016). Therefore, qualitative research was determined more suitable for this study because it focused on the social context of participants' personal experiences that are accurate and reliable through verification and cannot be simply reduced to numbers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). At the base of this study is an inquiry into the experiences of Black male teachers thereby better understanding the world in which they live.

A gap in the literature was revealed exposing the need to look at Black males who leave a high minority and predominantly low-income school district for an affluent PWSD. This will be done through a qualitative method known as heuristic inquiry. The focus of this chapter is to explain the heuristic methodology that was used in analyzing the participants' experiences. This study will also be used to discover why they chose the district they chose, and why they remain teachers.

Two theoretical frameworks were used in this study: Mason and Matas' Four-Capital Framework for Teacher Retention and Critical Race Theory. A theoretical lens according to Swanson (2013) is "formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions," while the theoretical framework is, "the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists" (p. 5). The terms are often used interchangeably but nevertheless the framework or lens is essential to guiding the direction of the study. In this case, the participants represent a subset of teachers who are highly coveted in one type of district, yet choose to work in a less disadvantaged area. The Four Capital Framework will be used to organize their experiences while Critical Race Theory helps to contextualize their experiences. Some would argue that the participants in this study are migrants because they remain in the

profession and have simply moved from one school to another. I argue that because these participants left urban disadvantaged districts that are need them more, to a more affluent county, attrition is a more accurate term. Billingsley (2004) acknowledges the nuances of these terms (attrition, retention, and migration); in this case, a particular subset of teachers who leave a high need area to teach in one that has less issues. By examining the experiences of this minority subgroup through this lens, it is possible to also uncover the reasons they became a teacher as well as the types of capital that are needed to retain them in areas that need them the most.

Heuristic Inquiry

In order to capture the participants' voices as well as my own understanding of the process and how it affected me, I employed a methodology that allows for phenomenological examination of the participants while, instead of divorcing the researcher's voice from the process, acknowledges and includes it into the data. Heuristic inquiry is the tool that allows for this type of data collection and analysis. It is, "a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences" (Moustakas, 1990, p.15). Heuristic inquiry was developed by Clark Moustakas, resembles lived inquiry (Hiles, 2001) and is born out of phenomenology (Moustakas, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). Lived inquiry is simply a person's "reality" or "lifeworld"; therefore, inquiry is the exploration of a person's reality. This is also known as phenomenology, or how a person "orients their...experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 4). The process, from a philosophical research perspective, is designed to "always question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings" (p. 4-5). In order to know the world a person must also be in the world, therefore the process of research and inquiry is the "intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to

become more fully part of it, or better, to *become* the world" also known as the principle of "intentionality" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 5).

Heuristic inquiry is the process of phenomenology that adds the researcher's experience to the equation. Hiles (2001) describes heuristic inquiry as,

> an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the *researcher*, to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research...Indeed, what is explicitly the focus of the approach is the transformative effect of the inquiry on the researcher's own experience. This is often achieved by a process that I think can usefully be called *discernment*. (p. 20)

Moustakas (1990) describes heuristic inquiry as a "...process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience" (p.9). Heuristic inquiry includes the transformation of the researcher as they move through the process of the study. Hiles (2001) dismisses the inclusion of the researcher's own experience as the sole difference of heuristics from phenomenology but offers the idea that Moustakas' intent was to allow the researcher room to engage with the research question, compare their experience to that of the participants, and illuminate the metamorphosis that transpires during research. Meaning and essence are the basis for heuristics which is "concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behaviour" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1984, p.42).

In heuristic inquiry, the researcher must have a direct experience or personal encounter with the experience they are researching (Moustakas, 1990). I share common experiences with the participants, being a Black male content teacher in a PWSD. Whereas phenomenological studies do not require the researcher to have gone through the same experience as the participant,

heuristic inquiry requires it emphasizing "connectedness" and "relationship" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1984). In this study, I interviewed fellow Black male teachers to examine their journey and their overall purpose for teaching where they teach. I also had to observe the way their experiences changed my own perception and realization as to why I teach and where I teach.

Heuristic inquiry contains a range of methods and processes making it unconventional considering the nature of the data analysis, where the researcher returns again and again to the data. I liken this to constant comparison. The constant comparison method is where the methodology and processes adapt and change as more data are collected, sorted, and analyzed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This may seem like the rules governing the methodology of heuristics is a haphazard, hodge-podge of methods and analyzing techniques; however, this is far from the truth. Moustakas (1990) outlines six phases which guide the data collection process and basic research design. "These steps include: the initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis" (p. 27). Heuristic inquiry also begins with a question that needs to be answered through a series of concepts or processes: identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference (Moustakas, 1990). These steps are used as guides for the researcher to begin self-reflecting and developing a framework to use in formulating research questions as well as interview questions and a general direction of the study.

The next step in heuristic inquiry is to examine the participants through a phenomenological structure. This means the phenomenologist's role is to extract the experience of the participants to "depict the essence or basic structure of experience" (p.25). Van Manen

(1990) furthers this explanation describing this process as a "*borrowing* other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience" (p.62). Participants in this study were chosen because they all share the common experience of being a Black male content teacher in a PWSD. Since the aim of phenomenological research is to "construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p.41), the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Black male teachers who teach in a PWSD as well as why they left predominantly Black, disadvantaged areas to come teach at a more affluent PWSD. Analyzing and interpreting their experiences in this PWSD was an important step in understanding their motivation.

As stated earlier, the process is cyclical, where the researcher's "*constant appraisal of significance* and *checking and judging* facilitate the process of achieving a valid depiction of the experience being investigated" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). Returning back to the data and re-interviewing participants allows for continuous verification of the data that are collected and ensures the trustworthiness of the phenomenon in question (1990). This process will be discussed in more detail in the research design and trustworthiness parts of this chapter.

There are a few examples of heuristic inquiry being used in research. One example is Seidman's (1998) study of one-on-one life history interviews, where the participants discussed the formation of their Black male identities. Also, Slayton's (2013) study examines the "professional and personal" growth of a teacher after becoming overwhelmed and frustrated in his career, using other teachers and colleagues as participants, helping them to parse out ideas from their own lives. In another study, Etherington (2004) explored two women's journeys in using reflexive methodologies in their research and how the process changed them. In fact, her

research was inspired by the personal and intellectual growth her students often felt after using methods like heuristic inquiry. Djuraskovic and Arthur's (2010) study of acculturation and ethnic identity reconstruction is based on one of the researcher's understanding and introspection of his immigration experiences. The researcher used the experiences of his participants to help ground the inquiry and to better understand his own experience on a deeper level.

The common thread of these studies is the symbiosis of the researcher's direct experiences with the research as well as his/her transformative journey during the process. In this study I examined the participants' motivations to become teachers, the reasons they say they left their previous school districts, and their experiences in this PWSD. Also, this heuristic inquiry provided better insight into why I became a teacher, and how I came to teach in this particular county. As I stated in the beginning, I had feelings of guilt leaving the type of disadvantaged areas I had been teaching in for almost a decade to a more affluent district, potentially teaching students with whom I did not have ethnic/cultural congruence (Milner, 2017) and did not share common cultural and economic experiences. I have found that there are layers to this experience that needed further examination to better understand myself, which, consequently is one of the purposes of heuristic inquiry.

Research Questions

If I had to ask one question that has plagued me for years in the education system it is, why am I here? I came into this field to help other young Black males because of all the odds and obstacles that I faced, and the obstacles that I saw impeding my friends and classmates. An important part of this mission was going to teach in areas that had an abundance of students like me: low-income, Black males in urban schools. And I did teach in these types of schools; but I soon left to take a position in a different type of county: why? Moustakas (1990) discusses the

beginning of heuristic inquiry starting with a question:

> Heuristic inquiry is a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher
>
> seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and
>
> puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The
>
> heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters
>
> personally there is also a social - and perhaps universal - significance. (p. 15)

The question *why am I here*, therefore serves as a journey into the reason why I became a teacher

as well as where I decided to teach. I extended this line of questioning to the participants in this

study. The following research questions that were used to guide this study, are both personally

challenging and highlight a critical educational issue in this country:

What are the experiences of Black male teachers in predominantly White school districts?

The sub questions include:

> Why did they come: What factors contribute to these Black males seeking employment at
> a PWSD?
> Why do they stay: What motivates these Black male teachers to remain in the classroom?
> How do they stay: What challenges do these Black male teachers face in a PWSD?

In heuristic inquiry the research and the researcher are deeply connected and therefore one does

not formulate research questions, the research question chooses you (Hiles, 2001). The primary

research question in this study forced me to reexamine my own motivation to teach and use this

line of inquiry to inform this current study.

Research Participants

At the time of this study all of the participants were employed at the Hamilton County

School System. Hamilton county is a pseudonym given to protect the identity of the district: the

names of the participants were also given pseudonyms for the same reason. The participants for this study were chosen using criterion sampling. Researchers have the autonomy to choose participants on the basis of an "explicitly stated criterion" which is usually prescribed in "inclusionary terms" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010, p.112). Researchers looking to interpret a phenomenon select cases purposefully (Patton, 2002), thereby finding the participants who both fit the criterion of the study and provide "information-rich cases" which lead to in depth research (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) defines information rich as "those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 46). Coupled with the parameters of heuristic inquiry, it was therefore necessary to choose participants who, like me, identify as Black and male, and who are content teachers employed at a PWSD. Because Hamilton County is a PWSD in a large suburban district, its teachers are predominantly white as well (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Strizek et al., 2006; Taie & Goldring, 2018). Black teachers only make up around 7.4% of all teachers, with only 5.1% working in large towns similar the context of this study, and 8% teaching in low poverty schools. Of that 5.1% only 25% are male (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Strizek et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the participants had to be content teachers. Because of the lack of positive male role models and a limited range of role models in popular culture and the media (Hebert, 2002; Sailes, 2003), Black males are in need of teachers who are able to empower them through culturally responsive experiences within the school setting outside of a sports context. In my experience, I have never had a Black male content teacher, however, every year I had a Black male coach and P.E. teacher. This is not uncommon as the participant experiences will show in the next chapter. Many Black males aspire to sports and entertainment and identify men in these arenas as role models; consequently, Black males less often identify themselves as able and

talented in the school setting (Whiting, 2009). Black male teachers may be the solution: a

positive male presence who promotes academic awareness and talents in areas that are less

visible to Black male students. Whiting (2009) stresses the need for support that focuses on

changing Black male's self-perception, self-esteem, self-concept, and racial identity in academic

settings.

Portraits.

An iterative part of several core processes and phases, portraits provide "profiles that are

unique to the individuals yet characterize the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1990, p.50).

Though Moustakas suggests "two to three exemplary portraits" by extracting two or three

participants who "clearly exemplify the group as a whole" (p. 52), I decided to include portraits

of each participant and show how they are related wherever possible. I deviated from Moustakas'

suggestion for three main reasons. First, the methodology is a research methodology steeped in

creative processes, whereas Moustakas notes, all the steps and processes may not be utilized or

followed (1995). Also, other studies utilizing the method have altered, changed, and completely

deviated from the core process and products (see Etherington, 2004; Pair, 2017; Reed, 2015).

Secondly, a review of the raw data during the immersion process led me to the realization that

being a Black male content teacher in a predominantly white school district was the only true

tether that unified all of these participants. Participants all had different personalities,

backgrounds, situations and circumstances and were highly diverse. Only providing portraits of

two or three would paint a picture that inadequately depicts the group as a whole. Finally, the

anonymity of myself in the creative synthesis serves as a pillar to the spirit of Moustakas'

heuristic philosophy; that is, each of us "exemplifies the group as a whole" in our own way. It is

also important to remember that I personally know several of the participants and have been their acquaintance before the inception of this study. The camaraderie we all share was evident in both my interviews with them and the responses many of them gave while talking about the other participants. In short, we are brothers, and though we all share similar experiences it was important to me to provide portraits that highlighted their individuality considering that the rest of the data discussion binds those personas together.

Stewart

I know Stewart. No really, I actually know him. Stewart has a hearty laugh and has a saying so iconic that paraphrasing it would distort the passion it entails and directly quoting it would give away his identity to the hundreds of students he has taught, mentored, and essentially raised. He is a solidly built, 43-year-old, with eyes he probably used, along with his charm (one of the words he used to describe his teaching style) to snag his beautiful wife. He is retired military which one immediately notices from his poise, tactfulness, punctuality, and promptness: Stewart does not waste time; in fact, he adores the bell to bell philosophy and now teaching in middle school he has found that preteens/tweens do not share his inculcating regime of teaching all he can in a class block. He has been in education for nine years, teaching literature at different levels and in different types of schools: both private and public. He served as a youth pastor for years before teaching and his spirituality is evident not in a boisterous but humble and meek way. The big family in a small town, with the addition of a paragon of a father provided Stewart with a paradigm that is mentor centered. Now in his second year in the county, in a second position, Stewart makes preparations to become an administrator and part of his moving schools within the county is to build a more dynamic resume in preparation thereof. He jokes that his

wife is looking to him to make more money, but in talking to him he really wants to have a greater impact on the culture of the school as whole, not just the climate in his classroom.

Jordan

Jordan, like Stewart, comes from a small town and a big family, in fact he joked about slim pickings for a mate between him and his dozens of cousins because everyone was essentially related. His path to education started in pre-med, took a left into mortuary science and a funeral director and finally pulled into a high school science position in an urban metro high school not far from Hamilton County. Jordan spoke of his father as if his father was this necessary moral compass and hardworking blueprint needed to foster a successful child in this modern era. His reverence of his father exacerbated the sting of not having mine. Consequently, young Black males not having fathers is one of his many motivations for becoming a teacher. At 43 he has found a new joy for teaching, noting that though all of the students aren't engaged all the time the numbers are more in his favor now. Teaching is second career but the idea of helping people has always been at the core of what he wanted to do in life. He went to mighty Morehouse for pre-med and was turned off by the disparity Black people were facing in healthcare system that seemed too big and complex to fix. He then went into mortuary science and was a funeral director for a few years before transitioning into education. The only other experience he had teaching was at his college where he taught undergrad lab classes. He sees teaching as a calling from God and after teaching at a predominantly Black low income school he changed gears and came to Hamilton. In his first year there he has noticed that students are entitled and this causes some of them to take their academics for granted. He's one of only two content teachers at his school in Hamilton County.

Oliver

Oliver is a big guy with a stoic facade and a blunt tone. He's about the same size as Jordan and I surmise this is from their shared experience of football. His brow always seems on the edge of a much deserved eye roll at the behest of an ignorant comment-something I'm sure happens everyday teaching middle school; however, this football playing, master of his content, helped a student during our interview and guided the young man with ease, patience, and the kind of positive and negative reinforcement you find in a person fresh out of a graduate level educational psychology practicum. He comes from the "hood" and is proud of it like being proud of a scar that has since healed but never faded. It is a tattoo that he flashes only when it needs to be shown to the students who see only his shirt and tie: a badge that doesn't define him but is as much part of him as his black skin and his athletic build. Like many young Black males, his father was, as he said, "not around much" and his older brother was far from an appropriate role model. Oliver is the diamond in the rough character in this book, and his complexity cannot be overstated: whether it's his walking away from a corporate job to spend more time with his family; his strategy to rear his children in an atmosphere completely opposite of his own; or his beating the odds in one of the roughest areas and roughest high schools in the metro area to be the lone double masters wielding Black male content teacher in most schools on his resume, Oliver is the epitome of not judging a book by its cover. He spoke with passion that he masked with a pessimism that comes from surviving in his hood. Battle scarred and battle hardened, he scoffed often when speaking of the majority Black population in this predominantly white county. "If they only knew what was on the other side of the that bridge over there…" He's been used as a disciplinarian tool and I could easily see why. He carries an intimidating aura that is probably

terrifying to the students until you spend a class period with him and you realize, oh...Mr. Oliver

is cool. Having to be that policing agent in his previous assignment has made him reticent to

make the preparations to move to the next level in his career. He says he'll make the move when

it's his time. A supervisory role would take him away from his first career/passion and that's

raising his two young children. By the way the tattoos mentioned earlier are completely

allegorical.

Clark

Clark on the other hand has physical tattoos that are very visible. If Oliver flashes his proverbial

tattoos when he needs to, Clark wears his rough, rugged, and regret-filled ink on his sleeves as

he interacts candidly and sometimes brazenly with his students. Clark is energetic and is as

youthful in looks as he is in manners. At 33, he has been in education for eleven years teaching

different subjects and on different levels. He was hired into his current position at Jeffersonville

High three years ago. Clark coins his experience as the "typical Black male experience" no

father, single mother, growing up in the lower-income working class parts of a large metro city.

This, along with his mother manipulating documents to get him into a "whiter" and arguably

better high school than the one he was slated to attend, had an immense impact on his teaching

philosophy. He also attributes his style and motivation to become a teacher to one of his high

school teachers. He was the first Black male content teacher at his school and until recently was

the only one there. He does not have immediate plans to become an administrator. He jokes

about his lack of organization, political tact, and timeliness and above all losing the direct

interaction with the students; but, he says he is considering other options in education that have

a greater impact on teaching and learning that will probably take him out of the classroom soon.

Bruce

I consider Bruce my mentor. He was the first to be interviewed and a major inspiration for this study. He also did his dissertation on Black males as well, so as you can see there is an obvious parallel to the studies. At 43, he is the only non-teacher in the group, however, he was the only Black male teacher to teach at Gladwell High School and has remained in the county even after moving into an administrative roll. Now the principal at Overland Creek Middle, he has been in education for a total of 19 years. He ran a young men's mentoring club in New Jersey that he rebooted when he got to Hamilton County. In-between talking school, we talk often about hip-hop, comic heroes, and movies. He is unabashedly candid about his mini-Black movement he's creating in his school. He hired five Black men to his school a year after he got there. Ironically he was beat by the principal at the neighboring middle school from which many of the other participants were pulled. There are nine over there. He has a strong vision for the future of his school and the students therein and his leadership inspires those who follow him because many of them echoed the same sentiment when talking about the climate, culture and direction of the school.

Victor

A graduate of the county, Victor teaches at a different high school in the county than the one that he attended...and it's a mix of his preference and not being able to teach at the school. He's in his seventh year of teaching and had a hard time getting into the county when he first decided to go into teaching. His first career was as an engineer. Which makes sense when you meet him. He is postured, careful with his words, low on facial emotion and analytical about everything.

Teaching science allows him to show his students the world through his adroit eyes. His rigidity is more of a mechanical part than a total sum of who he is. He is warm with his daughter, whom I met during our interview, and speaks fondly of his infant child at home. He often tries to impart wisdom onto his students, namely the importance of making the right choices based on many of the experiences he had growing up as one of few Black males in a predominantly white area. His goal is to move into administration using supervisory experience he gained from his first career as an engineer. He has started the process for administrative ascendency but is trying to figure out to whom can he pass his coveted program. He has made a mark that few shoes are big enough to fill.

Arthur

I stumbled onto Arthur. His name was given to me by a woman passing me by as I was leaving another interview at the same school. She was interested in my study, as I tried to explain it as simply as possible, and when I said Black male teachers she immediately started rattling off the ones she knew in the county. It was very short list and Arthur was at the top. Arthur is probably the oldest of all of us and this is easily recognizable by the gray in his beard, however he is the most energetic out of all of us. He spoke with a passion and enthusiasm of a Black militant teenager starting his freshman year at an HBCU-yeah, he is that conscious. Over twenty years of teaching in different inner city schools has given him a sentinel like shell covering a deeply yearning content guru. Now in Hamilton county he has found a new energy to impact students using a unique Afrocentric-lens of his content and a mission to help create upstanding men of the future. Though he has gone through the process of obtaining his leadership certification, Arthur is also the only participant out of the ten who has no desire to become an assistant principal or

do anything other than being a classroom teacher. He considers it a humble calling, the official title of a poor Black righteous teacher, and a career the creator himself hand picked him for Arthur. Hamilton County will probably allow him to go far past his 30-year tenure.

Barry

Barry was quite a pleasant surprise. He was one of the first people that responded to the email request to be interviewed. He had a youthful face and a jovial attitude. He reminded me of Carlton from The Fresh Prince of Bel Air. Unfortunately, he told me a story of people teasing him at school for this very same thing. I of course wasn't using it as a dis, more as a complement of a posh standard-I made sure to sit up straighter than usual while interviewing him. At the time of his interview Barry had only completed one year in Hamilton county at one of the middle schools. He enjoys his position and has a few to compare it to including a tenure overseas. He sees himself as an observer of the racial politics of the school and county and took the year to be a fly on the wall. However, he does work hard to impact the students. He grew up in a military family which means he moved around a lot and was often harassed by students because of the way he talked and dressed which was not stereotypically Black, as they lamented. He also talked about some poor Black male role models and the expectation that he play sports. He has no desire to be an administrator however he does have long term goals of doing something in education that is out of the classroom.

Wally

Wally was the cool guy in school and in college-hell he's pretty cool now! He's the best looking of us all, has the best sense of humor (other than me), has the lightest complexion, and like

Oliver, he had that perfect balance of sports and academic knowledge. He's the kind of guy you talk to for a while at gatherings and parties. Wally' early education was punctuated by a majority white school, a gifted mind, and Black power promulgations in the media like A Different World and Public Enemy. Naturally this led him to attend an HBCU passing up schools like NC State and Duke. Wally is convinced that there are no discipline issues at his new school here in Hamilton County but after hearing his stories of gang infested schools reminiscent of Eastside High, he was the Joe Clark of his era and Joe Clark wouldn't consider these suburban Black kids who think sagging and imitating gang like signals gleaned from rap music are taboo iconography of the proverbial hood. Wally' perception of his new school was a pillar in analyzing this study because oddly enough, no matter how much I probed he was convinced that there were NO discipline issues at his school, which for a middle school anywhere, is impossible.

John

I worked with John for a short stint before he got this new position. I was impressed by a trinity knot with which he had fashioned his tie. Coincidentally his fashion sense is on a long continuum of his complexity. He's also an ex-marine, a former track star, a theater major, and a northerner without the heavy Yankee enunciation that annoys southern ears like mine. At 41 and now in a "wonder bread school," he's ready now to extend his reach and influence. This kind of setting is not new to him. He's worked in every type of school and seems to focus on pedagogy more so than any of the other participants. Though only nine years in education, he's in the next phase of his personal life, still married to his high school sweetheart, graduating his last daughter, he is enjoying the tangents of teaching like coaching soccer, track, and running programs to help those students stuck in the academic middle (those barely making a B, or just missing proficient

on standardized tests). He spent some time during our interview showing me some of his strategies like using chess to teach the big picture and a trick to isolating response questions. He's the only participant to complain about structural issues in the county, regarding information about acquiring leadership credentials but he has since made headway.

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Co-Researcher	Age	Years in the county	Total Years Teaching	Father present	Previous school PBSD?	Middle Or High	Teaching first Career?	Preparing for Administration
Stewart	43	2	9	Yes	No	Both	No	Yes+
Jordan	42	1	14	Yes	Yes	High	No	Yes
Oliver	38	1	10	No	Yes	Middle	No	Yes
Clark	34	3	11	No	Yes	High*	Yes	No, but
Bruce	43	10	19	Yes	Yes	High*	Yes	Yes
Victor	38	2	6	Yes	Yes	High	No	Yes+
Arthur	48	2	23	Yes	Yes	Middle	Yes	No
Barry	31	1	8	Yes	Yes	Middle	Yes	No, but
Wally	43	1	15	No	Yes	Both	Yes	No, but
John	41	2	9	No	Yes	Middle*	No	Yes+

+ denotes making steps towards becoming an administrator like being in a program
* both middle and high school but the one listed is the level they are currently teaching
"But" signifies leaving the classroom but not to go into administration

The designation of this district, coupled with the paucity of Black male teachers in the profession nationwide, creates an ideal pool of participants from which to choose. 10 Black male content teachers were recruited for this study. It is important to note that only eleven teachers fit the criterion in the entire county. One participant was not able to be interviewed because of scheduling issues.

Research Site

This study takes place in Hamilton County School District, a small metro school district in close to a major metropolitan city. Hamilton County has traditionally had a fairly affluent population but the demographics have been shifting over the past two decades. Hamilton County has about 26,554 students under the age of 18. 21,432 or 80.7% are white, 3,532 or 13.3% are

Black or African American, 880 or 4% are Hispanic, 682 or 2.5% are Asian, 300 or 1.1% are

other, and 558 or 2.1% are two or more races (NCES).

Table 2: Demographic Information of Hamilton County

Year	2000	2010	2017
Total Population	91,263	106,567	112,549
White	83.9%	71.1%	68.5%
Black/African American	11.5%	20.1%	23.6%
Hispanic	2.83%	6.3%	7.3%
Asian	2.42%	3.9%	4.6%
Median household income	$71,227	$82,216	$81,689
Percent in poverty	2.6%	4.7%	7%
High School Graduate	?	?	93.9%
Bachelor's Degree	?	?	43.8%

The importance of the data in Table 1 is the shift in demographics between 2000 and 2010 with an increase of "minorities" and a decrease in the white population. This may have important implications on the hiring of Black teachers during this time. The school district has also seen a dramatic change in many areas such as increases in minority population, free and

reduced lunch averages, retention, as well as decreases in achievement and graduation rates and
overall College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores. A school's CCRPI score
is the state measurement scale that determines how well students are prepared for post-secondary
options One school showed an increase in population from 619 to 1045 from the 2012-2013
school year to the 2013-2014 school year with the following statistics shown in Table 3 and
Table 4:

Table 3: CCRPI Scores for Jeffersonville High School

	2013	2014	2015
CCRPI	86.1	85.4	81.9

Table 4: Demographic Information for Jeffersonville High School

	2012-13	2013-14
Enrollment	619	1045
Gifted	157	146
Students with disabilities	58	140
Free/Reduced Lunch	20%	44%
Remedial	126	363

The school had a 41%, or 24 out of the 59, staff turnover rate in the 2012-2013 school year, 18% in the 2013-2014 year, and 19% in the 2014-2015 school year. This school also saw a change in enrollment and the demographics of those enrollees. For instance, in the 2012-13 14% of the students lived in a single parent household; in the school year during this study 31% lived in a single parent household. The school also saw similar trends in areas like free and reduced lunch, students with disabilities, and remedial students.

This school also reported a one-point grade point average difference between continuing students and students new to the county (82 and 78 respectively) though both groups showed continuous improvement over the years. The school showed an average 20-point gap between the White and Black students' achievement on standardized tests such as the Georgia High School Milestone test, though both groups showed an increasing trend in scores.

It is important to note three things about Hamilton County and these statistics: One, Jeffersonville High's feeder middle school, Overland Middle, has similar patterns of change in statistics; Two, Jeffersonville High School and Overland Middle, along with two other schools (Cornell High School and Freeman Middle), are the only schools with a majority Black population. The other six middle and high schools in the district are majority White; and lastly, out of ten middle and high schools in the county, Jeffersonville High School and Overland Middle School are the only schools that statistics that categorize them as low-income schools. It is important to note that the other schools in this district saw no such drastic changes in demographics, population, and academic achievement. It is also important to note that at the time of this study, nine out of the ten participants were employed at these four predominantly Black schools presented above. One of the participants, who is now the principal of Overland Middle School, was the only Black male content teacher at Gladwell High School (one of the other three

predominantly White high schools). Other than P.E. teachers and two elective teachers, the

remaining five schools (two high schools and three middle schools), with the exception of

special schools like Open Campus and Alternative schools, have never had a Black male content

teacher. Table 4 provides an illustrated model of the county. I will take a deeper look at the

differences between schools in the discussion.

Table 5: Hamilton County Middle and High School Statistics

School	Jeffersonville	Cornell High	Gladwell	Lakefront	Cooperson
City	Jeffersonville	Adamstown	Pleasantville	County	County
Median Income	66, 793	81,689	90,051	81,689	81,689
Free Lunch %	42	33	10	9	15
Graduation %	87	85	93	91	98
CCRPI Score	82.9	86.4	99.9	96	89.8
Feeder Middle School	Overland	Freeman	King Charles	Bluffington	Anchor Creek
Free Lunch %	49	42	15	10	20
CCRPI Score	80	85	92.7	97.9	94.1

Research Design

As stated earlier, heuristic inquiry employs methods that are not necessarily regimented

on a step by step basis. Heuristic inquiry also utilizes a constant comparative methodology where

the researcher is constantly reevaluating the direction of the study, examining the data collected

against the participants' experiences, as well as the understanding and transformation of the

researcher (Moustakas, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). Heuristic inquiry is a process that is difficult to put in any definitive boundaries. The process of the method is often characterized as "following your nose" yet it does demand rigor and discipline and should not be taken lightly (Hiles, 2001). Moustakas (1990) does provide a blueprint, or "core processes" for heuristic inquiry:

Identify with the focus of the inquiry: The heuristic process involves getting inside the research question, becoming one with it, living it.

Self dialogue: Self dialogue is the critical beginning, allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to one's own experience. Knowledge grows out of direct human experience and discovery involves self-inquiry, an openness to one's own experience.

Tacit knowing: In addition to knowledge that we can make explicit, there is knowledge that is implicit to our actions and experiences. This tacit dimension is ineffable and unspecifiable, it underlies and precedes intuition and can guide the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning.

Intuition: Intuition provides the bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge. Intuition makes possible the seeing of things as wholes. Every act of achieving integration, unity or wholeness requires intuition.

Indwelling: This refers to the conscious and deliberate process of turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of a quality or theme of human experience. Indwelling involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some aspect of human experience.

Focusing: Focusing is inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the central meanings of an experience. It enables one to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with

necessary awareness and insight.

Internal frame of reference: The outcome of the heuristic process in terms of knowledge and experience must be placed in the context of the experiencer's own internal frame of reference, and not some external frame. (p. 15-27)

Moustakas (1990) also provides six phases that guides the basic research design:

Initial engagement: discovering an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications.

Immersion: the researcher lives the question...everything in his or her life becomes crystallized around the question

Incubation: where the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question

Illumination: the natural occurring step where the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition which allows for the awareness of themes inherent in the question

Explication: fully examining the themes discovered in the previous step

Creative Synthesis: After becoming thoroughly familiar with the data the researcher takes the components and synthesizes them into a creative artifact. (p.27-32)

There is an intimate and natural link between the processes of heuristic inquiry and the phases (Kenny, 2012). Each process and phase is an important step in the data collection, analysis, and production phases of the research. Moustakas provides both the processes and phases as a

roadmap in a heuristic inquiry study. I have taken the steps and phases of heuristic inquiry and adapted to fit this study.

Data Collection.

Data collection was completed through interviews. Participants were interviewed at one to two times for no more than two total hours depending on the need to answer all interview questions thoroughly. These questions included inquiries on their past experiences in school and after graduating, influences which may have impacted their decision to be a teacher, their career in public education before teaching in Hamilton County and their experiences transitioning into Hamilton County. Rubin and Rubin (2005) define qualitative interviews as "conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion" (p.4). The purpose is to "understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p.1). In particular, respondent interviews were used. Respondent interviews are conducted to "find out how people express their views, how they construe their actions, how they conceptualize their life world and to disclose their subjective standpoints (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010, p.179). When interviewing participants, especially in extracting phenomenological experiences, the aim was to extract *thick description* of their first-hand experiences. This level of detail, focus, and depth is through formulating a system of main, probe, and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The process of interviewing in heuristic inquiry uses both respondent and phenomenological interviews. The former allows for structured interview questions, including follow-up and probing questions to gather the experiences, while the latter provides an opportunity for participants to explore, reflect, and respond to their own responses. This is

critical of any phenomenological method which is based on the extraction of the nuances and detail of a particular experience, which in this study is the experiences of Black male teachers.

Furthermore, because the purpose of the interview is to extract personal experiences, its structure looks much like an everyday conversation rather than a formal interview. This does not mean the interview is not structured at all, however part of the goal of heuristic inquiry is to extrapolate the essence of the experience regardless of the method. "The persons in the heuristic interview must be willing to say freely what they think and feel relevant to the research question, and what emerges in their awareness when the phenomenon becomes the focus of their attention and concentration: Although general questions may be formulated in advance, genuine dialogue cannot be planned" (Moustakas, 1990, p.47).

Heuristic inquiry also requires the researcher to address their own experience in the process. Part of the process is to address the researcher's experience of the phenomenon as well as look at what way the study influences and even changes the researcher (Moustakas, 1990; Moustakas, 1994; Hiles, 2001). Moustakas (1990) writes:

> From the beginning, and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration. When I consider an issue, problem, or question, I enter into it fully . . . I may challenge, confront, or even doubt my understanding of a human concern or issue; but when I persist in a disciplined and devoted way I ultimately deepen my knowledge of the phenomenon...I am personally involved. (p. 11)

Initial interviews began as open-ended or conversational interviews. This is critical in establishing rapport with the participant and allows the researcher to "obtain a general flavor"

(Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.4) of what is like to be a Black male teacher in a PWSD. In their

study of immigrant acculturation, Djuraskovic and Arthur (2010) talked about the way informal

conversational interviews allowed for a "free flow of data, and supported the participants to

share their stories in a natural dialogue (p.1570). Moustakas (1990) likens it to music with a

"rhythm and flow" in-line with the search for meanings through both researcher and participant.

This understanding is only part of the process. Miller and Glassner (2004) warn against these

responses being a "repetition of familiar cultural tales" rather than a "authentic accounts" (p.

125). Participants were also asked a set of ten questions that were formulated to answer the

research question and sub questions (See Appendix B). So though interviews were

conversational, they still are guided by set questions with a specific goal in mind. All participants

were interviewed initially once for approximately 45 minutes with my self-interview conducted

first. After each interview I recorded a reflection on what I learned from each participant and

possible new questions that arose during the interview. Participants were then interviewed briefly

for a second time to ask these new questions and review responses already provided, to see how

they respond to their responses and experiences. Next I transcribed each of the interviews being

sure to include pseudonyms for any identifying information.

   Data Analysis.

   In this study the data are the transcriptions of the participants used in the study. I was the

sole collector and transcriber of the interviews. After each interview I reflected on the particular

participant's account and completed a self-dialogue in the form of a recorded self-reflection.

These self-reflections allowed me to think back on my own experiences that I share with each

participant. These self-reflections were a part of the data as well. One of the heuristic methods is

the constant comparison of data which is a process that is embedded in heuristic inquiry methodology. Strauss (1987) (as cited in Olson, et al., 2016), further elaborated on the data analysis methodology, with the creation of constant comparative method in which the researcher reviews the transcripts and develops codes to identify constructs along with other comparative texts to ensure consistencies or patterns, of the same construct to form generalizations. Constant comparison simply allows for the addition and analysis of data to help guide the process of further data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The idea of methodologies like these is to allow for the process to "guide your *methods of data-gathering* as well as of theoretical development (Charmaz, 2006, p.16). Lindlof and Taylor (2011) consider it to be "one of the most influential models for analyzing qualitative data" (p.250). The goal is to either utilize or even create techniques that will help to give your ideas shape and form (Charmaz, 2006); as Moustakas (1994) notes to essentially make the study your own and a reflection of you. This is an advantage of qualitative studies over quantitative studies as Charmaz (2006) states, "We can add new pieces to the research puzzle or conjure entire new puzzles-while we gather data-and that can even occur late in the analysis (p.14). The type of methodology allows for freedom to and the ability to be guided by the data considering that my own journey and what I learn becomes a critical part of the research.

Each participant's story, including my own, serves a piece in a broad puzzle. The philosophy of collecting and analyzing data is based in large part on the understanding that no one person has the answers: "In both topical and cultural studies, rarely can you find a single individual who has all the information that you seek; instead, you look for people who know about particular parts of a problem and then piece together what they collectively know (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.66). In this case, what experiences do these participants share that could be

used to discover why they left their previous position and came to their current position? Each participant, including myself, therefore played a crucial role in creating a complete picture for this study.

After participant interviews were transcribed, I proceeded to code the data using thematic coding. "Coding labels segments of data with terms to summarize, categorize, and account for these segments" (Charmaz, Thornberg, & Keane, 2018, p.424). This was done primarily by extracting quotes, narratives, and responses that seem significant and tagging them with terms that summarize their general meaning. After the initial coding, themes were formulated through focused coding. Focus codes are used to sort through a large amount of data and are more "directed, selective, and conceptual than most initial codes" (Charmaz et al., 2018, p.426). Once these themes are created more questions can be produced in order to extract more data from participants to help fill in potential gaps in questions or experiences. This is also achieved through incident coding, a derivative of line-by-line coding through a comparative study of incidents (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) further explains, "here you compare incident with incident, then as your ideas take hold, compare incidents to your conceptualization of incidents to your conceptualization of incidents coded earlier. That way, you can identify properties of your emerging concept" (p.53). This was an important step in the analysis process because one incident a participant experienced gave a wealth of insight though the question may not have been directed to another participant. So, the question was added to the list of follow-up questions to then ask the other participants. This includes my own perception and experiences. Often, co-researches would make a point that I had not thought of and I would address these new insights in my reflection interviews. Incidents and experiences from other participants forced me to revisit and reevaluate an experience that I may have muted, or suppressed, or ignored

completely. This admission and revelation is a critical part of heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990).

After coding the data, I combined the similar codes together and formulated conclusions, or themes, from the patterns that emerged during this grouping. These themes were then broken down into sub-themes to better organize the coded data that correlates with the themes. Each theme correlated with the research question and sub-questions as well as with the characteristics of the participants and the setting of the study: i.e. the PWSD in which they worked. Analyzing, coding, and discovering themes are only part of the overall heuristic process.

Using constant comparative analysis, I interviewed, coded, and created themes using the initial responses. I went back to the data often while completing the initial coding after going back and listening, transcribing, and coding my own reflections. I then used these themes and my own suspicion of participant responses to guide the follow-up questions. This allowed me to add to the data and adjust the themes. One of the primary conclusions born from this process is the interrogation of the county being without flaws and behavior issues which was a common response by many participants. Further probing allowed me to adjust this love of the county, to a realization that they were simply comparing their experience in this new count to their old position. These methods ameliorate both the flexibility and focus of this methodology and should help "quicken the speed of gaining a clear focus on what is happening in the data without sacrificing the detail of enacted scenes" (Charmaz, 2006, p.14). Much of the process in the data collecting phase are detailed in the steps and process table provided in the section Heuristic Inquiry Process.

Heuristic Inquiry Process.

While researching Heuristic inquiry and finding other studies that utilized the process, three things occurred to me: One, there are two sets of processes (steps and phases specifically) that are presented and though they are related, they present different processes and understandings. Two, every study that utilizes this methodology is vastly different especially those researchers who used it for their dissertation. Lastly, the methodology lends itself to being adapted to better reflect the subject of the study, the phenomenon in question, and researcher and participants involved. Therefore, I have adapted the process based on my understanding of heuristic inquiry and what the creators of this process seem to suggest we do with it. The following table details my research process throughout the entire study as I move through each phase and step.

Table 6: My Heuristic Process

Phase	Step	Reflection
I E n n i g t a i g a m l e n t	**Identify with the focus of the study**	My initial engagement with the came with the idea for this study. Why am I here is the main question? Here is loaded in more ways than one. What are my experiences at a predominantly white school district? Why am I a teacher in the first place? Where did I come from and why am I the only person like me here? Identifying with the focus of this study assumes that I exist outside of the study I have created, but I do not. I am constantly aware of my position partly because I am often reminded through my relationship with my students and with other teachers; the comments I hear from others; and the practices I employ and compare to my colleagues. To truly embrace this heuristic inquiry I have simply opened my eyes and ears more to my everyday experience.
I s m i mo e n r	**Self dialogue**	Being immersed leads me to the next step which is the self-dialogue. This is a critical component. In this study the self-dialogue was completed through a self-interview, answering each of the interview questions thoughtfully and thoroughly. The process is truly reflective and heuristic because my own experiences predicated the questions and the direction of the entire study. Much of the honesty and the thoroughness of the answers in self-dialogue or self interviewing is naturally leads to the next phase incubation
I a n t c i u o b n		For Moustakas (1990, incubation is where the researcher "retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question." This is important because of the need to separate my experiences from the other participants before I begin the interviews. My self-interview was done months before even beginning to contact potential participants. I do not want my biases, opinions, and assumptions lead them towards what I expect or what I think we have in common in the way of feelings and motivations.
I l l l u m i n a t i o n	**Tacit knowing**	Once the processes of IRB approval, contacting potential candidates, sending out emails, getting signatures, and setting up interview times is over, the interviews can begin which leads to the next step: tacit knowing. Tacit knowing comes with an interaction with participants. Each answer to each question leads me to a different understanding of the motivating force behind becoming a teacher and seeking employment at this site. Assumptions here are usually shattered which in-turn has an overall effect on the research questions and sub-questions and overall direction of the study.
	Intuition	The tacit knowing in this instance is the relinquishing of assumptions of things like feeling guilty by coming to this county and the need to stay in the classroom to impact students which flood my interview answers. Hearing the responses of the other participants forces me to reevaluate some of my experiences. I cannot change my answers, nor should I; however, I can use these data to extend my answers and follow-up with myself about things I neglected to say and see a more complete picture I was too close to see
E x p l i c a t i o n	**Indwelling**	Now that all of the interviews are collected and transcribed, including my own interview and follow-up reflection interviews after each interview, the explication phase begins. In methodological terms this is the coding and finding themes phase. Part of this process includes indwelling and uncovering the essence of the shared experiences.
	Focusing	Coded data shows me patterns and these patterns tell deeper truths. Through focusing these deeper truths are translated into themes. This includes taking seemingly unrelated pieces of the puzzle and arranging them regardless of the individual or place or chronology; at this point, all coded data are pieces of a puzzle that have to be arranged to make a complete picture. The next step is to organize some of the key quotes to help support the themes discovered. This includes uncovering themes, showing sub-themes and organizing the pieces of experience that help complete the picture for those outside of the study.
C S r y y e n a t t h i e v s e i s	**Internal frame of reference**	Now with a completed puzzle the next step is to express these findings and synthesize them into a creative form of expression that answers the research question and represents who I am (Moustakas, 1995). If I am to frame this study and how I express the findings. I realize that our connection was so in tune that it was like we were in the same room. Moustakas (1995) suggests two to three exemplary portraits to represent the entire group (p. 50) but this is counter to my frame of reference. We are "connected" so we are in the same room, but we each maintain our individual personalities, motivations, experiences, backgrounds, and passion; so we are still individuals and therefore each should be given an individual portrait. A creative artifact would therefore not separate me from the room of participants; one should not be able to tell me from any of the other participants for this study to be truly heuristic. This creative artifact would also maintain the distinct voices each participant possesses stripped down to their essence. Almost as if we were all in a focus group being asked the research questions, collectively answering and sharing stories, experiences and feelings.

Researcher's Role

My role as a researcher permeates through all aspects of the study and goes beyond the typical parameters of a researcher in other qualitative studies; as Charmaz (2006) states, "Qualitative research of all sorts relies on those who conduct it" (p.15). More specifically heuristic inquiry requires that the study begins with the research through self-dialogue and self-recognition to uncover the "constituents and qualities" that make up an experience and also the researcher must have had direct personal experience with the phenomenon in question (Moustakas, 1990). A researcher's "background assumptions and disciplinary perspectives" guides them and directs them to look for certain patterns and themes in the data (Charmaz, 2006, p.16). Heuristic inquiry also requires the acknowledgement of the researcher's transformation in the process of this study as part of the data (Moustakas, 1990); therefore, my experiences are included in the research as an interview just as the other participants' interviews are. This means that data from my transcript were coded and analyzed with the data from other transcripts. Heuristic inquiry "encourages a researcher to explore openly and pursue the creative path that originates inside of one's being and that discovers its direction and meaning within oneself" (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010, p.1572).

Quay (2016) sees the start of any phenomenological inquiry as a leap requiring the researcher to get "wet, coughing, and spluttering, feeling what it is like, experiencing it, living it—to realize that phenomenology, like swimming, is not necessarily the same as reading about phenomenology" (p. 487). This metaphorical pool of phenomenology known as heuristic inquiry requires that I be both the swimmer and the surveyor of the event. "The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990,

p.9). Van Manen (1990) provides an astute and personal vantage from which to view a

researcher's interaction with phenomenological methods such as heuristic inquiry:

> The ego-logical starting point for phenomenological research is a natural consequence of
>
> the above remarks. My own life experiences are immediately accessible to me in a way
>
> that no one else's are. However, the phenomenologist does not want to trouble the reader
>
> with purely private, autobiographical facts of one's life. The revealing of private
>
> sentiments or private happenings are matters to be shared among friends perhaps, or
>
> between lovers, or in the gossip columns of life. In drawing up personal descriptions of
>
> lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that one's own experience are also the
>
> possible experiences of others. (p. 54)

Heuristic research differs considerably from other methodologies in that it views the researcher

as a participant (Djuarkovic & Arthur, 2010). Therefore, my role as a researcher is instrumental

in guiding the direction of study, reflecting on my own experiences before, during, and after data

collection and analysis while not allowing my own worldview to overtake that of my

participants. This was done through an initial self-interviewing process before beginning to

interview the participants, to not allow my own experiences, and conclusions thereof, to be

influenced by the interviews of the other participants. Furthermore, the heuristic process requires

that I go through an incubation period which allows me to step away from the data I collect for

the study for a period of time, to allow a sort of distancing from the phenomenon. This helps

with separating my own feelings and perceptions from what is objectively there (Moustakas,

1990). Ultimately being a part of this process should shed light on the issue of attrition and

migration of Black male teachers from predominantly Black, low-income areas and help me deal

with my own guilty for leaving one type of district for another.

Trustworthiness

Instead of validity of a study, qualitative researchers use trustworthiness (Glesne, 2016).

Trustworthiness stems from the co-construction and interpersonal contact with participants and

the subsequent data (Guercini, Raich, Müller, & Abfalter, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985)

provide a more succinct set of four criteria of trustworthiness including credibility,

transferability, confirmability, and dependability. In either case, the goal of trustworthiness is not

to provide deductive proof, through convincing persuasion the reader is compelled to accept the

research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness can be achieved through rigor and discipline

while collecting and analyzing data. "Both passionate and disciplined commitment to studying of

human experiences is necessary to ensure trustworthiness" (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010, p.

1572); however, there are different steps and practices to follow when dealing with qualitative

research. Ongoing absorption, reflection, and interaction by the qualitative researcher with the

data collection, analysis and interpretation processes are part of constructing trustworthiness that

constant comparison and chain of evidence establishes (Stewart & Gapp, 2013). Because of the

variety of methods and procedures, as well as the highly subjective nature of the participants'

perceptions and beliefs, I tried to be careful and methodical in trying to ensure trustworthiness. I

did this primarily by asking them to clarify their experiences during follow-up interviews and

asking participants about the experiences that other participants had. "Researchers and research

participants make assumptions about what is real, possesses stocks of knowledge, occupy social

statuses, and pursue purposes that influence their respective views and actions in the presence of

each other" (Charmaz, 2006, p.15). Dahler-Larsen, (2018) details the use of checklists in the

qualitative discipline in order to cover the large amount of criteria needed to validate qualitative

studies. Different criteria therefore apply to different forms of research; for instance, narrative

inquiry is based on how well a story is told versus in ethnography how detailed the observations are recorded. The experiences of each participant, including that of my own, were revisited and cross checked to ensure trustworthiness.

Dahler-Larsen, (2018) outlines four different ways to validate qualitative accounts: saturation, member checking, peer review, and audit trails. For this study, I used member checking to ensure validity of the findings. Member checking is typically a single event that takes place with transcripts or early parts of the analytic process and can lead to the conclusion that a study has been performed with rigor (Chase, 2017). Dahler-Larsen (2018) further argues that if done correctly, member checking leaves no room for questioning the analysis of the data and subsequent findings and ultimately leads to further inquiry of the implications and further research into the topic. In the above sections, I outlined my process through the different phases and steps, chronicling my journey throughout this experience. Adding myself as an anonymous participant also helps with cohesion of trustworthiness. My role as a researcher is documented throughout this chapter while my voice as a participant is stitched in through the inclusion of an interview that preceded any of the other interviews.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend member checking as a means of enhancing rigor in qualitative research, proposing that credibility is inherent in the accurate descriptions or interpretations of phenomena. Member checking is also a viable tool in ensuring trustworthiness. The popularity of member checking may be traced back to Lincoln and Guba (1985), who claimed that member checking is the 'most crucial technique for establishing credibility'. More recently, the method of returning an interview or analyzed data to a participant is also referred to as respondent validation or participant validation (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). This process is instrumental in heuristic inquiry since participants are considered more

like partners in constructing the research than participants on which to be experimented. Charmaz (2006), however, warns that methods alone do not "generate good research or astute analysis" (p.15), and that it is the job of the researcher to uphold the rigor and integrity of the study. It is for this reason member checking was used in this study not to merely minimize, but eliminate the possibilities of misrepresentation or misinterpretation of participants' experiences.

Lastly, an external audit or peer review is performed which is having a person outside the project read over the findings at different stages which is helpful in conceptualization and abstraction of data (Dahler-Larsen, 2018, p. 813). This was achieved through my dissertation advisor as she provided continuous feedback on drafts and manuscripts during this process. My advisor also created a supportive study group who was instrumental in critical peer feedback assisting in issues with the methodology, data collection and interpretation, as well as communication of ideas and clarity of verbiage.

Trustworthiness with regards to this heuristic study focuses on the authenticity of the narratives the researcher and participants create and how they are analyzed. This process and the burden of trustworthiness falls heavily on the researcher considering they are the direct step in data collection and analysis. Van Manen (1990) stresses the importance of realizing that the main point is not to ensure whether a certain experience occurred the exact way the researcher or participant recounts it; "we are less concerned with the factual accuracy of an account than with the plausibility of an account-whether it is true to our living sense of it (p. 65). Charmaz (2006) stresses the importance of being critical of your data without necessarily being critical of your participants, but instead "being critical forces asking *yourself* questions about your data. These questions help you to see actions and to identify significant processes" (p.51). I did this in two ways: asking participants questions about their own experiences in the first interview, and asking

participants to speak on similar experiences and phenomena of other participants. In a way I was

skeptical of their perception of their experiences especially considering that I share many of

these same experiences working in the same county. Qualitative researchers can never capture an

objective truth or reality (Van Manen, 1990) and this is not the mission of qualitative

researchers. In qualitative research, specifically in phenomenological or heuristic inquiry, the

aim is to comprehend and capture the participants' perspectives who are directly linked to the

phenomenon of interests. Much of this process is articulated in chapter four where the

presentation of data help to paint a picture of the process, including my own transformation,

thereby highlighting biases and assumptions.

Ethical Considerations and Procedures

It is important that the researcher adhere to procedures that protect the participants and

other actors involved in the study. The initial step taken by the researcher prior to data collection

was to gain approval through the Institution Review Board (IRB), which was achieved.

Satisfying this requirement helped to ensure that the procedures of this study were in no way

harmful to the participants nor were they unethical in their execution and protect the privacy of

the participants as well. To do this, pseudonyms are used for the county in which this study is

based and pseudonyms were used when discussing the participants.

Credibility in a qualitative study corresponds to internal validity in qualitative research

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Credibility was established by ethically recruiting and interviewing a

suitable group of volunteers who provided open and willing answers to interview questions. The

interactions between the participants and the interviewer allowed for open-end responses to the

interview questions, and supported the credibility of the collected data. Participants were also

informed of the potential impacts of the study, both negative and positive. Responsive

interviewers have an obligation to "deal ethically with their conversational partners, respect interviewees, and honor any promises made...This means not deceiving them, not pretending to be someone you are not, and not leading interviewees into thinking that some benefit will come to them from the research that you cannot deliver" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 97). Heuristic inquiry is centered around phenomenology or the way in which people orient their experiences; therefore, it is important that I respected the perceptions, beliefs, and feelings of my participants.

Summary

In the methodology section, I provided a description of the qualitative research design, the setting and sampling method, the strategy for data collection, and the data analysis plan. This heuristic inquiry aimed to discover why these 10 Black male content teachers left a predominantly Black disadvantaged school system to teach at a more affluent PWSD. The method used to collect data was interviewing. I have included my own initial interview with that of the other participants as per the heuristic process. The transcribed interviews were coded and themes were extracted from the data. In chapter four, I discuss the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Chapter four includes an explanation of the data collected throughout the study. The results are based upon the overall experiences of 10 Black male teachers in a predominantly White school district (PWSD). Their responses are organized based on the research question and sub-questions. Through interviewing, I explored the experiences of these Black male teachers, then interviewed them again asking them about their perception of these experiences and the experiences of other participants. This phenomenological interview process allowed participants to speak about their experiences teaching in a PWSD, what challenges they face, why they left their previous position, and why they remain a teacher. This chapter is divided into four sections: The Restatement of the Purpose, The Theoretical Orientation and Conceptual Framework, Findings, and Summary.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this heuristic inquiry was to explore the experiences of Black male teachers who teach in a PWSD. This study was an attempt to discover the experiences, specifically the who, what, why, and how of Black male content teachers who shared my experience of leaving a predominantly Black, low-income district, to a predominantly White and more affluent one. Findings from this study could lead to a better understanding of why Black male teachers leave predominantly Black, disadvantaged school districts to teach in districts with different demographic, as these participants did. The overarching research question for this study is: What are the experiences of Black male content teachers in a predominantly White school district? The sub questions include:

1. Why did they come: What contributed to these Black male content teachers seeking employment in a PWSD?

2. Why do they stay: What motivates these Black male content teachers to remain in the classroom?

3. How do they stay: What challenges do these Black male content teachers face in a PWSD?

Through the Four Capital Framework for Attrition and Retention and Critical Race Theory, this study may give insight into the experiences of a subset of teachers who arguably leaving areas that need them most.

Theoretical Orientation and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework was used to analyze the experiences of the participants. The Four Capital Model for Attrition and Retention was applied to the research questions and sub-questions to organize participant responses. The participants in this study have different experiences in their previous county as well as their current county. As they responded to the interview questions their experiences were coded and themes were created and then arranged based on the research questions with correlating quotes added for support. The quotes that referred to their leaving or staying were then categorized as: human capital, or the amount of experience and content knowledge they possess; social capital, or the relationship with others; structural capital, or the building and policies of the school and larger district; positive psychological capital, or the amount of grit, resilience, and motivation they inherently possess (Mason & Matas, 2015). For instance, if a participant reported that they had an issue with administrative policies in one county and another participant reported respecting and applauding administration in a different county, both of these were categorized as structural capital: the

former shows a lack of structural capital which may have led to their leaving while the latter shows an abundance of structural capital and may be a factor in their staying. If a participant talked about how much they loved their students or how close they were with their students, this would be categorized as an abundance social capital. Whereas a participant who may have responded that they did not feel like they were able to teach because of discipline issues in class may be interpreted as different forms of capital; Does this fall under lack of positive psychological capital because of his lack of resilience, maybe a lack of personal connection between the students which would be human capital, or perhaps the lack of support from administration to deal with discipline issues which would fall under structural capital? Ambiguous responses like these were further interrogated in their follow-up interviews where I asked the participants to respond to the experiences in the previous interview in an attempt to gain clarity and specificity to the nature of their experiences.

CRT was applied to the research question and sub-questions to gain a deeper understanding of the participant experiences by looking through a more critical lens. CRT suggests that Black people suffer from systemic disadvantages and that a critical examination of educational policies and procedures, as well as the experiences of Black people, could uncover many of these injustices. CRT also acknowledges the voice of people of color as a viable source of knowledge in a society where they are often mitigated and ignored (Dixson & Rousseau). Issues such as the ubiquity of racism in this country (Matsuda et al., 1993; Taylor, 2009), whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), the marginalized voices of people of color as well as the micro aggressions they face (Delgado, 1989; Matsuda et al., 1993) as well as other factors, were all important in contextualizing the participant responses. As their responses are categorized

based on the different forms of capital, I used CRT as a lens to analyze and gain a deeper

understanding of their experiences. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) developed a methodology

around CRT to focus on the accounts of people of color in the school systems to show possible

issues of inequality and racial privilege. This was a similar goal in this study; whereas on the

surface, a participant may have left their previous school because of structural capital, more

specifically their issues with administrative discipline policies, applying a CRT lens to this

incident led to the realization that some discipline policies are created by people who are far

removed from the schools in which they are applied and are unequally applied to students of

color.

Lastly, it is important to critically examine the taxonomy of the Four Capital Model for

Attrition and Retention because of its being applied to a unique population. Because these

participants are Black males, many of the Eurocentric values of "capital," as well as the four

branches of this model, have to be calibrated to fit their unique identity. In fact, one major issue

CRT scholars attribute to issues in education is the way in which policies and curriculums are not

designed for students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Therefore, I applied Afrocentric

ideologies and philosophies (Akbar, 1979; Asante, 1991; Hilliard, 1995) in the analysis of their

experiences to further push back against the Eurocentric frame in which the Four Capital Model

is entrenched.

Findings

My method for answering the research question and sub-questions included asking the

participants the initial interview questions about their experiences which ranged from their

educational experiences as a student to why they became a teacher (see appendix 1). I asked

probing questions to ask for clarity on some responses, I also shared a similar experience when a

participant spoke about an experience similar to one that I had. My interjection of these experiences, as well as my self-interview, and the short reflection interviews I recorded after each interview, aided in documenting my change throughout the process. These answers, including my own interview responses, were then initially coded and organized into loose categories. I then conducted follow-up interviews asking the participants questions clarifying their initial responses and the responses of other participants. These interviews were transcribed and coded as well (along with my reflection interviews). I then organized them into themes that correlated with the research question and sub-questions, adding excerpts of their responses as support. In the analysis, the themes and codes are arranged based on the participants' desire to leave or stay and whether they were content or not. This made it easier to categorize their feelings based on the Four Capital Model. These data were returned to after the initial coding phase, and adjusted after each follow-up interview and self-reflection. This constant comparison analysis was important in adjusting the codes as these follow-up phenomenological interviews were conducted as well as interrogating the responses of some participants through other participants' perceptions. Their responses were then analyzed further using CRT to uncover deeper implications for their experiences and the reasons why the left one county and planned to stay in the other. Below the research questions and sub-questions are presented, including the findings and followed by the analysis of each. This chapter ends with a conclusion on the findings.

Sub-Research Question 1 (SRQ-1): Why did they come?
What factors contributed to Black males seeking employment at a PWSD?

The first sub-question is important because it gives background information about their previous experiences, which provides possible context on why they left, as well as the county in

which they now work. All of the participants left high minority, low-income, urban schools to come to Hamilton County. This correlates with the research on Black males leaving urban schools in higher numbers than other types of schools (Ingersoll et al., 2017). If the overall purpose of this study is to discover the reason why theses participants left predominately Black school districts to teach at a PWSD and explore their experiences in this new district, it is important to explore where they came from.

For SRQ1, the categories generated the following two themes: "Why I Left" with the subthemes: issues with students, administration, and the district and/or community; proximity to where they live or where they want to live; desiring a change; and, "Final Straw" which is one instance that gave them the impetus to finally decide to leave. The second theme is "Where I Ended Up" which focuses on the PWSD in which they are now employed. The sub-themes under this theme include: ease of being hired, coveted county, teaching at a predominantly Black school within the PWSD, and mismatch between White teachers and Black students.

The sub-themes under "Why I Left" all fall within the structural capital and social capital realms. Participants cited social issues, i.e., issues with individuals, namely students and the culture of the school and the surrounding community, as well as structural issues including the policies and procedures of the school such as lack of administrative support and increased administrative tasks and levels of accountability (Mason & Matas, 2015). However, the Four Capital Framework does not address the deeper inequities that may be at the root of many of the issues in these previous district and schools. The sub-themes under "Where I Ended Up" fall under different capitals as well, however, deeper implications of segregation and discrimination emerged as a CRT lens was applied in the analysis. The findings and analysis of both themes are presented below.

Theme 1: Why I Left.

All of the participants have experience in predominantly Black, low-income areas and nine of them came directly from these types of schools. When probed on why they came to the county many steered the question to why they left and cited several reasons including: issues with students, administration and the district and/or community; proximity to where they live or where they want to live; desiring a change; and, almost all of them had an experience which one participant coined as the "Final Straw," which is one instance that gave them the impetus to finally decide to leave.

Most participants acknowledged the unfortunate circumstances from which many of their previous students were coming:

Barry: 100 percent free and reduced lunch-it was your typical school. A lot of African-American or Latino students, Project housing, Trailer park-trailer park homes...That whole [nine]

Interviewer: So how was teaching there different from teaching here? How is teaching here? Is it better...?

Barry: In some ways one is better than the other. I honestly believe every teacher should teach in some form of an environment like that where students don't have much. They're not used to working with Black men as authoritative figures. It really broadens your perspective of what this country is like and what a lot of our kids are growing in.

Barry' account of the demographics of his previous school shows a stark difference from where he is now. It is also important to note that he did not definitely say the experience is better or worse. This pattern of accepting the predominantly low-income environments from which they came was evident in most of the other participants' responses, where the characteristics were

more of a condition than an issue. This acknowledgement coincides with Matsuda et al. (1993)

proposition of racism being endemic to American life and specifically the normalcy of the

advantages of those in power (Taylor, 2009). Nevertheless, many also cited behavior of the

students as a growing nuisance that ultimately led to their leaving. Observe one participant's

epiphany at his previous school:

> In a classroom a master teacher quickly understands that these kids are your audience and
> no more than an actor in front of a crowd who's not paying attention can entertain or
> benefit their audience, a teacher standing in front in front of 30 young people who have
> no interest, concern, or desire for what I am saying to you are not going to learn
> regardless of how passionate I am about my lesson plan. So there is it and at this point
> and we as teachers understand it that teaching requires willing participants on both
> sides... (Jordan)

Jordan's frustration with the students went beyond apathy in class. Studies show that class

management is a major reason that teachers leave predominantly minority and low-income areas

(Ingersoll et al., 2017).

Other participants cited things like violence, unruliness, and other actions that are not

permitted on school grounds. "Much of my job was focused around the behavioral issues that

were present in our school and in our school system…" (Jordan). And Wally noted, "the system

the discipline we had to deal with was criminal." Furthermore, many talked at length about being

hired at certain schools intentionally to help clean the school up.

> Glen County gave me another contract, three years in a gang infested school. I didn't
> know that at the time though. And he recruited five Black men: three of us went to one
> school, 2 of us went to another school and we were told to clean the school up. Those

were the words, "clean the school up." It was a middle school…It was pretty rough at

first. Well we did clean the school up, we worked some Disney magic on that school. We

got rid of 32 kids the first year. (Wally)

Consider Wally' comment on working "Disney magic" on a "gang infested school." Below

Barry speaks about a similar experience at his previous school:

My first school, my principal hired five Black men, my year, I was on the sixth grade.

There were two who were seventh grade, one was eighth grade, and one was a

connections teacher. She did that intentionally. For one the school had a high turnover

rate. They had a lot of issues with behavior. You know they just couldn't find people to

handle or really relate to the students. The boys in particular. So she kind of, when she

started to hire she had certain person she was looking for…. We came off of the needs

improvement list my second year there. That was before CCRPI, I can't remember what

that was. I mean we just all came in and we were all brand new to the teaching

profession. So we kind of had, that *save the world* mentality and you know we were

willing to stay after school, we were sponsoring clubs, coach teams, like whatever she

need we were willing to do. So it was awesome and me and the connections teacher are

the only ones still teaching-the other three are in administration. (Barry)

"She did that intentionally" meaning that the principal purposely hired Black males to enforce

school rules where she assumed they would excel in a population of similar demographics.

Research has shown that Black males are often used as disciplinarian tools in the more difficult

districts (Bristol, 2015; Brokenbrough, 2012). However, both Wally and Barry looked at this

almost as a duty and were successful in helping young men in their respective schools. Again

this speaks to Hilliard's (1995) concept of socialization. It is also important to note, that even in arguably difficulty situations, both Wally and Barry had the administrative and resource support to initiate the change they desired. Jordan, however, makes no mention of administrative or resource support. In fact, Jordan spoke of an incident where he was monitoring students and got into a physical altercation with young men who he later found were participating in a gang initiation.

> I knew almost every student in the building. And this particular young man I did not recognize, and as the building was being cleared a very negative encounter took place and I later found out was the product of a gang initiation but as I'm closing down my end of the building, and like I said before, I had many different administrative duties that I performed on a frequent basis to help out administration and a lot of times those of us who have them go as you do that with the impression that that opportunity [to advance] is going to later present itself. But sometimes you find out you're just somebody's workload. Long story short, I'm in this area to building-it's the oldest part of the building, student body is well aware of the cameras on this of the hall don't work. This was almost a vacant area the building there. And I found myself in a fight. Was lured to this area by this kid. You know you can recognize it in hindsight, and as soon as I turned this corner, to basically follow like to correct his action, because you're going against the traffic flow and everything else. And then got to this one particular area. He turned around and confronted me physically and spit in my face. And that's a fight. From the son my father raised regardless of how old you ever get, that's a fight. And we found ourselves in a fight, but I wasn't fighting myself. I mean, I wasn't by myself because at the point that I

turned around I was surrounded by him two of the students and five minutes later I was in a fight. And now I'm willing to say at this point for my survival…

Jordan does relay the aberrant experience as something he did not like to talk about or relive, but when asked was that the final straw in compelling him to leave he responded unexpectedly:

Well I'll be honest it was the thing that happened after that lead me to decide to leave because, I grew up in a big family so I've been outnumbered before just by my family and people who love me. I've dealt with dudes who were five and ten years older than me, they just people who love me. So you know they're your cousins they still rough you up a little bit, it's with love, they don't hurt you-hurt you. So I found myself in a fight in an outnumbered situation, but in a situation, I'm still dealing with kids. They got overpowered. …They took off but the one kid, we're in a struggle, because, you're not getting away. I'm taking you upstairs you're going to jail today. But he worked his way loose: we're literally fighting out our clothes. He got away ran out the building ran through the neighborhood and at this point I'm literally trying to pull myself together and figure out what just happened. Went upstairs to try to find somebody to attempt to report this. There was nobody in the building but janitors-administrators home, teachers gone. So as frustrated as I was I literally went to the locker room, cleaned myself up and got in the car and went home. By the time I got home because I was sitting down to write an incident report or something because I had it this point there's Nobody even for me to talk to. And my principal called me and she's upset, "what happened and dah-duh-dah-dah-dah!" And she has all these questions because now the mother has come back with student. She has tracked her down through the resource officer and now they've scurried

back to school to act as if they were there. The mother reports her version of what happened. The mother of the student and literally her only concern was who was going to pay for this shirt. She had now placed a value of four hundred dollars on it and she wanted $400 and this was all gone go away and I told her I will see you in court. And she-over the course of the next several months, this thing carried on. I had to go to court. I was accused as being the attacker all of these-I mean attempted to ruin my reputation as an educator, and the whole time I'm just asking for the videotape that does not exist. And even when being questioned by the principal, I tried to-because I wasn't being fully supported, and I asked her this question and that's when everything turned around. I said, "Now I'm concerned. Who are you more worried about suing you, her or me? Because there some things I need to remind you of: 1, I'm down here on this hallway by myself and you know it; these cameras have been out for two and a half years and you know it; there's no other man on this hallway and nobody no other person willing to even step in that position; and I've made it known to you and security and everybody else and we haven't done anything about it. So it's time for you to weigh your concern…

When revisiting this issue with Jordan and asking him what was the main source of his frustration and resentment in the situation, he mentioned the lack of support from the administration in handling the altercation not the altercation itself. In fact, he mentions, "I don't blame the young man, I know the complexity of gang culture. My beef was with the principal and the lack of support" (Jordan). Again, Jordan's issue is with, what Mason and Matas (2015) would categorize as a lack of structural capital, primarily the support of his administration and not the more extreme social issues that many urban areas face which it appeared to be in the beginning. This is an example of how it was important to conduct phenomenological follow-up

interviews asking participants about their own perception of experiences they related. This allowed me to return back to the data and adjust the codes and subsequent themes, as their perspective of the phenomenon becomes more clear. All participants seem to acknowledge these issues; however, they are able to make positive impacts only when they have a supportive administration which was not the case in many schools. Jordan's case is an extreme example; however, his response speaks volume to the participants' understanding of the dire situations they are in their desire for administrative support in order to combat these social ills.

Jordan mentioned a similar issue when relaying his harrowing story. He spoke of the helping administration but:

> I had many different administrative duties that I performed on a frequent basis to help out administration and a lot of times those of us who have them go as you do that with the impression that that opportunity [to advance] is going to later present itself. But sometimes you find out you're just somebody's workload.

Oliver, Wally, Jordan's experiences speak to the use of Black males as administrative tools in schools. Each of theme viewed these responsibilities differently: Jordan assumed they were a segue into administration; Wally seemed to relish in the impacts that were made in his responsibilities, while Oliver simply saw it as a duty.

Finally, some just wanted a change. These were categorized into feelings of curiosity, fatigue, burnout, and simply wanting to teach; however, even this pattern of reasons in wanting a change have more complex implications. Below, Bruce talks about wanting to see how the other half lived when asked why he left to come to Hamilton County. Among the cost of living in the south and better neighborhoods, Bruce admitted:

Because I was just curious. I worked in predominantly Black schools and I just couldn't believe that we were just so awful in terms of education. That I was just curious I'm like-What is it really that different. What is it like really to be in a school-a predominantly white school and what are they learning? I was just really curious and I really wanted to know. Like I said, I've been in the trenches for X amount of years and I just really wanted to know what was the difference because I just feel like as a people, no matter what school I went to, it was a predominantly black school and it was the same thing: one level of violence to another. It was one level of apathy to another. And I just couldn't understand why that was the case… And plus because I went to a predominantly white college, I felt like, for whatever reason, they connected to professors better: they seemed more equipped for college than I did. And I was like are they learning something different? What is happening in their environment that makes their situation, in terms of transition, better and their way of life better? So I went in there thinking I need to investigate what's happening in a predominantly White school.

When asked about why he left his previous position, Oliver remarked:

Kids were always in and out, suspended, then that started to shift where they wouldn't discipline them anymore now you can't have school because the buildings in chaos. so it was it was always a tug of war everyday going to work. I was doing more of overseeing, like it was some type of prison camp or something. That's what it felt like. Fights every day, disrespect that was blatant towards administration all the way down to us as educators and there was no recourse-no reprimanding to the students at that point.

Bruce's curiosity and Oliver's fear are apt culmination of the feelings of all the participants. Both reacted to the perception of their monolithic experience of predominantly Black schools in urban districts differently. Bruce's hunger to understand how predominantly White schools operated differently paired with his desire to move from the north which included a host of other reasons he wanted to move. He admitted, when asked about this experience, that he was "curious in his move" and "discovered a difference" upon being hired. He realized this when he reflected on his own experience in college and how he realized that his White counterparts were better prepared than he was. "I just felt like I wasn't educating; I felt like it was just time. I needed to have a different outlook now. I don't want that to be the only vision I had of education." His sentiment is echoed by the other participants who seemed to persevere in these harsh conditions because of their commitment to teach and help students, and their frustration to help young people in a system that was essentially designed to be against them.

Theme 2: Where I Ended Up.

In chapter three, a blueprint of the county was provided. These findings provide a more in depth portrait of the county and the themes drawn from the data collected from the participants. Several themes surrounding the context of the district were discovered. First, it became evident that Black male teachers are being recruited and hired at a higher rate than what is typical of the county in years past. Also, though all of the participants teach in a PWSD, they all teach at predominantly Black schools within the district. While some chose to teach at a school with the aforementioned demographics others were unaware of the segregation. Finally, the abundance of

Black students means there was a huge mismatch between the demographic of the teachers and the students at these particular schools.

The first significant observation identified was the large presence of minority students enrolled in the schools in which the participants were employed. Referring back to the chapter three, two schools out of the five major high schools and their middle school feeders are predominantly minority, with Black students representing the largest minority group (over 65% in all four schools). One participant noted, "Even though it's in a PWSD the school is definitely predominantly Black and you know those are the kids that I service the most" (Clark). Another participant, Bruce, shared a similar observation. He has been in the county for over 10 years, compared to all of the other participants who together averaged under two years in the county. The significance of this difference will be discussed following the discussion of the rest of the themes for the county profile. Bruce is an outlier in more ways than just his length of tenure. As more data is presented, his connection to some of the other participants in this study will be uncovered. Below he explains the county dynamics:

> Well there's two pipelines and one is in Jeffersonville and one is in Adamstown and those two pipelines are predominantly Black. And the difference between the Adamstown pipeline is that, that the access point is affluent in terms of homes, they're the middle to high in terms of cost of homes and cost of living for Black people period. The Jeffersonville side is more of an axis point of lower worker middle class with some pockets of affluence based upon how the way the town is set up. There are eight apartments in the Jeffersonville pipeline. Which is the most of any other pipeline. So in terms of transiency in terms of access you have more opportunities for people to move into Jeffersonville and get the benefits of the Hamilton school system than you would

someone who's moved into say the Pleasantville pipeline (the most affluent city) where there are very few apartments and the houses are much pricier...So the access point for Jeffersonville allows more or people in a lower socioeconomic class despite their race. It just so happens that because of the closeness of Luther County, anyone who wants a better school environment can just move right across the river to get the first apartment building and get into the school system and reap the benefits. So you're going to get a certain clientele.

This dynamic is not unusual. De-facto segregation along racial and economic lines were present long before Brown v. Board (Fridie, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Bruce remarks that the Jeffersonville pipeline or feeder zone has eight apartments which is far more than any of the other five pipelines. This was followed by an increase in the minority population over the last decade which may have precipitated a change in school zone lines. One participant commented on talking to his students about the change:

I heard my students talking about an old middle school and how they missed it. When I asked about it they were so passionate about it. They all talked about how their school was just about all Black and they had so much fun and took trips and had great teachers but then the school was closed and they were mixed with a predominantly White middle school. Half of those [White] kids were rezoned into another newer school. The students talked about how the teachers were racist and how they lost so many privileges. Parents got involved and protested and they were just so miserable. I was shocked at how many of them had the same narrative about the White students and teachers. They treated them like they were inferior. And this was like five or six years ago so something huge happened with the demographics shifting…

Clark's comments show some of the consequences of the influx of minorities into a

predominantly White school system. Oddly enough, when probed, Clark admitted that a majority

of the students who experienced this were from inside of the county suggesting that there was a

microcosm of middle and upper income Black people who were already segregated but this is

only speculation. John's previous experience in a county with a similar dynamic gave him

insight into the possible politics of this county:

> When I say demographics is pretty much the same and-just like just like there-here, it
>
> seems like the pockets of economically disadvantaged are funneled into the same schools
>
> and the affluent are zoned into other schools. And if they have to change zoning a little
>
> bit to make sure it stays that way, they do it.

He suggests agency of separating peoples and that zoning practices and procedures are directives

from county leaders used to segregate populations. As seen earlier in chapter three, there has

been an influx in minorities into the county. Barry echoes this sentiment: "I'm not just looking at

that and how there's kind of a system to keep things separate but you know, hey you guys got

your Chromebook and your promethean boards so you know, what's the problem" (Barry). His

comment acknowledges the segregation of the majority Black and the majority White schools in

the district, and the resources, in the form of technology, provide the illusion of equality when

this may not be the case. Also, Oliver, who was living in Hamilton County before teaching there

noted:

> I think the demographics are changing, but I think It's changing where you have Black
>
> people who move into Hamilton who generally want something better educationally for

their children. As opposed to where I came from, they moved all the time it didn't really matter which school.

Oliver had been living in Hamilton County before starting to teach there so he has more of an insider view of this supposed migration than many of the other participants. He acknowledges the migration of minorities from neighboring disadvantaged school districts and believes these individuals are the ones who value education for their students. This will be supported later in the participants' perception of their previous school compared to Hamilton County schools.

Furthermore, most of the participants admitted to how easy it was to be hired into the county despite hearing that Hamilton County is typically considered a difficult district to get hired into. This was usually discovered only after being hired. Other patterns were found under the umbrella of this theme including, how easily the participants acquired their position and what I entitled "opportunities out of the sky." This points to the idea of interest convergence where their being hired may be more to address something the in the district than a typical hiring. This is one conclusion that can be drawn from the sudden influx of minorities into the county and then a sudden increase in Black male teachers. For example, Jordan spoke about how he did not need to go the extra mile to get his position:

I hadn't done any excessive homework, I hadn't dug into my networking pools, made phone calls or any of those things like I normally have to do, I simply put in an application...The first call I got for an interview was Mr. Bridges (pseudonym, principal of Jeffersonville High). Less than 24 hours after we spoke on the phone he scheduled an interview. The following day I interviewed...And by the end of the day I had a job offer. I didn't interview at any other school. I didn't apply to any other school at Hamilton County.

Jordan's comments suggest that typically a teacher has to utilize connections to gain easy access to a desired county. Oliver shared a similar experience where Hamilton County was "the first to call him back" and Clark was offered a job at two different schools within the county. Some participants also spoke about stumbling onto the prospect of Hamilton County:

> Is a funny story. I didn't really know about this district but I guess my melancholy at my last job, at the elementary school, was so pronounced that this one guy he brought this flyer to me and it was for Hamilton County and he was like, hey man I thought about you when we were talking yesterday. It just seemed like, you know, you're having a hard time here [and] you don't really like it here so why don't you check it out. And it's, I'm not very religious, but it was almost like he was sent from God because it just so happened that the fair was like the next day or the day after. (Clark)

Clark was given information about Hamilton County being a prospect but otherwise had no prior knowledge of the county's dynamics or that there were open positions. Stewart's story of acquiring a position at Hamilton County in the midst of larger surrounding counties at a job fair shares a similar pattern, while John admits that he stumbled upon the county from moving from the north by luck:

> They had a job fair there and so we were there and everybody was there and Green County was like all the way out the door miles out the door-the line was long…[towards the end of the fair] All that stuff was broken down and we were getting ready to leave and Hamilton County was the last school on our list. It paid well, relatively speaking, but we were just tired. So we were getting ready to leave, man without even stopping by. Mr. Bridges was manning the booth for Hamilton county with another principal: just those

two for some reason and they saw my wife and I and said, "Hey you guys haven't stopped

by to talk to us." I said well who are you? She said Hamilton County and I'm like, who's

that? And we talked to them Mr. Bridges was like, "Hey, I want you to call me. I'd like

you to consider us." So we canceled that meeting in Grayson, or canceled that house visit

and we rolled our heads to Hamilton County and man....just as soon as we came out here,

you know, things just kind of fell in place... We rolled around like man it's got a slow

feel...It's not far from the city and we just thought it was great man. So just that little bit

Mr. Bridges and the lady and us walking over because we were about to leave. It just

happened. So we went home and begin to apply. My wife got picked up at Dale County.

It's about 30 minutes from here. And of course I got at Jeffersonville High. And so it was

great man. (Stewart)

Interviewer: So what led you to Hamilton County? Because I mean you know you've

circumvented a lot of counties to-Hamilton County is a very specific, you know….

John: Yeah I've learned that people like it here! It's like…

Interviewer: Don't tell me you ended up here by luck?

John: That really is it. I put in an application and got a call back.

Interviewer: So. OK. So you just stumbled onto this county and you say you realized that

people are trying to get in.

John: Yeah…

In both instances the participants were essentially sought out or were called back, unaware of

how highly coveted the county is by those who had knowledge of it. This is in stark contrast to

what some of the participants said about what they had heard about Hamilton County being

highly desired. Clark notes, "People I know who work in other counties are so surprised when I tell them where I work now. I didn't know it was so hard to get into the county." Stewart also, when probed about the supposed exclusivity of the county, remarked:

> I didn't know man, I never had heard...Like I said when we were looking on the stuff online....and to be honest we were kind of drained, I mean I was, because I'm military I move a lot but it was tough you know. And I got tired looking at home I got tired of looking at stuff. And so had Mr. Bridges not stopped us we probably would have never looked there-we would've gone to Green County. And so now we know about the growth and people trying to get in. We didn't know that.

The discrepancy is glaring unless we account for two important elements: one, time is an important factor. Looking at all the participants the average length of time in the county is two years (if we exclude Bruce, who is the obvious outlier). In fact, Victor's experience speaks to this phenomenon of timeliness:

> Victor: Before I got this position, I had interviewed for several years in this county and even at a school where I was a student. And I did well in college, and they knew me around the district from my mom being an educational consultant but it was really difficult for me...I interviewed with all five principals for three years and got nowhere. They would say, "Oh yeah your resume is just fine, but it's not...it's just not a good fit."
> Interviewer: So was this that you were saying that you were trying to get into the school system and then you had a difficult time with. What year would you say that was?
> Victor: (Counting to himself) 18, 17...I started at Cornell High in 2016 so maybe 14, 13, 12 when I tried to get in at first...

Victor still had difficulty getting a job in Hamilton County six years prior to this study even though he is a graduate of the county, has parents who taught in the county, and contacts and connections to help him get hired. This suggests that a change in the county may have prompted an increase need for Black male teachers, not only in hiring them but in some cases seeking them out. As one of the people who hired Clark mentioned to him: "If they don't see it, they can't be it…" Alluding to his being a model for the young Black men who make up the majority of the population at his school. Hiring more Black males to address the influx of minorities into the county and into these particular schools is an example of CRT's interest convergence. Though the hiring of these Black males can be considered a positive impact on the local community, the fact that all of the new hires were funneled into these four predominantly Black schools in the county creates other questions. Were these teachers purposely placed here or did they choose to teach at these particular schools within the county?

Secondly, part of the ease of acquiring a position in Hamilton County may be based on the fact that all participants, with the exception of one, taught at majority Black schools within the PWSD. Again, excluding Bruce who is the only Black male content teacher to teach at Gladwell High, all of the participants teach at predominantly Black schools in the county. In fact, based on my research, there are no Black male content teachers at any of the other schools except for several P.E. coaches, three elective teachers, two foreign language teachers, and one Black male assistant principal in one of the predominantly White schools (Lakefront High). This is far from unusual, research shows that Black male teachers mostly teach in urban and majority Black areas, (Ingersoll et al., 2017). And though many of the participants could probably attribute their being hired to changes in the county's demographics, some even admitted to avoiding majority White schools within the district which will be discussed later.

Also, though some of the participants purposely avoided the predominantly White schools within the county, others were unaware of the segregation until after they were hired.

I remember going into class like the first day and seeing my roster and any kid showed up and I'm like, "Where did all of you Black kids come from?" So you know maybe it was or maybe it was a majority White county or majority White school at one point but it certainly isn't anymore. (Clark)

Clark's anecdote suggests that he was unaware that an influx of minorities had come into the county. Another participant had a similar revelation seeing one of the other schools in the district but after talking to the teachers he discovered that the majority White schools had a position that is more coveted in the county:

And I remember we took our kids to a job fair that they did and it was our school. And I know the school and we got there first so you know our kids were kind of floating around looking at the exhibits and then the other school walked in and it was all White kids. I pulled the counselor to the side and I said, "Where are the Obamas?" (he laughs), you know where are all the Black kids? And they're like... yeah you understand now. So it's kind of like, what does it take for a Black male teacher to get into a school like that? Because even when I talk to their teachers they're like we don't write lesson plans and we wear jeans every day. We kind of give the kids the content and they go and they do it and they perform well on these tests and it's kind of like, you know, we have to fight an uphill battle…(Barry)

Barry's experience suggests that though the county's positions are desired, a hierarchy has been created within the county. Barry seems to almost covet the position in the predominantly White school when he relays that they can "wear jeans every day" and "don't write lesson plans."

Also, in the previous discussion, participants spoke about being used in different administrative capacities in their previous positions. Leaving their old school system, however, did not change the way they were used as disciplinarian agents in Hamilton County:

> I don't have discipline issues in my class....and I teach a lot of Black males in my classroom-I think it's almost on purpose sometimes (Wally)

> I started noticing that I was getting a lot of the new students from like Macon county and Lumen county and so I started asking and finally one of the counselors told me that he was purposefully putting those students in my class. I didn't really mind but-but I was a little taken aback. Those kids always have a hard time adjusting but he said he did it because all of the students speak highly of me, so it's cool (Clark).

> So you know there's always that thing but you know even here, at this school, I don't know about the other middle schools you've been to, is still a predominantly White staff here. So a lot of times they'll, my team will run into my room and say, "Can I just put him in here." Several boys they've swapped their schedules so that they're in here more so than in their classes…(Barry)

Wally, Clark, and Barry each speak to abundance of Black males in their classes in schools that still have a majority of White female teachers. I mention in the previous section the hiring of Black male teachers to address the influx of Black students, here it seems that within the school a

similar pattern of ethnic matching is evident as well. Observe what one administrator from a previous school said to Stewart:

> Stewart: we had a lot of Black males...A lot! -Because to be honest the administrators, they want Black males in the core classes.
>
> Interviewer: Why? Why do you think that?
>
> Stewart: Because of the demographic and their mentality-was it was simple math. If we got 75-80 percent Black they need to have people who looked like them teaching them not just, and I'm not knocking P.E, but teaching core classes, especially English because, to me, that is the most fundamental disciplines, and so to have Black males teaching not just general-ed but AP, teaching math...that was something that they weren't overt about it but they wanted the kids to have that. And they-what they told me that off the record, you know, we want some "us" here. And so that was deliberate…

Stewart's experience shows the administrator's view from a statistical standpoint. An apt perception considering that in all types of schools (urban, suburban, high poverty, affluent, high minority, etc…), regardless of demographics, White females make up the majority of the teaching staff (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Furthermore, if schools are segregated within Hamilton County, it stands to reason that many of the participants' experiences are similar from their previous county to Hamilton County. Wally, Clark, and Barry all commented on having to carry a heavier load of Black male students under the assumption that they can "handle" them better. Research is clear on this argument. Black males are often assumed to be natural enforcers and can therefore deal with unruly students (Bristol, 2015b; Brokenbrough, 2015). It is important to note, however, that this does not seem to bother the participants, in fact as Barry's response

implies, many of the participants embrace this proximity and use it as an opportunity to teach and mentor these young Black males.

Theoretical Analysis of Data Associated with SRQ-1.

In answering the sub-research question "Why did they Come," two major themes emerged: "Why I Left," and "Where I Ended Up" with sub-themes contained within each. Initial analysis of the reasons for why they left seemed to suggest that participants left because of discipline issues and class management as the research suggests (Ingersoll et al., 2017) which would fall under a lack of human capital, or their experience and pedagogical knowledge or social capital which is would be the lack of connection to the students; however, after further analysis the real issue was the lack of administrative support in dealing with these discipline issues. Analysis of both themes using The Four Capital Model and Critical Race Theory (CRT) uncovered similar conclusions. For instance, analysis of the theme, "Where I Ended Up," uncovered instances of segregation and Whiteness as Property. Much of this overlaps with the sub-themes from the previous theme. For instance, the sub-theme "proximity to where they live or wanted live" had implications of Whiteness as Property (Harris, 1995). In this case, the county had wealth and other benefits compared to some of the surrounding counties. For instance, Oliver already lived in the county though he worked in one of the predominantly Black, disadvantaged counties. He said he chose Hamilton county because he was either going to "pay for private school or pay the extra money to live in a good county, but he wasn't going to pay twice." This response shows the way Hamilton County is seen as something of value. Bruce and Clark also commented on working in the district but not being able to afford to live there, while Stewart chose to work in Hamilton county based on all of the positive attributes of the

surrounding county. Even desiring a change, as several of the participants' responses were categorized under, suggested that Hamilton County was a much desired change. Both themes are discussed together in this analysis because of the way they are intertwined, in that both show deeper issues of inequality and segregation.

First, the idea of "Why I Left" is more complex than what appears on the surface. Wally made a point that seems contradictory: "I came from a school district, Riverdale, where it was awful. Loved the kids there. You know I loved the administrators and teachers, but the system the discipline we had to deal with was criminal." Does Wally like the students but not their behavior? Does he like administration but not the policies that they enforce? Wally' seemingly paradoxical comment suggests that his problem with discipline issues coupled with wanting to be in a predominantly Black school are more focused towards the lack of structural capital and not social capital; i.e., he dislikes the system not the people in it. When asked about what he meant when he said this, Wally mentioned that he was specifically bemoaning the policies and administrative protocols, what he labels as "the system," used to deal with discipline issues. He mentioned that "even administrators' hands were tied at times."

Also, Oliver's frustration initially seemed to be focused on the students' behavior but when asked to address this experience he commented on the inability to educate as well this experience being "the only vision." The former speaks again to the desire to the socialize the students and the inability to do so, while the latter is more about the environment skewing his perception of what goes on in all schools. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) address this phenomenon and situate the pervasive issues many disadvantaged school districts face in the context of school inequity based on race and Whiteness as property; in this case the segregation of schools in disadvantaged areas compared to those in more affluent areas. Oliver desired a

"vision" different from the disadvantaged, majority Black school system he came from, including all of the structural issues from which it suffered. The more specific implications that the Four Capital Framework fails to address is the unusual dynamics of a system that is not designed for Black students. Jordan was equipped to both handle the violent situation he was thrust into but he also had the capacity to understand the root issues that were bubbling underneath the surface. He was, however, perturbed by the administration's response over the situation. Furthermore, when Wally speaks about the liking the administrators and their hands being tied as well, he is not talking about just a lack of structural capital but a lack of systemic protocols to deal with the unique discipline issues that certain communities face. Ladson Billings (2009) furthers this notion by addressing the inadequacies of the instruction and curriculum that is not only used to "legitimizing Black student deficiency" but also leads to disproportionate labeling of students of color as "at risk." These factors culminate into the School to Prison Pipeline ideology (McGrew, 2016; Noguera, 2003a; 2003b) that all participants seem to strive to reverse. Structural capital is therefore nothing unless it can be used as resource to address the structural inequities already inherent in many of these disadvantaged areas. Wally, Barry and Clark each made it a point to be an important fixture in alleviating the negative perception of "unruly" Black male students by taking more of them in their class. This suggests that the participants did not leave their previous positions because of a lack of structural capital but because of the way the structures were used to exacerbate the injustices of an already inequitable system. Again, Mason and Matas' (2015) framework is inadequate in addressing this unique phenomenon when dealing with teacher capital. What do we call the desire that Black males have to impart knowledge on other Black males?

This is also evident when it comes to impact. Observe this part of a quote from Jordan presented earlier when he was asked about leaving:

…at this point and we as teachers understand it that teaching requires willing participants on both sides...And while I knew that wouldn't completely change, I felt I'd have a better attempt with the numbers. And just like any other group or population, when the dynamic of that population is more receptive to your message, your message will be more effective and that's the point at which I saw it. (Jordan)

Notice Jordan says, "I felt I'd have a better attempt with the numbers." Where on the surface his reflection of the experience seems to focus on the negative aspects, a closer probe shows his main issue was the lack of impact he was having on the students. Hilliard (1995) speaks to this idea of assuming the responsibility of positively impacting one's ethnic group, or socialization. Jordan's frustration and subsequent migration are neither an example of giving up nor a negative critique of his previous school but a lack of support from the system in which he was employed or, based on our Four-Capital framework, a lack of social capital. He simply desired a different opportunity to make a bigger impact. This is also evident in his mentioning of purposefully moving to a predominantly Black school even though that was coincidentally in a PWSD.

So, in looking at the theme "Where they Came From," though conditions were less than desirable in many of their previous position, these conditions were not the reason for their leaving. Even in extreme situation like the altercation Jordan was in or the discipline issues Wally spoke about were only conditions of a district that suffered from societal inequities. This suggests that the participants did not leave because of these behavioral issues and classroom

management as research suggests (Ingersoll, et al., 2017) but the lack of structural capital, more specifically the lack of administrative support.

Looking at the characteristics of the county, a pattern quickly emerges. Oliver's mentioning of the influx of minorities into the county backed up by the demographics of the county cited in chapter three, were coincidentally followed by a tenfold increase of Black male content teachers into the county. The ease of their being hired in a highly coveted county may therefore be to address this change in demographics. Bruce's comment, "You have more opportunities for people to move into Jeffersonville and get the benefits of the Hamilton school system…" supports the notion some Critical Race Theorists call Whiteness as property or the value in the hands of the predominantly White school district being a source of privilege and status from which resources are allocated to other communities (Harris, 1993). Here the economic benefits of Hamilton County school system are sought after by the surrounding counties (e.g. Luther County) and this influx of minorities and lower income individuals has caused some dire effects including, segregation, re-zoning and redistricting, and the problems that ensue because of it (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006).

Participants did gravitate from a predominantly Black school district (PBSD) to a predominantly White school district (PWSD) but they still ended up in majority Black schools within the PWSD. This is understandable considering that though their White counterparts' attrition was correlated with an increase in minority students, there is no relation between demographics and turnover among minority teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017). In fact, research shows that Black male teachers purposefully choose schools in urban areas with more minorities (Ingersoll et al., 2017) arguably because of a shared kinship. Initially using Mason and Matas' (2015) framework, this would fall under social capital or the connection to other individuals. It is

true that the participants not only gravitated to the schools with more Black students, but are now in closer proximity with Black male students within the school, however social capital is an inadequate means of analyzing this phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, Hilliard's (1995) socialization stresses the need to positively influence young people of the same ethnicity, Waldron (2012) takes this Afro-Centered ideology and proposes that because Black people, in this case Black male teachers, share a history and culture with these students this helps shape the interaction with their Black students, particularly Black males. The "culture synchronicity," (Irvine, 1988), "ethnic matching" (Easton-Brooks, 2014), and "cultural congruence" Milner (2016), mentioned in the background literature speaks to this relationship. Participants in this study desired to be in predominantly Black schools to have an impact on these individuals. Jordan complains of essentially being used to perform administrative duties without the opportunity to advance as an administrator. He also echoes Wally's sentiment putting more of his contempt on the administration and not the student with whom he was in an altercation. This all falls under structural capital (Mason & Matas, 2015): while Wally's comments of "loving the kids, teachers, and administrators," and Jordan's comments of and "understanding their situation" represents strong social capital.

The disparity within the county is also shown in the participants' responses. Barry's comments about the perks teachers get at the predominantly White schools within the county like, "not having to write lesson plans and wearing jeans everyday" to which he responds, "what does it take for a Black male teacher to get into a school like that," suggests a hierarchy within the district. These predominantly White schools are also in the more affluent cities within Hamilton County. Harris (1993) links the position and privilege that some Whites possess as a form of property or capital where essentially their position becomes a form of commodity. Barry

see's these teachers as having an advantage and his comparison is based primarily on their lack

of "Obamas" or Black students. He then focuses back on his own school and mentions fighting

an "uphill battle." Again, this lack of Black males in the predominantly white schools, within the

county, shows the obvious segregation that still exists. Barry's comment's also highlight the

advantage that whiteness affords the other schools, or what Harris (1993) would label as

whiteness as property.

Where Mason and Matas (2015) focused on the attrition of teachers and possible

reasons, exploring the background of these particular participants and their motivations may give

a more accurate context into the reason for their exodus. The movement of these teachers has

more to do with deeper structural issues than what any individual lack of capital could explain;

this includes, not only what they are lacking in different capitals but also what they feel is

lacking in their communities. Numerous studies have been done on each of these phenomena,

however, this study assumes the view of the Black males who have recently been hired into the

county at exponentially high rate.

Mason and Matas (2015) focus only on the different capitals that teachers either have or

do not have, they do not address the context of the schools they are in and how this plays into the

migration patterns of teachers. Critical Race Theory, however, provides the means to access this

situation: specifically, whiteness as property. Hamilton County is desirable to families in

surrounding counties that have lower household incomes and schools that suffer from these

economic disadvantages that are coincidentally majority Black communities as well. This is a

typical structural inequity in communities across the United States that has its roots in slavery

and racial domination, namely the "interaction between the conceptions of race and property

which played a critical role in establishing in maintaining racial and economic subordination"

(Harris, 1995, p. 277). Therefore, the migration of people of color from one community to one with more opportunities to social mobilization through the school system, as Oliver suggests, is understandable considering the "property" this community possesses. As Harris (1996) notes,

> In addition to the theoretical descriptions of property, whiteness also meets the functional criteria of property. Specifically, the law has accorded "holders" of whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded holders of other types of property. (p. 281)

When Bruce speaks of the two majority Black pipelines and the abundance of apartments, and Clark and John mention redistricting, this is not a coincidence but a pattern of transformation of space and district lines as a way of addressing the influx of Black inhabitants. The Black male teachers are arguably being used in a similar fashion; as resources to be modified and moved based on the influx of Black students in schools. It is no wonder why all of the Black male participants in the county are in the only majority Black schools in the county.

Nevertheless, the Four Capital Theoretical Framework for teacher attrition and retention is apt in contextualizing the reasons why these participants may have left their previous schools. As many participants purposely and purposefully sought positions in predominantly Black schools within the predominantly White Hamilton County suggesting that social capital, or the connection with others is a salient factor. This suggests that they desire a more relatable relationship with the students and possibly parents based on race. This of course seems odd considering that they all left majority Black schools to come to Hamilton county. This may mean that other forms of capital, like human capital and structural capital, were low enough to warrant leaving, but what are the deeper implications of these capital deficiencies in the surrounding counties that they left? The findings related to the next question detail participants' explanations on why they left their previous assignment, coincidentally citing both structural and social capital

as reasons and expressing underlying issues of racial and structural inequities therein. The next section addresses participants' capital in their previous districts but also digs deeper into the context of this deficiency.

SRQ-2: Why do They Stay?

What Motivates Black Male Teachers to Remain in the Classroom?

This was a complex sub-question for many reasons. In order to understand why they remain in the classroom it was first important to gain an understanding about "who these men" are and "why they chose to teach" in the first place, which then leads into "Why they stay," which are the three themes that were created. "Who We Are" includes details about the identity of the participants including their commonalities. The second theme, "Why We Became Teachers," explores the reason why the participants remain in the classroom. It includes the sub-themes: giving back to the community, being built to teach, fulfillment, and experience in school. The last theme, "Why we Stay" includes the sub-themes: numbers, reach, multiplying me, as well as money, wanting a challenge, and wanting a change. Jordan provides an apt introduction to answering this sub-research question. He began and ended his journey of teaching in a predominantly Black school from a precipice of death and despair, and like many of the other participants, he provides a dichotomous view of why he stays in the classroom and conflates it with why he started teaching in the first place. Following their exodus from predominantly Black school districts, participants maintain their mission of teaching and helping students in this new arena. The sub-question "Why do you stay" was used as a basis to craft interview questions that would unpack participants' motivation to remain in the classroom. The question, however, becomes loaded; in hindsight, for reasons that will be discussed below; the question should have

been restructured because the participants are not remaining in the classroom. Only one out of

the ten of us had no desire whatsoever to leave the classroom. Six made actual steps towards

administration while one is a principal at one of the schools. The reasons for their wanting to

become an administrator are provided below.

Theme 1: Who are We.

As stated in chapter three, the participants for this study were chosen based on criterion

sampling. The criterion was based on my characteristics as well as the types of teachers that are

the main focus of attrition studies. At the time of the request for participants, including me, there

were eleven Black male content teachers in the school district. I was unable to interview one of

the high school teachers. Of the ten participants interviewed, nine had come directly from

predominantly Black, low-income schools. Three, Stewart, John and Barry, had taught in

different types of schools other than predominantly low-income, majority Black schools,

however they had some experience there as well. Stewart is the only teacher who did not come

directly from a predominantly Black, low-income school though he did teach at one prior to this

school. This is typical of Black male teachers. Most recent numbers show that of the

approximate 3.8 million teachers in the U.S., only 6.7 percent are Black and of that 6.7 percent,

only 23.4 percent are male (Taie & Goldring, 2018). Ingersoll, May, and Collins (2017) report

that Black teachers make up 50% of the teachers in urban schools compared to 27% in suburban

schools, 68% in high poverty areas versus 8% in low poverty areas, and 67% in high minority

versus 1% in low minority. All but one of the participants are new to the county with an average

length of tenure being under two years. Also, they have over 120 years of teaching experience

between them and average about twelve years of teaching each. It is important to note that all of the participants had prior experience before being hired at Hamilton County.

An apt introduction to this theme is Oliver's response to the question "Do you see a lot of Black males like you move into administration?":

I've seen some movement. There's been one gentleman, when I started in education, he's now the Assistant Principal. He had been in the classroom; I think about 20 years teaching math. He was department chair and held leadership positions in different capacities at the local school level. The reality is, there's not enough of us to even move up because we're not even in the schools. A lot of it is contributed to the fact that most African-American males don't finish high school, And the ones that do finish high school don't go onto college. The ones that do go on to college, how many of them finish? And then those that do finish, how many of them pursue a career in education. Because there's two things that is keeping them from coming here: one, the negative perception of hey, "well they don't pay teachers anything." The other perception is, "I'm not dealing with these bad kids." Those are, if I had to narrow it down to two reasons, pay and dealing with behavior issues. (Oliver)

Oliver's perception is supported by numerous studies: there is a lack of interest in education that starts as early as high school and carries over into college and pre-service programs (Berry, 2005; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011;). Also, the numbers are a huge factor when it comes to recruiting Black male teachers. If Black male students are underperforming in school then there is a trickle-down effect on their becoming teachers (Bristol, 2014; Brown & Butty, 1999; Graham & Erwin, 2011; Jackson, 2003). This would therefore have an effect on the pool of teachers and who stays in the classroom and who attempts to go into administration.

From my analysis of this collection of participants, they all have relatively high human capital in the form of strong educational background, content knowledge, and diverse classroom experience. Therefore, there would be a disproportionate number of them ascending out of the classroom. Bruce's comment supports this theory:

> So I was strategic in looking for them, but I would not pass over someone capable, who was a female or who was another ethnicity to do the job. I didn't take the worst Black man and put them in this building because he's a Black man. I chose them because they were good candidates and the best person for this position at this school in fact, they're such strong individuals in their own right to the point that I feel like I'ma loose two of them in the next two years if not faster...

Bruce echoes research by Brown (2012) that stresses the importance of realizing the multidimensionality of Black males and their characteristics as teachers not just hiring them because they are Black males.

Below, participants' reasons for becoming teachers are juxtaposed with their reasons for leaving the classroom providing a jarring conclusion that has much deeper implications.

Theme 2: Why We Became Teachers.

Probably the most salient reason that emerged from this theme was the sense of helping their people or giving back to the community. Participants responded to questions of why they became teachers and why they still teach with commitment to helping young people in their community, being "built to teach," and non-monetary fulfillment were also pulled from their responses. Several of the participants talk directly about helping their community and helping students that need it the most. It is hard to pinpoint one aspect of capital from The Four Capital

Framework because the sense of giving back to community has an element that permeates all capitals. For instance, two participants note:

> I think one of the things I asked myself was, is this going to be a good fit for me in the classroom? I'm definitely not perfect but there are some skills that I have developed over time and other people have helped me develop that I think need to be shared with the next generation. How to still enjoy yourself and have the life that you plan and negotiate all the things that end up coming your way. So those are...and duty is a good word: It's an obligation to help, not just teaching the content. (Victor)

> ...If you would have asked me what is the single singular characteristic that makes you who you are, I tell my kids all the time I do this because we're in this together. (Jordan)

Victor's duty rhetoric along with Jordan's commenting to his students that "We are in this together…" further supports the "giving back to the community" conclusion. Participants were motivated to teach to give back to their community and therefore have become heavily invested in the community in which they teach. Victor talks specifically about his experiences or human capital while Jordan speaks of being "in this together" which fits under social capital. Both are operating from motivation that is internally driven which correlates with positive psychological capital and are operating to push back against the structures that are often times, not designed for Black males. The unifying element in this is their racial congruence. I mentioned earlier the importance of socialization to the participants, in this case, the data suggest that many of the participants became teachers to be in a better socialization position. Other participants expressed similar sentiments of taking their experiences and using it to guide their philosophy in education:

I felt like it wasn't fair that Black kids were all in the regular classes, they were just kind of underperforming when they thought it wasn't cool to be smart. Now that seems kind of archaic but I mean it was true. And so I kind of developed this mission like I wasn't going to let that happen; like I was going to get Black kids to realize that learning is fun and learning can be cool. We can be cool and be smart and you know you don't have to like... school doesn't have to be this boring thing that you have to do, it can be something that you enjoy that actually enriches your life because it enriched my life. I just wanted people to have that feeling that I got...(Clark)

Clark's experience led him to a mission of making learning cool. Stewart uses another experience of students who may be missing something; in this case, Stewart felt students lacked the "village" that was instrumental in cultivating him, while Barry attempts to help students avoid the stereotype pitfalls that deeply affected him in school:

So I've always been taken care of. So as I got older, I didn't know that so many kids didn't have two parents in the home and didn't have a village raising them. So I just kind of gravitated towards that, and in volunteering trying to help and so after a while I finally wised up at 30 years old and said "hey why am I...I should go and teach professionally and work with kids all day long!" It was a natural fix for me. And so, the reason why I'm so passionate about kids naturally is because once I encountered so many kids who didn't have what I had-I'm like "every kid should have what I had." So I try to give that to them in the form of instruction and tough love...(Stewart)

But you know I grew up in a town where if you are a black male kid there was a certain stigma that was associated with you and if you didn't fit that [standard]you were kind of

labeled an outcast and it just would have been really great to have a mentor or someone to confide in during those years. So I kind of decided, for right now anyway, to be that vessel for black boys in particular...And even now I can kind of pinpoint the ones who feel like an outcast or who are trying really hard to beat that stereotypical image kids are telling them they need to be. (Barry)

Stewart's and Barry' experiences became instrumental in their mission to teach.

Stewart also suggests that this transition into was natural as if he was meant to teach. Other participants suggest similar ideals of being built to teach as if it were an innate ability. Observe Wally' comment: "I'm good at this...teaching comes easy to me...I'm just wired to teach. I didn't know that until years after I began teaching-I'm wired to teach." Wally suggests that he has a gift and is "wired to teach." Researchers have cited an X-factor to teaching that exists outside of formal training (Milner, 2003) as well as the special characteristics that Black males possess (Bristol, 2014; Bristol, 2015; Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2010).

Furthermore, participants who started teaching as a second career expressed that they felt more fulfillment compared to their previous job.

I did the corporate scene for about six years and I found it-my work life balance was being taken away. So I'd leave for work, I would not come home in time enough to see my children, so that kind of prompted me to start looking. I always had a desire to work with young people but just didn't know how I could do it and make a living at the same time. So once I kind of got weary of the corporate rat race I started to pursue different avenues to break into education. (Oliver)

From an economical practical sense, the thought of leaving education crosses my mind

every once in a while. But really-my wife reminds me of this-that when I come home I

speak highly of my experience-much more highly of my experience teaching than I did

when I was doing other stuff…So this is a more rewarding career. (Victor)

Oliver's lack of time with his family and fulfillment in the corporate rat race, while Victor's

comment of speaking "more highly" than he did in his other career shows the drastic difference

between education and the other careers. It is evident that the participants' reasons for becoming

a teacher fall heavily into the social and positive psychological capital realms, but again, based

on their earlier desires of giving back to their community and seeking predominantly Black

schools, a kinship with Black students and racial commitment to help these students are more

accurate. Participants desired an opportunity to impart wisdom onto primarily young Black

males, while believing that they are "built to teach" gaining fulfillment in the process.

Next, the lack of Black male content teachers led to a motivation to fill this deficit.

Almost all of the participants expressed the lack of Black male content teachers and inversely an

abundance of Black male P.E. teachers:

Interviewer: And no Black male teachers out there?

Oliver: Not in the critical areas. There were PE Coaches and all that stuff. The head

basketball coach was white. The head football coach was Black, but he taught PE and

health. My math teachers were either White females or Black females...

Victor: The teachers there...we had, at the time, we had one Black long term sub who

became a teacher for my senior English teacher from our senior year.

Interviewer: Male or Female?

Victor: Female.

Interviewer: Any Black male teachers at all?

Victor: We had one Mr. Hector. He was a Spanish teacher from Cuba

Oliver's and Victor's comments are just a few of the comments made about the paucity of Black male teachers. All of the participants admitted that there were few to no Black male content teachers when they were in school. Barry does comment on the only Black male teacher he had in school:

> I only had one Black male teacher growing up. His name his name was Stanley Callaway (pseudonym). Mr. Callaway, and he taught Georgia history and he actually wound up leaving halfway through the year because he was running for Congress the same year he was teaching us and he won. So he actually left…(Barry)

All agreed that most Black males filled the P.E. and coach roles at their respective schools. This carried into their professional lives where Oliver, Bruce, Clark, and John all admitted to being the only Black male teacher in their content in their building. These responses echo the statistics cited earlier in this paper (see the low statistics of Black male teachers in: Bristol, 2015; Department of Education, 2016; Duncan, 2011; Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017). The participants' acknowledgement of the lack of content teachers and desire to fill the void, again speaks to their commitment to the community.

Negative influences also may have played a significant role in the participants' choosing to be a teacher. While Bruce admitted that he had an awful school experience and teachers who made no impact:

My entire system was just horrible. So it was overtly clear that we were in a dysfunctional system. This was in New Jersey. Yeah it was. It has become progressively worse to the point that as of now more killings and there have been instances systematically with the school where the teachers say they lost the students' records. They these kids went to school one year and didn't have any schedules. They didn't have report cards just systematically and then systematically assistant superintendent was telling teachers who had changed numerous student's grades with a button to fail on a passing school-wide, system-wide. (Bruce)

Bruce explicitly says this was part of the reason for him going into education. This seems to contradict other studies where participants admitted that they were turned away from a career in education because of poor educational experiences (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Other participants expressed more enmity towards their teachers because of their negative impact. Barry' even talks about an assistant principal who he did not "advocate" for the Black kids at his school and a teacher who tried to forced stereotypically Black activities on him:

And you know you don't see Black administrators at school like that it's a harsh reality.... I remember my high school was predominantly White and we had a Black, assistant principal but he wasn't an advocate for the Black kids there and we didn't confide in him. We know there were teachers that we could go and talk to and now that I look back on it I wonder was it intentional or was he trying to save his job and his career because he still got called nigger and monkey by everyone else (Barry).

Well you know in Dale County at the time I was a big corn fed kid growing up. My mom's from Alabama. That's just how we roll. You know the pork in everything. But I

wasn't an athlete you know I was more so- I was a band geek. And I liked to read, and write, and do recitation, oratorical contests and things like that were kinda my thing. My brother was the athlete, between the two of us. But it was just like everywhere I went everyone was like "you're big and you're Black you're supposed to be on the football field what's wrong with you?" And Mr. Boseman was the basketball coach you know won all these championships. So one day he kept me after class and was like, "All the boys came the basketball tryouts. Why weren't you there? You're going to stay after school and you're going to work with me but I only want to work with you if you want to learn it..." As a middle schooler you don't know what you're into and what you like and to constantly have adults saying this is what you're supposed to do or think or act or there's something wrong with you, you know, it got a little eerie. I don't think anybody was intentionally malicious with it. And some kids, you can say things to them and it rolls off their back but it really stuck with me. So even now I'm really careful about things I say to kids and if you're not an athlete you're a band geek or you like to read books or whatever it is, let's sit and let's talk about it. You know there's nothing wrong with that and I'm really careful about saying what you should be doing or shouldn't be doing. Whatever you're into, hey I support it. (Barry)

In both anecdotes Barry' negative experience with teachers, oddly still, Black male teachers, led him towards some modus operandi to not follow the same doctrine. Goings and Bianco (2016) reported similar conclusions finding that young Black males said that their Black male teachers had little impact on their decision to teach. In a way Barry' teachers demonstrated to him what kind of teacher not to be. Barry' experience of being expected to play sports is not unusual. Research shows that Black male students often play sports because of the expectation thrust upon

them by family, teachers and even society (Beamon, 2009). Other participants spoke of similar negative experiences. Jordan spoke about a biology teacher who did not teach him anything, coincidentally this teacher was also the football coach. Clark spoke about a poor teacher who only gave worksheets and showed movies, while Arthur cited an all too familiar scene of a teacher handing out book work and putting his feet on the desk and reading the newspaper for the remainder of the period. Coincidentally these "poor" teachers, Black and White, seem to have motivated the participants by showing them what kind of teachers they were not going to be. It also helped to foster the mission to help those students who may fall victim to this poor educational experience. This does not mean that the participants did not have positive experiences in school. Most of them told stories about teachers who made an impact in ways outside of teaching which had life changing effects on them.

Theme 3: Why We "Stay."

Stay is the wrong word to use hence the quotation marks. All but one of the participants had desires to leave the classroom and ironically he has a leadership certification though he has no intentions on using it. One of the participants, of course, has already left the classroom and is now a principal at Overland Creek Middle School: the same site in which several of the other participants teach.

Participants were asked about their perception of Black males staying in the classroom versus leaving to become administrators. The results were mixed, though most comments seem to suggest that more are leaving and going into administration than staying in the classroom, which is similar to researched projections (Ingersoll et al., 2017).

In my experience, most of my friends have moved to administration. And I'll say at Johnson High, ironically, we had a lot of them: We had AP Psychology teacher, Black guy, Chemistry, Black guy, three or four English teachers who were black guys, Geometry-everything-there were a lot of us! Dr. Kite hired a lot of black males in that school. And these were heavy classes man and so all of them, for the most part have gone into Administration. So not many of them stay in the classroom from my experience…(Stewart)

When I think about it, I'd have to say that most of the really smart Black guys I've known were headed to administration. I know several really smart brothers who I felt like they were going to be a principal or work at the board. My mentor at my first job was a teacher but he had run an alternative school for years and lost a taste for it. Most of the guys who don't are usually P.E. teachers and elective teachers, though I did know one art teacher who had his leadership certificate but he wasn't using it…(Clark)

Stewart and Clark's comments show a trend of Black males leaving the classroom to go into administration. Barry even comments that many teachers he started with had "intentions on teaching for a few years before going into administration," sort of as a means to an end.

There were a few participants who stated that they would be in administration had it not been for circumstances. Stewart cited moving around numerous times as a reason, John had issues with changing states and certification woes which impeded his momentum, Jordan felt like he was being used in his system while Oliver admitted that it was not his time. Though in Oliver's case, many of his duties were tantamount to supervision, considering his having to monitor areas outside his classroom, having a walkie-talkie, and other such administrative tasks.

The most salient theme in participants' responses to why they are not staying in the classroom was the greater impact they felt they could make. Questions stemmed from my own belief that leaving the classroom would diminish direct influence on students, however, almost all of the participants argued the contrary:

I can still have an impact on these kids. I've seen it happen with a Black assistant principal; in fact, he probably had a bigger impact on a larger level than I did on a classroom level because you're able to get a lot more boys than just me in a few classes...I don't want to stay stagnant I don't want to keep on teaching in class where I just have a job-see that's not my purpose. My purpose is to try to stand somebody else up so they can take this position. I can be that something else for somebody and just keep that cycle continuing. (Wally)

In addition, I've gotta find some other brothers like me who are multiplying them and we've got to build our army to try to keep this thing balanced because our dash is all going to come to an end. I need ten people replacing me, that's replacing themselves, that's replacing themselves, so by the time I croak up out of here I've got a hundred strong that are multiplying themselves: That's how we fix our situation. It's not going to be quick and without multiplication we can't do it. We've been trying to add, but we got to multiply. (Jordan)

Wally and Jordan both allude to reasons for moving into administration that other participants also cited. The ideas of "numbers" and "reach" were patterns that emerged from their responses. Wally and Jordan both speak to multiplying the number of students they impact through their influence over teachers teaching the students. Bruce takes this notion further:

I felt like I could do more. I realized that the problem wasn't the students anymore, I found that the problem was the teachers. As I taught at the high school level, even at this high level, I found that there was still an absence of an approach and absence of a caring and absence of listening and communicating and really working with students to help them grow. That was happening in my class because students said so. They would say stuff like, "We like you because you listen and you pay attention. You care about us." You this you that, the way you teach is this and this, and I saw that it wasn't happening everywhere. Someone said, "You know it's just as hard for me to get an F as it is to get an A in your class," and I thought that was pretty dope too. So I said Wow. I felt like they really got value out of it and then I realized that that wasn't happening everywhere. I was like wow, this is a shame that they're not getting this experience everywhere and it didn't make sense why they weren't. And I was like, well I'd like to be able to help teachers to provide that experience, and if I can just get another teacher to do something different and kind of think differently about what they do and how they do it, that's 150 more kids a year that it's going to impact. If I teach more teachers that's thousands of kids being impacted year in and year out. So I felt like in terms of reach I wanted to change the mindset. I feel like I could change a mindset of the students because of where they were, and I felt like I wanted to support teachers and help shift their mindset as adults to get them to support students the way I believe that these kids needed. (Bruce)

Bruce views moving into administration as necessary to curtail some of the problems he saw in education that obviously cannot be fixed in the classroom. Reach is important theme. Consider the cliché that I often heard by those outside of education, "If you reached one, then you made a difference." That comment always annoyed me since my mission was to reach all and maybe not

reach one. Bruce saw moving to administration as a way to multiply this concept stating, "If I can just get another teacher to do something different…" essentially, if I can reach one teacher, then that increases the probability of reaching even more students. This motif was echoed by other participants. Stewart remarked

> I enjoy the classroom, But I want to influence the culture of the school. Then I want the school to influence this class. And I believe that an administration and other things I want to do, that I can improve, what we're feeding the kids it's kind of like, yeah, I don't mind cooking, you know, and go grab this and that (motioning his hands as if to cook) and prepare a meal here and there; but, if I could just plan a menu and take over the whole thing, I could improve everything and not just my meats and what I cook. So that's me; I really want to get into or into leadership where I can kind of shake it up...I'm not burned out teaching but... (Stewart)

Both participants see moving into administration as necessary for having a positive impact on more students than just those in their classrooms. Other factors for leaving included money, wanting a challenge, and some simply just wanted a change. Observe Stewart's comment below where he cites several reasons for people wanting to leave the classroom:

> I think after a while with teaching, as men, and usually these men are very educated educators, I think sometimes the challenge, not that it's not challenging teaching the kids but it can seem like a thankless profession especially when they get familiar with you. At first I had parents tell me, "You're the first man that my kid's ever had." But after while people get familiar, and then as men you want something new, especially when you're in the same thing it kind of like I've got this down, the kids taking me for granted, they don't know what they got. And it's like you want greener pastures. So I think for a lot of them

it's a combination of that and also money, you know usually sometimes the most of the time the men you want to be the breadwinner you want to be the man taking care of stuff you won't be able to take care of something if your wife can't. And so I think a lot of them also want to make more money because you start getting older you start looking at retirement you start looking down the line. So I think that's a factor as well. Unless you've got some other side hustle going, you gon be hard pressed to be able to survive on just this job. So those two things. I don't think they realize how rare it is to have a Black male-you don't have to worship at my feet, but my goodness, you need to understand, when I talk, I can say the same thing as someone else, but the fact that I'm saying it from my vantage point it's so much heavier, you know what I mean. (Stewart)

Stewart's feeling of becoming complacent and money were main points that were shared by others. Though not all of the participants thought that administration was necessarily the best path. Barry admitted to wanting to go for his PhD in educational psychology and going into educational media, Wally considered consultation, while Clark, though he was in a graduate program and admitted to one day leaving the classroom, was unsure of what he wanted to do post classroom teaching.

Theoretical Analysis of Data Associated with SRQ-2.

The participants have a variety of experiences and backgrounds which led to a variety of motivations that influenced them to become teachers. Clark's experience watching his classmates become disillusioned with school led him to a mission of making learning cool. Stewart's motivation to teach stems from his upbringing which he describes as growing up in a "village." Stewart felt students lacked the "village" that was instrumental in cultivating him, while Barry

attempts to help students avoid the stereotype pitfalls that deeply affected him in school. This goes beyond human capital or simple acknowledgement of a teacher's experience, and social capital or the connection with the students, these participants desired to use their experiences to help students like them. Here the participants see their experience as a crucial component in their pedagogy. Applying The Four Capital Model, positive psychological capital, or their motivation to teach, seems appropriate. Participants possess high positive psychological capital stemming from the lived experiences they bring to the classroom. Mason and Matas' (2015) positive psychological capital however is an insufficient measurement for this phenomenon. As Waldron (2012) notes:

> Psychologists who adhere to an African-centered perspective argue that, since most of the basic principles of dominant Anglo-American psychology are designed to understand personality structure and behaviours and were not designed with non-Whites in mind, they are not useful for understanding how African heritage (as well as a European one) has influenced the dispositions of African peoples worldwide. Consequently, they fail to understand how the experience of social, economic and political inequality and oppression provide African peoples with a unique standpoint or worldview and how those issues impact on their psychological, mental and emotional status. (p. 42-43)

Waldron's (2012) analysis challenges the Eurocentric frame Mason and Matas (2015) uses, which focuses on grit, resilience, and motivation, and shifts to something more quintessential to Black male teachers. Critical Race Theory acknowledges the proliferation of racism in this country and the experiences Black people share (Taylor, 2009), which suggests that Black male teachers already possess grit and resilience from their everyday experiences. Victor's comment

on "sharing with the next generation," Jordan telling his students "we're in this together," Stewart commenting that every student should have a village to rear them, while Barry's mission is to find the outcasts like him to help, all speak to issues of being Black in this country. The participants felt it was their duty to help Black students to better navigate life.

Furthermore, Baldwin (1992) proposes a different psychological focus for Black people that challenges the blanket idea of motivation that Mason and Matas propose. Baldwin (1992) defines psychological capital as being conscious of one's racial heritage, and commitment and service to one's community. Add Hilliard's (1995) socialization and we have a parameters of psychological capital that better suit the participants in this study.

Also, the participants are not staying in the classroom. All but one of the 10 have ambitions of becoming an administrator (Bruce is already one) or at least something beyond the classroom. This becomes an important element in the scheme of their migration from one school to another. The sub-themes "numbers," "reach," and "multiplying me" all speak to increasing the impact they have on students. Stewart wanted to "influence the culture of the school" not just the students in his class. Wally spoke about "standing some else up" and "keeping the cycle going" while Jordan said his goal was to "find brothers like me and multiplying them-we've got to build an army." Bruce, who hired four Black males in one year said he was trying increase his influence as well:

> I'd like to be able to help teachers to provide that experience, and if I can just get another teacher to do something different and kind of think differently about what they do and how they do it, that's 150 more kids a year that it's going to impact. If I teach more teachers that's thousands of kids being impacted year in and year out.

Bruce's quantifying the impact was echoed by other participants. Wally talked about an old

principal he worked under who he said probably influenced more students than he could just

being in the classroom while Jordan spoke about "having a better chance with the numbers."

Participants' responses seem to suggest that not only is commitment to helping their community

important, but many of them desired to increase their positive impact and therefore found a

position that provides them a better opportunity to do this. Again, this shows overlapping capitals

where the participants are using their human capital (their experience) and their social capital, or

kinship with Black students, and extending it through ambitions of increasing their reach. The

Four Capital Model is insufficient in categorizing this motivating piece. Afrocentric scholars

speak at length about the differences in Eurocentri and Afrocentric world views, in this case

putting the community's interest above one's own individual interest (Akbar, 1979). Though

some participants did mention more money in administration, several of them talked about the

fulfillment they got from teaching. Taking this impact to the next level was their next goal and

moving out of the classroom seems to be the platform that allows for this possibility.

SRQ-3 and Research Question: What are their challenges and experiences?
What are the experiences (and challenges) of Black Male Content teachers in a PWSD?

The sub-research question and main research question were combined in this section

because none of the participants could really provide challenges they faced in this new district.

Upon further investigation, participants seemed to suggest that the challenge was more of what

was hindering the students from being more successful than what capital deficiencies they

experienced. Participants for the most part like their new positions while most said they "love it

here." When further analyzed, these feelings stemmed mainly from comparing Hamilton County

to their old districts. This is at the core of their motivation to migrate. When asked about their

challenges in this new district, participants had a difficult time finding problems because of the comparison. As mentioned earlier, the lack of opportunity for growth and impact were major factors in their exodus from their previous districts. This section focuses specifically on their experiences in Hamilton County, an experience that seems to be phenomenologically based on comparison to their old position. Nevertheless, participants do think students should be doing much better given the resources they have and they believe that this underperformance in large part is due to cultural influences. This suggests that the disconnect and subsequent issues they acknowledge their White female coworkers are having with mostly Black male students, may not be all on the teachers.

The ultimate question when asked about their experience teaching in a PWSD, participants overwhelmingly said that they "loved" their new position. Several commented on the student's behavior, others said positive things about the community, while others applauded the administration. After probing and analyzing the responses, much of their joy came from comparing their previous school to Hamilton County. Some admitted to the idea of perspective and comparison suggesting that the kids may not be better but they are certainly better than the types of students they taught before. This leads into the question of issues that the participants had in the county. Participants generally said they had little to no issues when asked about student behavior. However, their responses suggest that there is a consensus about the Black students in Hamilton county underperforming in the midst of such rich resources. This again is based heavily on their comparison between the two counties. When asked why, participants cited several reasons including negative cultural and peer influences.

Theme 1: I Love it Here.

The first obvious view of the participants' experiences in Hamilton County was that they loved their positions. Students were almost unanimously the first element mentioned in their praise. One participant found coming from a PBS to a PWS that:

The one thing I didn't realize was going to be the case, was how much they only cared about grades. The primary difference is that at the white school they were much more in tune and really cared about school, as it pertains to, what it meant to them socially-like it was it was negative for them to get bad grades and it was socially accepted for them to not be failures. It was socially acceptable for them to go to meet in the library and study groups. They were meeting in a library first thing in the morning pack talking about school, talking about teachers, talking about less classes and talking about types of strategies teachers using the classroom. They engaged me more as an adult and ask me questions about their academics and what they can do to improve. When I wrote comments on the paper they wanted to know if they could meet with me and talk to me about those comments versus when I was at the other school. And there was no violence none, zero violence! Zero threats of violence. It was all white collar violence like bullying and more cerebral way, social way, economic way. And it was it was really a lifestyle that was complete. It was so high school musical environment. I really I never believed that when I watched the kids on High School Musical or White Kids on any movie, I was like that those are a whole bunch of adults walking in the building and none of them are 15 16, all of them are 21 and is not really school and it was exactly that. It was exactly that…So there was a difference between apathy...in a Black school. They were there to socialize first and they were there to convene and just be social. And that

was the predominant culture or the dominant culture. Failing was just a part of just things

that happened and it didn't bother any of them if they failed an exam. They could care

less when they got negative critique they just threw it in the garbage. Really, what it was

was that they really respected education and the environment that I was in as a general

population. (Bruce)

Bruce was, of course, the only teacher in this study to teach at a predominantly White school,

however it is important to document his perception in comparing the two types of schools. He

saw that the White students in this school acted as they did in "High School Musical" or the

media: they were more studious, there was less violence, and "more respect to education and the

environment." He also commented on the similarities of the academic mindedness of the Black

students in Hamilton county when he changed schools to go to Jeffersonville High:

It was the first predominantly Black school where there were no overwhelming levels of

violence and there was an overwhelming social apathy towards education in the way in

which it was used to it was they didn't come to school not wanting to learn. What I

realized is that, the educators there had very low expectations and didn't provide them

opportunities that would have allowed them to grow and be excited about school.

Again, Bruce's response is typical of the participants. All of the them commented on the lack of

discipline issues at their respective schools. This is not surprising considering the way many

schools are seen as underperforming and at risk because they mirror the societal inequities of the

surrounding communities (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). The

comparison stems from the whiteness as property (Harris, 1995) mentioned earlier. These social

inequities have manifested in the correlating school systems. However, another difference may

help to better explain the movement. Along with positive student behavior, participants also commented on strong and reliable administration in their new positions.

> Really it's combination of the kids themselves and the administrative direction. I feel like our leadership here is moving more progressive approach to education. They are supportive of what we are doing in trying to what teachers are doing to help kids to give them experiences to push them. They support us even in those tough places when the parents you know upset and what not. You don't have those rollover administrators. (John)

> Bruce is a strong leader, and I like that. You can't have a weak person especially in this county and be a person of color. He's a strong person, he speaks his mind, he's professional, he's knowledgeable... Like I said I can respect him, I can trust that... (Wally)

> The administration allows me to teach pretty much what I want, how I want...to a certain degree. I definitely don't have those gotcha moments where administrators pop in and reprimand you for not having standards on the board even though all the students are engaged and having fun learning. (Clark)

John, Wally, Clark, along with numerous other participants all highly praised administration in their respective Hamilton County schools. This is important considering studies show that minority teachers cited their dissatisfaction with administration as their main reason for leaving (Ingersoll et al., 2017). This suggests that structural capital is an important factor in Black male teachers' motivation to stay in a school especially to what end these structures can help them

make positive impacts on their community. Participants also cited the positive nature of the

community and the sense of kinship among teachers, students and parents:

> And when I walked in the building there was a sense of family there's a sense of you the
>
> kids seemed like they wanted to be here. The faculty looks like they were looking out for
>
> kids. And that's the basis, it's one of those things-you can't teach those things. So if you
>
> have that foundation you can do all kinds of stuff. So I like that most of all. (Victor)

> There was a secretary who came from my old school in Macon county, and after a week I
>
> came and talked to her. I asked her how was she liking the school. The first thing she
>
> said, with her eyes wide in surprise, she said, "Everyone is soooo nice! I had teachers
>
> bringing me gifts welcoming me. Parents are so nice, no one has cursed me out,
>
> everybody says good morning! I love it here! It's almost scary, I can't believe it!" I know
>
> right, I told her. I'm never going back and she was like *me neither!* (Clark)

Though teachers commented on the positive atmosphere, students and administrators, some also

mentioned that they did have a bit of an adjustment period. Observe Arthur's experience:

> For my own self and this becomes interesting, this becomes a paradigm shift too because,
>
> when you have post-traumatic stress disorder: when you're in one of those environments
>
> and you're constantly under attack, constantly bloawh, bloawh, bloawh! (making gunshot
>
> noises) that heat is on you, I can understand there's a certain level of psychosis that goes
>
> with it. To be honest with you, it is, that once you are free from out of that environment
>
> and you come into an environment where you can actually say, damn, the monkey ain't
>
> on my back... I can see colors now, I can see...I can teach.... It takes your mind some time
>
> to readjust. I'm loaded with skills, but coming over here into an environment where I can

teach and I can I can put it down...I'm like Felix I've got a bag of tricks, but I'm in this

environment...man I'm a little bit more...a little bit more...man let me chill a little bit. And

so I don't...first year, it was a feeler, second year...OK...I'm Unzipping my bag you know,

I'm Felix unzipping my bag, Now, third year, I'ma Come out and run it! I'ma come out

like a show pony. I'm Felix I dun reached into my bag of tricks and now I'm start pulling

more stuff out because I'm in an environment where I can teach…

Barry presented a similar reaction of having to get used to the new environment:

I will say here it was a bit of culture shock-I didn't expect-I remember coming to open

house and I was shocked at how many fathers I met that night. That were biological

fathers and not baby daddies and not boyfriends but like...and were very vocal about you

know if you need me call me here's my number... They have a lot more access, it seems

like most of them anyway, to a lot more resources and opportunities, than those Students

did, for whatever reason. So it was a lot to kind of get used to that because I feel like the

interaction for the two is a little different.

Participants generally liked their position and all most all of them used the word "love" in their

initial responses. They cited student behavior, administration, the positive atmosphere of the

community, and being able to teach.

Theme 2: It's Better Because You're Comparing.

A closer examination of these positive accounts is a good segue into the next theme;

Participants positive answers all seemed to be based on their comparison with their old school

district and the qualities therein. Participants expressed: being able to teach, numbers or reach,

and being able to teach. Being able to teach is a sub-theme that does fit into why they love their new positions but it fits better here because of the way they expressed being able to teach, as if this is a perk and not the norm. Bruce began this comparison when he spoke about the White students mirroring the stereotypical White students in the media like in "High School Musical." Arthur talks about being in an environment where you are "constantly under attack" but then says, "In this environment, I can teach." Arthur argued about being "berated" in his previous position when lessons did not work as planned because of behavioral issues:

> You're actually berated in that environment when it doesn't work because...Pooky and Kiki started a fight in the middle of your lesson, and they want to blame you because they say, "well if the kids were engaged they wouldn't fight." Hey man that philosophy don't work over here. Because this stuff happens in the community, they Bring that stuff from the community in the schools and we deal with this. So you telling me about keeping the kids engaged-how can I? I'm trying to keep the kid engaged and this kid is on a level two...

Arthur's emphasis on being able to teach highlights another salient pattern that emerged. Many of the participants emphasized the importance of being able to teach instead of having to focus on discipline issues. Oliver spoke about leaving his last position for that very reason:

> I was spending so much time with discipline and trying to get things under control, I didn't have an issue with classroom management, but when you put so much into that aspect of education instead of teaching, you do have some cracks that start to form in your instruction and what you're able to really do and how you are able to help kids to develop strategies or how to problem solve because you're dealing with other aspects of the classroom environment. So that was that was very clearly stated when I was

interviewed; that, I just want to teach to be able to teach. There's no other rhyme or

reason for why I'm leaving other than I don't have the opportunity to do what I signed up

to do. I didn't like the fact that I wasn't able to do that [actually teach] for the last few

years at my last school.

When asked about then to now, Oliver remarked:

Oh it's definitely a total 180. Not only do I get to actually teach now, I don't have to

spend 90 percent of my instruction time on discipline, I actually get to teach. And outside

of the classroom, I'm able to coach and mentor can be a part of a county that has

programs that support the youth: football, basketball, volleyball, different activities after

school and I'm involved in at least two of those.

Jordan shared the same sentiment when asked about his desire to leave his previous assignment

but put emphasis on the numbers:

And while I knew that wouldn't completely come it would not completely change but I

felt I'd have a better.... I'd have a better attempt with the numbers. And just like any other

group or population, when the dynamic of that population is more receptive to your

message, your message will be more effective and that's the point at which I saw it.

Jordan understood that no situation would be perfect but he anticipated that a more suburban and

less impoverished area would be "more receptive" to his message: an assumption about which he

was relatively correct. Later he expounded on this idea:

Is it perfect? No, not in the least. Do I have more students that I can pour into? Yes. Are

all my students energized about getting this information trying to be the best science

student they can be? No, but more of them than it used to be. Because in reference to this education this thing is a numbers game. If, at my former school, I had seven classes and 30 students per class and had two individuals per period that truly bought-in, I got fourteen people that's rockin with me. If I move to location B, and is 10 percent of those 30 in those seven classes, now I got roughly 50 kids rocking with me. Right now we look at the numbers. Take me three years to get those same 50 somewhere else. One year to get that fifty right here. I know I'm in my dash... 1976 it popped off. I'm in the dash somewhere on the other side of that dash I'm leaving here. How can I be more productive? Because you gotta stay focused on your dash. When we were in track practice and they said dash, you know you were running as fast as you could: That's what life is, it's a race and we're going get to the end and the only question is how far did your dash move? (Jordan)

Lastly, Clark compares the experience to his other assignments and puts emphasis on what and how he can teach in this new arena.

It definitely is [more to my liking] just because I have the freedom and autonomy to teach kind of how I want to teach. You know, I have some restrictions but I also get more respect now…I'm a lot less stressed out now I enjoy my position a lot more because I am able to challenge students and I think I'm a better teacher because of what I'm able to do and the clientele that I have now.

The comments clearly show that participants are having a better experience in Hamilton County but this is largely because they are comparing it to their urban, high minority, low income previous school.

The comparison went beyond the ability to teach. Several of the participants talked about environmental hurdles including lack of resources, parental support, and violent communities that no longer impeded learning. Again, pay attention to the emphasis on comparing Hamilton County to the previous assignments:

> They have a lot more access, it seems like most of them anyway, to a lot more resources and opportunities, than those Students did, for whatever reason. So it was a lot to kind of get used to that because I feel like the interaction for the two is a little different. (Barry)

> I taught in a situation where, as a teacher you better keep a pack of paper in your trunk. But they have-they have access to resources that other kids don't that they don't even understand becomes the challenge of getting through this work. (Jordan)

> The main difference is pretty much school I came from was a high transient population, they were about 70 percent transient student population so it's really difficult to determine the mastery of the students that I taught because they moved so much.... So when one group came in they probably stay about 30-45 days and then they would leave…(Oliver)

> So you know I don't have many discipline issues, you know they are like few and far between, I've got a lot of parental support. You know a lot of kids have the resources and things that they need. You know numbers aren't disconnected, things like that. So it's a pretty good situation. (Clark)

I have kids that are willing and eager to learn. Also students come with a prerequisite of

skill sets that I have to work with that I can build upon. (Oliver)

Almost all of the participants admit to an abundance of resources available to their students in

Hamilton county from school supplies and parental support to prior knowledge and broader skill

set. In fact, Jordan elaborates on this issue adding to it the cultural deficits that are rampant in

many communities.

Some of the greatest challenges that I had this time last year I don't have and some of that

is just based on the resources and socioeconomics. At my former school, there were

students who if you didn't give them a pencil they didn't have one. Not because they were

at home in the locker, I just don't care, I don't have one. "My momma don't buy pencils.

In fact, my mama said you the teacher you're supposed to have a pencil for me."

Generational ignorance and a lack of investment, you know, going back to what is

important to us via how we spend our money, because again-now this same kid that

would tell me, and see a kid has confidence when their being honest about what mom

said. The kid who stands up with no hesitation and says, "My momma said it is your job

to give me a pencil." He meant that because that is what she said; that's the truth; that's

his perspective; that's his reality. "Naw man you're supposed to have my pencil." But this

same student is staring at me you know and literally lights might have gotten cut off this

morning, took a shower in cold water, got them fresh J's on! Got them Jay's on! And them

Jays could have paid the light bill and the water and the water bill and some pencils.

Jordan's viewpoint has been a major point of contention in research. Some have stated that

poverty has a culture that can be understood and corrected (Payne, 1999), while other researchers

have studied the unintended consequences that difficult environments have on students (Ahmad, 2006). As previously stated, these participants' departure from disadvantaged, high minority, urban school districts to a more affluent, PWSD follows a trend found in the research (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Their impetus to leave stems more from their lack of ability to positively impact the community than the systemic issues they speak about. Many of the issues the participants relayed were detailed in their comparison with Hamilton County and most admitted that it did not necessarily cause them to leave, the lack of administrative and other structural support to help them with some of these systemic, or what Jordan mentions as "resources and socioeconomic issues" however did.

Theme 3: A Skewed Perspective.

This is further evident in probing initial details of their new position in Hamilton County. When asked again about their feelings of the county, participants still had many positive things to say about their new positions, however there are caveats to this that illustrate the next theme found. Constant comparison analysis allows for the adjusting of the organization of data and conclusions and themes as new information becomes available. Initial codes and themes from initial interviews prompted surface level responses and patterns (loving their positions, and the students, being able to teach etc…; however, after conducting phenomenological interviews, asking participants about their experiences and the experiences of other participants, different themes emerged. The first theme discovered in this analysis was the comparison theme. As I interviewed participants and reflected afterwards, I realized that participants who had been in the county for two years or less had much more positive, almost pristine accounts of their schools and students. I was bothered because many of the participants taught at my feeder school and

many of these students were far from being perfect little angels. The next theme is the way in which the comparison of their old county has skewed their perspective of their new position. In analyzing their views on their responses about teaching in Hamilton County, many of the participants themselves admitted to the possibility of their perspective being skewed because of their comparing Hamilton County to their previous county.

> Yeah I haven't faced a lot of challenges I believe. You know, me answering that question I would say not a lot, but is oftentimes my wife and I agree-we finally agree on is your whatever you believe to be true or not is most usually governed by your perspective, and how you see things because we can talk about the exact same issue and if we have a different perspective we cannot see eye to eye on this. We might even convince each other that you're not being honest with me and I'm not being honest with you. We have a totally different perspective. (Jordan)

> So it's been a breath of fresh air. I mean every school has its problems, has its issues but it's nothing. I mean I really laugh Sometimes when I hear the complaints in the building because of what I came from. And I think if I hadn't been where I was the length of time, I wouldn't appreciate here as much as I do, but when all you know is one place you got to get another perspective. So this is night and day compared to where I was. So now that I'm here and I hear about the different challenges that some teachers have, it's not even an issue for me. Because I've had worse...far worse. (Oliver)

> I guess you know fortunately I'm only basing this on previous experiences and previous schools I've been in. I've had like a hard time in some of my other jobs, And so the county that I'm in now or the school that I'm in now, It's a little easier. I don't know if.... I

don't know if it could be better but since I've come from something that was kind of like a

crappy experience you know it seems good to me. (Clark)

The acknowledgment of comparison, again, suggests that the participants' views are skewed.

Jordan says, I haven't faced a lot of challenges I believe" as if he has to calibrate his experience,

He then comments, "whatever you believe to be true or not is most usually governed by your

perspective." Oliver says "I wouldn't appreciate here as much as I do, but when all you know is

one place you got to get another perspective" while Clark admits "I guess you know fortunately

I'm only basing this on previous experiences and previous schools I've been in." In each instance,

perspective becomes a salient factor. Consider the quote below from Wally who, you may

remember, was one of the teachers who mentioned the disconnect between White female

teachers and some of the arguably troubling Black males:

> Compared to where I came from...I came from a school district, Riverdale County, where
>
> it was awful. Loved the kids there, you know, I loved the admin and teachers, but the
>
> system the discipline we had to deal with was criminal. Coming here and hearing…You
>
> come here, these kids say Yes ma'am, no ma'am, yes sir, no sir...there are no discipline
>
> issues here-none!

He begins by saying compared to where I came from, an "awful" district when it comes to

discipline, however he prefaces this by saying he loves the kids. Keeping in mind the Four

Capital Framework, Wally then says "there are no discipline issues here-none." In a follow-up

interview he remarked:

> These kids man, and I'm not trying to be biased because these kids are Black, it's
>
> probably like 85% Black here. But being objective, we don't have any issues here. Plus,

this year Bruce, I believe, has intentionally hired more Black men, more Black teachers, to reflect what we have in the classroom which is of course Black students. These kids come from good homes, we don't any issues here! Not a one! I haven't had to write up a single child yet. We give check marks here. Kids are scared of a check mark.

Though he prefaces his statement with not being biased because the kids are Black, Wally's view is biased because he is basing it on his previous experience. All schools, including his school has discipline issues; however, his perspective of what "discipline issues" are may not match with many of his peers who do not share his previous experiences. Even Oliver, who works with Wally addresses his perception:

> Interviewer: I've heard some similar thing that the county is getting worse from some other people, like teachers and bus drivers, and yes, they are mostly the White women who were already here, but then when I talked to Wally and other people they say, no there aren't any discipline problems.
>
> Oliver: It's just based off perspective because he came from Hilltop in Riverdale County; when you pull up they're fighting. From the bus to the front of the rotunda, every day is something jumping off at that school. And when you come from that and you get to go outside and do bus duty here, and everybody gets on the bus, all the busses show up on time, no busses have to come back because they're fighting on the bus on the route home- that's private school to us. You know just the simple fact that the busses are lined up out there. You know we would have seven that don't show up sometimes so we get 200 kids sitting outside idle and sometimes the worst of the worst, so now we've got to stand out there for 30 minutes to sometimes an hour for another bus to come to pick them up. So it's about perspective-if all you know is what you know, you've been in Hamilton County,

that's all you know; that's all you've seen, then you don't understand the kids, the different

generations that are coming. The change, the shift in the pendulum, you know, it's not the

same.

Oliver acknowledges the idea of perspective highlighting the structural capital deficiency of his

and Wally' former schools and, contrastingly, the abundance of structural capital in Hamilton

County. Oliver falls into a similar trap but then he quickly acknowledges his biased perspective

as highlighted earlier about his feelings of not appreciating Hamilton County if he had not been

in the county he was in before and also the complaints he hears from other teachers and how it's

not an issue because he has had "far worse."

Theme 4: Students Should be Doing Better.

Though all of the participants spoke about the lack of discipline issues present in their

school, many admitted, however, that students should be doing better with the resources,

environmental support, and economic status they have. This led to many of them concluding that

some students are entitled and spoiled, while others cited their lackluster academic performance:

Well at my last school it was always the teachers. It was never my child. "My child didn't

do that! Nope! Never! I don't care if it is on camera, wasn't him/wasn't her." Here, we

have a little bit more support but I just think with everything, with all the resources in

place, we should be a lot further along. This is something I've noticed just in being here

almost in one year that you have Chromebooks you have boards all around the building,

some are still rolling in here. We Should be top tier., in terms of education because We

have everything we need It's just a matter of, making sure that students are using it-you

know were implementing it and making sure that we're holding them accountable, and

that the parents at home or guardians are supporting that. And if that's not happening then

it's a waste of a lot of resources (Oliver)

Oliver's comments encompass the comparison and the expecting more ideal when he says "We

should be further along...we should be top tier." His comment stems from the abundance of

resources that the students of Hamilton County possess. Stewart reiterates this idea. At first he

details the comparison as far as behavior:

I find that the students here, they have much, more say they have more family structure or

family support. A lot of the kids that I have dealt with, it was a lot of kind of drama. It

was crazy: kids cussing principals out like it's nothing. I heard one guy walking by, I

thought he was talking to a student. He said, "man you a hoe a hoe! Man you a bitch!"

And I'm like, man who's this guy talking to? You're talking to the principal man! And

he's like "quit acting like a hoe!" And I'm like whoa! This is the principal man…those

kids were off the chain! You know what I mean!? So….

Interviewer: It's not like that here?

Stewart: No. I've never! That was shocking. I've never experienced that. I may have a kid

suck their teeth which is the highest in the way of disrespect I've seen, and I shut that

down. I've never had to deal with that. I've never seen a fight, I'm sure they have them but

I've broken up four or five at my previous school. I'm chasing and a guy who came from

another school to fight Somebody-I'm chasing him off campus. I almost split my little

wig-almost slipped down the stairs. So no, it's totally different in terms of the type of

behavior issues. I don't call them behavior you know little slick mouth here and there

that's nothing. So I definitely say kudos to Jeffersonville High from what I have

experienced; to me, kids are great...That's behaviorally…

But when he starts talking about academics, his argument shifts:

...Academically, I expected the kids at my previous school to struggle because of the

family background etc... I don't expect them to be rocket scientists if you will right, but I

expected more from the kids here at Jeffersonville High. That's my biggest concern from

my little bit samples of only one year of sample but even here at Overland Middle they

don't seem to know as much as I would think they would know with all the support they

have in place. This county has a lot more resources.

Stewart's sentiments again begin with a comparison then end with the higher expectation that is

not being met. He also continued the pattern of comparison in detailing his experience. Another

participant commented, "These kids have more resources than they need, and it becomes a crutch

even...Most of their challenges are self-inflicted, here at Jeffersonville High School" (Jordan).

However, some participants did hint on the lack of positive academic male role models, issues

with popular culture influencing students as well as their peers negatively influencing them as

being a reason for their lack of success.

There is a dynamic, that is present in our kids here, that is not present in the

overwhelming majority. At times I feel like we bring certain aspects of our familial

situation to an unfamiliar situation; meaning, as African-Americans in this country, we all

have a cousin in some way I call them cousin Bobo-We all got a cousin Bobo somewhere

but when, oftentimes, when we're not cousin Bobo, we spend too much time thinking

about cousin Bobo. Most of these kids are living in middle class to upper middle class to

affluent neighborhoods who have two parents at home who have internet, Wi-Fi, laptop, not provided by the school laptop provided by the school, smartphone and a free and open schedule. And they perform much like many of my students, who in the past were selling drugs to pay the rent. That's a level of apathy that should not be present. There's no reason for that because of the challenge-The challenges that they are not facing many of them have replaced them with man-made or self-inflicted challenges, a lot seem to be tied to attitudes and levels of complacency that should not exist in your world because you didn't grow up in a poor or dangerous area. You didn't grow up seeing a rotating door on mama's bedroom. You didn't grow up having to walk through a drug filled jungle just to get from your bus to your doorstep but we are behaving as if those conditions were present. And that's a sad situation. (Jordan)

Participants cited factors such as peers, culture, and the media as all playing a part in negatively affecting students. Despite their economic advantages, Black students do underperform compared to their economically similar racial counterparts (Kena et al., 2015) and some have argued that this is in large part because of cultural influences (Noguera, 2003a). But, it is important to put these data and perceptions in context. In chapter three I provided the CCRPI or the College and Career Ready index, for all the middle and high schools in the county. It is important to remember that Jeffersonville High School and Cornell High school have the highest minority population and highest free and reduced lunch rate in the county (see figure 4). Surrounding schools in the area with similar demographics all are substantially lower than Jeffersonville High School. It is also important to mention that the state average score is 77 which both Jeffersonville and Cornell High are well above. When participants speak of their students not achieving at an acceptable level, to what are they basing this assessment? The other

schools in the county? The free and reduced lunch rate? The median income of the local

community? The surrounding communities? Again, the comparison of one space to another has

caused yet another distortion. Participants expect their minority students to do better with the

abundance of resources compared to students and they are, but why don't they see this?

Theme 5: Disconnect Between Teachers and Students.

Earlier, Oliver commented on the complaints he often hears from other teachers and he

responded with them not being an issue because he has had "far worse." This comparison is an

appropriate segue into the next theme which is the disconnect between the predominantly White

teachers at their schools and the Black students: mainly Black male students. Observe Barry's

comment below:

> When they say you know so-and-so came in and did this! And I'm thinking in the back of
>
> my head, he comes in and sits down and answers questions and he wants to participate in
>
> my class-like two totally different people. I don't know if they like the class, or they like
>
> me, or the subject or what it is but it's different here. And you know there at the end of
>
> the day there's still middle schoolers so there's still going to do what middle school kids
>
> do. So it's just a matter of you know what you have the tolerance for what you're going to
>
> brush off.

> Barry's response is important, "it's all a matter of what you tolerate and what you brush

off," suggesting that student behavior is largely based on perception. John notes when asked why

he felt he needed to move into a role where he can teach teachers:

> John: There need to be more teachers like me. There need to be more teachers who are
>
> more focused on teaching the student for tomorrow, than telling them the material that's

in the book today.

Interviewer: So you feel like as a principal or as an administrator you would be able to

funnel those resources here?

John: Not just funnel the resources but be able to help teachers broaden the way they see

things to broaden the way they approach students particularly in buildings like this one

where you have a large minority population. And Bruce and the administrative team here,

have done a great job of diversifying the staff here…Great job, but it wasn't like that at

the beginning and it's not like that in most schools. So in most schools you have teachers

that don't look like you don't know anything about your world, and so they don't

understand a lot of the cultural problems and the cultural proficiency classes that that

people get are useless because they're not…normally they're taught by someone who

doesn't even know it themselves. They know what's in the book, but the book doesn't do

anything

John's comments are similar to numerous studies on the issues that stem from the lack of cultural

congruence between teachers and students (Easton-Brooks, 2014; Milner, 2016). Several studies

have shown the damage that non-minority teachers can have on Black students (Goings &

Bianco, 2016; Milner, 2006; 2007). Most of the participants accept this responsibility of taking

the largely Black male students because of the issues many of their coworkers are having:

I met four students because we now have a literacy class and then we have our regular

content class. So in that extra literacy class I've got about four who's been here twice so

that they get a break from you know.... part of it is, I'm trying to play the game and be a

team player. I always say you get hazed your first year at school so there's always some

level of bullshit you've got to figure your way out through. You know your first year at

any school... But I do think that race and gender, and they've told me that before, it has a big part to how they interact with certain students versus how- how I do so. But you know my main thing is. I don't want it to be a situation of you know you break down behavior issues or the number of suspensions or the number of referrals, and it's all of our boys and it's all of our kids. So if sitting them in here is going to keep them from getting into trouble, and you know granted they're not really a problem that big of a problem for me. That's right. So it's a bigger I'm looking at it in a bigger picture than just you know getting a headache out of someone's class. (Barry)

I love my coworkers but (he motions towards the door and I close it)...but….like she's a great teacher (referring to his White female co-worker across the hall), don't get me wrong, but the same students she has issues with, they come in my room and sit down and do their work-I don't have any problems out of them. (Wally)

Barry and Wally both express their ability to better handle students that their White female counterparts feel are an issue in class. There is however a caveat to this. Observe Clark's comment:

One of my coworkers, this White lady who teaches reading, and I'll admit she has some pretty bad kids in there, but she made the comment when I mentioned a student the rest of the women in my department had troubles with, "Well of course you don't have any problems out of them, you probably have a much easier time with all the students because you're a black male…" And I wasn't offended, maybe a little taken aback but to be honest, she's probably right.

Clark experience is often cited in research where people assume Black males are the solution to the supposed problem of "unruly" Black boys (Bristol, 2014; 2015; Brokenbrough, 2015; Emdin, 2016). These data suggest that this may very well be the case considering that many of the participants admitted to having an easier time with Black male students.

Theoretical Analysis of Data Associated with the RQ.

The first theme in answering the research question was the participants all responding with "loving" this new position, but this is a façade as the theme of comparison was discovered, as well as their perspectives being skewed, through further interviews being conducted and more analysis being completed. One would expect to have an easier time in a district that benefits from the economic equality and segregation that pervades this country. The participants' responses tell a much more compelling story than simply "loving this new position." Research has shown that high numbers of minority teachers are leaving low-income and urban schools (Ingersoll et al., 2017). The experiences of these participants and their migration gives insight as to why considering that types of educational capital on which they focus in their responses. Bruce, John, Clark, Arthur and Wally all commented on the positive student behavior which arguably falls under social capital, though one could argue that this was not a deficiency in their old county as Wally laments, "[in my old county] I loved the students but the discipline we had to deal with was criminal." It would seem that the relationship was not the issue but dealing with the behavior was which falls under structural capital. This is supported by the overwhelming responses of participants applauding their administration in Hamilton County.

Also, Victor and Clark speak about abundance of social capital including the positive community atmosphere in this new county while, Arthur and Barry both admit that they had to

adjust to this new found community camaraderie. This suggests that they did not leave because of what they are now implying is a negative culture, quite the contrary. When asked about the culture of their old system, Wally admitted to, "loving the people" while Clark mentioned he actually had a different set of issues from the Hamilton County community than he did in his previous positions in disadvantaged areas. This new environment has skewed their perceptions of their experiences in their old positions. The Four Capital Model is a good framework for categorizing their feelings on their experiences in pinpointing why they may have left and why they desire to stay in this county, however, it is not sufficient in addressing the disconnect between their experience and their perception of this experience. CRT factors including microaggressions, and Whiteness as Property and the structural inequities in education are better tools to analyze this phenomenon. Arthur's and Barry's "having to adjust as well" as Clark's and Victor's positive comment on the community are all conditions…

Also, scholars over the years have stressed that Black people adopt Eurocentric values and perceptions when they are subordinates to this power structure (Fanon, 1963; Akbar, 1979), while Woodson (1990) warned much earlier that the Black teachers would perpetuate this ideology to their students for generations. The participants may not be brainwashed by Eurocentric values or mis-education their students, they are however commenting on symptoms of systemic issues and not necessarily addressing the root cause, though it is important to note that the support from administration may be the most important factor. If these teachers had structural support in their previous county, and therefore had more opportunity to teach and have a positive impact on their students, would they have still migrated?

Furthermore, the participants' perspective that students in this county should be doing better must be critically analyzed as well. Research has shown that many students of color,

especially Black students, in suburban areas still under perform and under achieve though their

circumstances are better than their urban counterparts (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Noguera,

2003b). Also, Ladson-Billings (2009) stresses the lack of relevancy and cultural responsiveness

of many schools and school districts as being a major contributor to the lower performance of

students of color. Participants fail to acknowledge that though the environment may have

changed from one district to another, the uninteresting and often Eurocentric lessons, curriculum,

and content are still the same. Also, the benefits this system has because of the wealth of its

community again becomes a commodity, one which the participants feel is still not accessible or

at least not used by the Black students in the district. In this case the whiteness as property

paradigm still eludes the Black students, considering that though they are in the "right" place,

they are still not benefiting from the resources of the space. This would mean that the capital the

teachers desire has nothing to do with what they need but capital from which they feel their

students should be benefiting. The Four Capital Model again is insufficient because in this case,

teachers are more concerned with capital that benefits their students than what benefits

themselves. This diverges from the Eurocentric paradigm of the individual and is better situated

in an Afrocentric paradigm where the benefit of the community, especially young people is more

important than individual success (Akbar, 1979; Asante, 1991; Hilliard, 1991).

Lastly, the disconnect the participants reported between the White female teachers and

Black male students is not uncommon. Again, Ladson-Billings (2009) attributes this issue to

several possible causes including a curriculum not designed for students of color, testing

measures that legitimize their supposed deficiencies, and a lack of innovation and persistence in

their pedagogy. Again, The Four Capital Framework is not as applicable here mainly because

here the focus is on the student and not necessarily the teachers. These teachers who are

allegedly disconnected from their Black male students have also not left or moved from their position. Nevertheless, participants, because of their shared racial experiences, are better equipped to help students of color, namely Black male students, continuing in their commitment to help their community. They also seem to dedicated to reversing some of the School to Prison Pipeline" practices (see McGrew, 2016; Noguera, 2003a; 2003b) that are stemming from the disconnect between the majority White female teachers and Black male students. As Barry and Wally suggest in their taking in more Black male students and, Barry stepping in to prevent students from getting in further trouble, the participants are not feeling a lack of social structure as the Mason and Matas (2015) framework specifies, but instead are pushing back against systemic structures that are overtly punishing and over criminalizing Black male student behavior. This may be a matter of perspective from their standpoint, as Wally's perception suggests, but perhaps the teachers having a difficult time should spend some times in a school situated in a community that is suffering from the societal inequities in this society. Nevertheless, all of the participants did leave previous positions for similar reasons of difficulty with unruly students though they also cited unsupportive administration, lack of parental support and a paucity of resources. As Gustav Flaubert once said, "There is no truth. There is only perception."

Conclusion

In conclusion, though the participants have diverse beliefs and perceptions, there are clear patterns evident in our experiences while being employed in the Hamilton County School System. First, our ease of acquiring a job in the county, while admitting that others expressed the difficulty of being hired in Hamilton county shows a possible change in the county which resulted in a demand for Black male teachers. However, upon further analysis, all but one of us

were hired in predominantly Black schools within Hamilton County. Some admitted that they chose a school with a predominantly minority population while others were unaware of the demographics of the school in which they sought employment. To understand the choice to leave one county one must be privy to the conditions of the county and in this case the participants' perception of these conditions. Most participants cited issues with discipline among students, support from administration, and lack of academic respect in the community. Moreover, many spoke about being used as disciplinarian tools to clean-up problem schools including being asked to perform sometimes unreasonable duties that were beyond the scope of classroom teaching. Proximity also fell under this theme of reasons for leaving previous districts. Many cited that Hamilton County made the commute home much easier and that Hamilton County was more desirable than other neighboring districts. Lastly, many of us admitted to simply wanting a change from the largely minority, urban schools: whether out of curiosity to see how the "other half" lived, or simply leaving from fatigue, burnout, and desiring to teach without myriad of the aforementioned issues.

Furthermore, in investigating why we remain in the classroom, I discovered that in fact, many were not planning to stay. To better understand this, it was important to discover what initially led us to the profession. Many of us cited teaching as a "calling" while others expressed their negative educational experiences when they were students and their desire to change that. This included an extreme lack of Black male teachers as well as the impact that poor teachers had on us. Some also mentioned positive educational experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Several of us recited influential teachers by name and how they went out of their way to help us when we were younger. Therefore, it could be concluded that leaving the classroom can be considered a way to extend the reach of the influence we have fostered inside the

classroom. Some participants also cited money and the feeling of complacency in the classroom as other reasons as well.

Finally, in terms of our overall experiences, all participants expressed a love for our current positions working in Hamilton County. Upon further probing and analysis however, it is evident that much of this is due to the difficulties which we experienced in our previous school districts. Many of us even acknowledged the idea that their perception and comparison of our previous district as being the primary reason for our affinity of our current teaching assignment in Hamilton county. In contrast, some participants have observed and expressed concerns over students in the PWSD being perceptively behind considering the abundance of district, community, and parental resources in comparison to a non-PWSD. This, again however is predicated on comparison of previous positions. The only salient point that seems unanimous among the participants is our White female counterparts' difficulty with many of the students, especially young Black males.

By using Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Framework of Attrition and Critical Race Theory, I was better able to organize and contextualize these experiences, especially when allowing the participants to clarify on some of their perceptions of these experiences. Themes and sub-themes had to be adjusted as more data was collected in follow-up interviews asking participants about their previous responses and the responses of others. Where the first round of interviews provided experiences and anecdotes, follow-up interviews provided context and perspective to aid in clarity. This allowed for deeper analysis especially when applying a CRT lens to their responses.

Participants cited issues of a lack of structural capital at their previous assignments, namely issues with their administration, which is supported by the research (see Ingersoll et al.,

2017). They also had a desire for social capital, specifically Black male students with whom they can share their experiences in their instruction and rearing. This seeking of kinship has elements of an Afro-centered philosophy that will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. Human capital and positive psychological capital are both inadequate measures in this case. Instead of the acknowledgement of the lack of content knowledge, pre-service experience, and experience or the resilience, personality, and grit each capital contains, participants seem to have a desire to use these attributes to better help their community and the young Black males in their charge to help reverse some of the systemic issues they are facing in their environments and in the school system. Where Mason and Matas (2015) measure lack of capital as a catalyst for leaving education, these participants saw lack of opportunity to use this capital to initiate change and have a substantial impact on their community as an impetus to migrate to an area where they can.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

To understand their motivation to leave it is important to situate their responses within the framework. Participants enjoyed the social capital: their relationship with the students and other teachers. They also cited little in the way of human capital deficiency; i.e., the lack of content knowledge or pedagogy. However, participants did cite issues of structural capital; namely, their issues with school rules governing behavior, lack of administrative support, and negative community factors. Even considering their strong positive psychological capital, their grit and resilience, participants still decided to leave these disadvantaged districts, suggesting that more needs to be done in the structure of the schools therein.

The purpose of this heuristic inquiry was to explore the experiences of Black male teachers who teach in a PWSD. This study was an attempt to discover the experiences, specifically the who, what, why, and how of Black male content teachers who shared my experience of leaving a predominantly Black, low-income district, to a predominantly White and more affluent one. The inspiration of this study based on my experiences in Hamilton County, paired with my initial feelings of guilt for teaching in a county I assumed did not need me as much as the low-income, predominantly Black school system from whence I came. A part of heuristic inquiry is documenting my transformation during this process.

An essential part of the heuristic inquiry is my transformation during the process through the interaction with the other participants. The guilt I initially had with leaving the majority Black schools served as a significant motivator for this study; however, interacting with the other participants helped me to better understand my drive to teach, my reason for leaving my previous

county, and my place in this new environment which all culminated into diminishing my guilt. Like the other participants, I have plans of vacating the classroom one day. Where I struggled with that decision before because of my fear of losing the direct contact and effect on the students, I realize from the other participants that I could potentially make a more significant impact in my community outside of the classroom. Also, like the other participants, I left a predominantly Black school district to come to a majority white one: but why?

Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Model Framework of Attrition and Retention was used as a theoretical framework to organize and analyze participant responses because it addresses the complex issues of attrition and retention. "Teacher attrition is a complex phenomenon with numerous variables at play" (Mason & Matas, 2015, p. 58). Studies have shown that Black teachers overall are on the decline since 2012, a trend that is not unusual considering that between 1988 and 2012 there was a significant increase in minority male teachers (46%) however Black males increased by only 30% (Ingersoll et al., 2017). The most substantial decline of Black teachers was after Brown v. Board where the number dropped from 80,000 to 40,00 because of the closing of Black schools (Hanford, 2017). But this framework alone was inadequate in contextualizing the unique situation this study addresses. For this reason, Critical Race Theory was used as a theoretical lens to help better understand the deeper implications of the participant's motivations and the arguably tumultuous spaces in which they worked. If the Four Capital Framework is the organizational structure for analyzing the reason why teachers leave, Critical Race Theory is the tool used to better understand these reasons. In this chapter I will address the experiences of the participants through the different capitals Mason and Matas (2015) have created but in the context of Critical Race Theory. Each component of the

framework will be addressed in the discussion of their experiences. I will also provide limitations of the study, policy recommendations, and further research that may follow in the future.

Problems with the Framework

First the idea of capital must be addressed. Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Framework arranges and attributes the reasons for teachers leaving or staying into different forms of capital, however this frames the problem in terms of "capital" or the needs of the teacher not the broader community. The makers are framing the issue in the context of the needs of the teachers and not the students and broader community. Hilliard's (1995) African Socialization is the assuming of responsibilities of teaching one's own culture through a shared communal goal progress. The goal for Black teachers, he argues, is a commitment to helping one's community, not putting one's individual's needs over the community as the capital structure suggests. Waldron (2012) writes:

> African centered scholars and other individuals understand the concept of self as being comprised of the concepts 'I' and 'We', with both concepts perceived to be part of an integrated whole. The notion that 'I am, because we are' means 'we are, therefore, I am' in the African-centered world view. Unlike in Anglo-American cultures, where an emphasis is placed on the individual, the African-centered world view sees the 'I' (self) and the 'We' (community, nature) as interdependent. (p. 41)

African centered philosophy is focused on the "We" not the I. If we are to measure the lack or abundance of capital a teacher has or does not have as a possible reason for them to leave the educational field, this paradigm leaves out a crucial component: the student. Waldron (2012) addresses the Anglo-American or Eurocentric view on which this system is based, is far removed from an African centered philosophy where the "capital" of teachers cannot be divorced from the

success and betterment of their students. Participants in this study were committed to teaching to help their community and became teachers primarily for this reason, which is also cited in the literature (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Leaving because of the deficiency in different forms of capital therefore is only half the story.

Earlier in this manuscript, I defined attrition so that the complexity of the idea could be better understood. Black males are also the slowest growing number of teachers in the surge of minority male teacher recruitment (Ingersoll et al., 2017). In a way, all participants, including myself, are a part of the large number of Black male teachers who are leaving minority and low-income urban schools (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Participants all further troubled the already debatable definition of attrition (Billingsley, 2004; Kelchterman, 2017; Mason & Matas, 2015). On the one hand, participants did not leave the profession altogether, suggesting they should be considered movers or migrants: teachers who move from one school or district to another. However, in this situation, participants left a disadvantaged school district to work in a more affluent one. Kelchterman (2017) defines attrition as qualified teachers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement. Migration may seem like a better definition since it pertains to the moving from one school or district to another, rather than leaving the profession altogether but it seems to exclude a crucial detail of where people are allocated versus where they are needed. Again, if we operate from an African centered perspective, community uplifting is more important than individual progress. In this case, qualified means that they have experience, content knowledge (Pil & Leana, 2009), and racial congruence (Milner, 2016), and "leaving the profession" in this case means leaving the schools in disadvantaged districts that are the hardest hit by systemic discriminatory structures. Basically, teachers who are high commodities, leaving areas that need them most.

This study was an attempt to discover the experiences, specifically the who, what, why, and how of Black male content teachers who shared my experience of leaving a predominantly Black, low-income district, to a predominantly White and more affluent one. Chapter five reintroduces the reader to the context of this study as well as the motivation behind it. Next, I will review the findings from chapter four and discuss their implications as they pertain to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Also, implications for the study as well as policy recommendations are addressed followed by limitations.

Review of Findings

During my journey through this process, I revaluated my reasons for leaving my previous position which included dissatisfaction with policies and procedures, lack of strong leadership, and issues with discipline procedures and community buy-in. I discovered through Mason and Matas (2015) Four Capital Framework that many of these issues are contained in a particular form of capital known as structural capital. I discovered by filtering my experiences through a Critical Race Theoretical lens that many of the issues in my previous position stemmed from systemic discriminatory practices. Despite my education prowess, commitment to my community, and the life-long connections I made with former students, teachers, and other members of the community, I left one county not because of the lack of capital, as Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Model would suggest, but because of my failure to use the capital I possessed to better help my people.

This deficiency was discovered through the examination of the experiences of the participants in this study who came into education rich in human capital, through their content

knowledge and pre-service training, and rich in positive psychological capital, considering their

motivation to teach and where they chose to teach initially. However, this was insufficient capital

to keep them in those particular school districts. Like me, the only other Black male content

teachers in this county left predominantly Black, urban, disadvantaged districts to come to a

much more affluent PWSD. The following discussion uncovers the different forms of capital, or

lack thereof, that lead to their departure and influence their feelings in this current school district

as well as their aspirations thereafter.

The Participants.

The participants of this study come from diverse backgrounds. They decided to become

teachers because of ambivalent experiences growing up. On the negative end of the spectrum,

some participants reported that they had poor educational experiences and poor teachers. This

recognition included an inadequacy of Black male content teachers and inversely, an abundance

of Black male P.E. teachers. Studies show that few to no Black male teachers can have an impact

on young Black males' choice in careers (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Wimbush, 2012). This trend

would continue into their tenure as professionals since most explained that they were often the

only Black male content position in their department and at times in their building. Both

experiences are not unusual considering the statistics of Black male teachers in education and the

percentage in P.E., coaching and other non-content fields (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Also, many

based their teaching philosophy on preparing students for the life outside of school using their

own experiences and the obstacles they faced in their adolescence as a guide. Their commitment

to helping people in their community was both a huge motivator behind their career choice and

also a main factor in their leaving the disadvantaged position they had before. Based on the Four Capital Framework, participants came into teaching with an inherently high amount of positive psychological capital, fostering a mission of providing a better experience to their students than the one they had in areas that needed them the most; however, in these areas many of the participants felt that they were not able to make a significant impact. Many used terms such as "reach," "numbers," and "impact" when asked to detail the reason for their migration.

On the other end of the spectrum, participants' positive experiences were also motivators in their career choice. Many reported on teachers who changed their lives including master teachers who were adept at their practice and teachers who made a tremendous impact outside of school. Studies show that one of the strongest predictors of career choice is students' experiences in school (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Participants typically had an array of experiences however we all ended up in the same profession and this same particular district.

The County.

The backdrop of the study is an important actor as the participants. Hamilton County is not unlike many of the other surrounding metro school districts with segregated schools based on location and income and fluctuating demographics. However, it is also a unique setting considering it was one of the more affluent and sought-after school districts in the area. This coveted position is situated in the concept of Whiteness as property where the benefits gained from a history of social inequity has led to a commodified and highly valued space (Harris, 1995). Of the several primary metropolitan counties in the area, with similar demographics, Hamilton County is also unique because of its sudden shift in demographics. A once

homogeneously affluent and White county, Hamilton County saw significant gains in minorities and lower working class individuals (NCES). Much of this movement, as observed by the participants, stemmed from their desire for their children to receive a better education. Oliver's comments on Black people moving into the area for better opportunity again speak to the concept of Whiteness as property in this case.

Furthermore, participants' comments showed that despite being a coveted school district, almost all of them reported acquiring their positions without difficulty. Though I did experience this firsthand (two principals contacted and offered me two different teaching positions within the county a day after each interview), I did not realize the implications of this fact. Only one participant commented on having a difficult time of being hired into the county; however, his job search was years before any of the other teachers. Research has addressed the trend of increasing minorities into suburban areas (Stoub & Richards, 2017). It stands to reason that the increase of minorities into the counties and schools had a direct impact on the hiring patterns as many of the participants suggested.

Another significant fact shared by a majority of the participants, except one, taught at majority Black schools within Hamilton County. Some chose to teach at these particular schools while others, like myself, were unaware of the majority Black demographic. Though I was oblivious to this point, after listening to the other participants, I realized that if given an opportunity I would not go to one of the majority White schools because this would be contrary to my reasoning of going into education in the first place: a mission, I found, the other participants shared as well.

Answering the Research Questions.

When asked why they came to Hamilton County and why they left their previous county, the first pattern that was noticeable was the fact that all of the participants (in this discussion participants includes my own experiences as well) came from majority Black, low-income school districts. Further supported by research, most Black male teachers are concentrated in urban, low-income, minority school districts (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2018). When asked why they decided to seek employment at a PWSD, participants cited several reasons including issues with the handling of student discipline, support from administration, and the feeling of not having a positive impact on the community.

Studies show that Black males have been leaving the large urban areas and the primary reason for their exodus, other than personal reasons was issues with the administration (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Also, many of the participants reported problems with structural capital at their previous schools, namely heavy administrative tasks primarily related to monitoring and disciplining students which are supported heavily in other research (Bristol, 2015; Brokenbrough, 2015). Participants were often asked to monitor areas of the schools like outside the building and restrooms that were known problem areas. Oliver noted that policing these areas took time away from his teaching while Jordan related a story of being put in a highly volatile and compromising situation. This deficit in the structural capital had a profound impact on the participants' decision to leave. Other factors included personal reasons, such as desiring to be closer to home and merely wanting a change. "Wanting a change," however, has much more profound implications.

In creating the theme of "wanting a change," it became clear that many of the participants desired a change because they did not want their difficult experience to be the only experience of

education they had. Answering the question of "why do they stay" involved dissecting two inherent quandaries: why did they become teachers and why did they remain teachers. Upon answering the former question, responses from the interview data showed a pattern of teaching as a calling, where a combination of giving back to the community, natural ability, and earlier life experiences culminated into a desire to be a teacher. Numerous studies correlate with these findings of giving back to the community and helping others (Lynn, 2002 & 2006; Wimbush, 2012). This is also a cornerstone in African centered philosophy where the communities' needs supersede the needs of the individual (Akbar, 1979; Asante, 1991). Furthermore, the "why do they stay" or "why do they remain" question was arguably the wrong sub-question to investigate. All of the participants, except for one, had desired to leave the classroom soon and most had begun the process: myself included.

The participants supported research on the high number of Black males who leave the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2017), though it is difficult to label this as attrition since these participants did not leave education altogether. However, these Black male content teachers left areas that arguably needed them most, to a district that had an abundance of resources and community support. As mentioned earlier, participants left for number of reasons, namely their feeling of not having a significant impact on their students and the community. From a Critical Race Theory standpoint, the already disadvantaged districts are impacted more so because of the very issues that stems from the societal inequities from which they suffer.

Not only did the participants move to an area where they felt they could increase their impact, but also, participants expressed a strong desire to amplify their impact by working in a position that would allow them to replicate their techniques by teaching other teachers, which would in turn reach a larger number of students, and extend the reach of their influence and

vision over the culture of the school not just their classroom. These aspirations would suggest that Black male teachers leave the classroom and go into administration not just for more money or simply desiring a change (which were other themes discovered in the data) but increasing their positive impact on students. To quote one of the participants, "I can reach more than the 100-120 kids a year in my classroom…" This proclamation was a paradigm-shifting revelation for me. I was adamant about staying in the classroom because I feared to lose the one-on-one interaction and influence on students, but my mindset changed when I considered what the other participants were arguing: leaving into a higher position did not mean losing interaction with students, it meant impacting students on a grander scale and in a different way.

Lastly, participants' experiences in this PWSD were unanimously positive. Many of them echoed the sentiment I often responded when asked how I liked my new position: I love it! In fact, the question of "how do you stay," inquiring about challenges in the county yielded little in the way of fruitful responses. Participants had nothing but positive things to say about student behavior, administration, and the community in general. Many of their replies prompted me to respond with skepticism considering that I taught the same group of students and could not admit to such utopian conditions. I would soon discover that their responses were mostly due to a combination of factors; namely, their comparing Hamilton County to their previous school district.

Now in my fourth year of teaching in Hamilton County, the proverbial honeymoon phase had ended, and I was much more critical of the students' behavior. Had this been my first year or two, I may have responded with similar exuberance. Students did behave much better than what I experienced in previous districts and were far from perfect. When probed, many of the participants admitted that their assessment of the students was based in large on a matter of

perspective: student behavior was much more tolerable because they were comparing it to dismal conditions at their previous schools. Participants did admit that despite the abundance of resources students had access to in the PWSD, they felt that students were surprisingly underachieving. They blamed much of this on cultural influences and the desire to emulate more stereotypical vestiges of Black culture, a conclusion reached by numerous studies (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Noguera, 2003a; Whiting, 2009). Also, participants noticed that the largely White female staff sometimes had a more difficult time with mostly the Black male students. The struggles this subgroup of teachers often faces is not unusual considering the research on the disconnect between White female teachers' perception of Black males. Worse still, studies show that this disconnect can lead to lower achievement and lower feelings of self-worth on the part of the student (Bryan, 2017; Whiting, 2009). Moreover, additional themes emerged from participants' transitions to the PWSD that speak to the heart of policy recommendations and educational research, which included the ease of teaching and the enjoyment of being able to give back to their community. Participants expressed how sharing experiences and positively influencing young Black males is a vital component that should be used alongside this research to help solve some of the issues in education.

The Need for a Better Frame.

In this chapter, the idea of capital as well as the notion of attrition in Mason and Matas' (2015) Four Capital Framework has been addressed when using it on this particular situation. Each of the different capitals must also be better repurposed to fit the unique perspectives, experiences, and motivations of these participants. Several factors are important to note in repurposing these different forms of capital. First, the spirit of Critical Race Theory is to look at

things critically, and acknowledging the axioms of CRT including: the importance of voice or

narratives counter the dominant narrative, racism being endemic to this country, the use of

curriculum and instruction to further perpetuate discrimination and inequality (Ladson-Billings,

2009) and social justice action, or what Ledesma and Calderon (2015) propose as educators not

being saviors but calling for activism that changes the inequitable system itself. Adding the

Afrocentric component allows for the analysis of this critical engagement to be grounded in

values that are central to Black people including African socialization (Hilliard, 1995),

highlighting the cultural and historical contributions of their own people (Asante, 1991), and a

holistic African-centered world view where the onus is put on the betterment of "we" rather than

"I" (Akbar, 1979; Waldron, 2012). Organizing participants' experiences using the Four Capital

Framework and filtering their reflections of their experiences led to a necessary reworking of the

different capitals of the Four Capital Framework, to better speak to the experiences and

motivations of these Black male participants in explaining why they migrated the way they did.

     First, human capital or the education, pre-service knowledge, experience, professional

knowledge that a teacher has (Mason & Matas, 2015) was not an issue with these participants.

All of them, including those who went through alternate teaching programs, said that they were

adequately prepared; in fact, several participants spoke to the advantage of their careers outside

of education. Also, almost all of them talked extensively about the importance of using their

personal experiences to better help and prepare students for the real world. Many of the counter

narratives and micro-aggressions the participants relayed, speak to the all too familiar reality of

discrimination and inequality in this country. Participants like Clark and Barry who spoke about

being the only Black kid in their classes, Arthur and Bruce who grew up in harsh environments

and poor schools, and even participants like Victor who grew up in an affluent area but still faced

scrutiny based on his race all provided evidence of racism. Human capital is centered too heavily around formal knowledge and not experiential knowledge and endorses seemingly monolithic educator's programs focused on content and not kinship with students. Afrocentric scholars would suggest that knowledge without purpose and goal of bettering one's community is pointless (Akbar, 1979; Asante, 1991; Hilliard, 1995) Critical Race and Afrocentric theorists would also challenge the merit of pre-service programs and challenge the relevance of the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1998) as well as the tendency of teachers to replicate vestiges and attitudes of White supremacy and not teaching in ways that are culturally relevant ultimate mitigating racism in society (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Instead of human capital the data from this research suggest more of a Socialization Capital. Based on Dr. Hilliard's definition of socialization, this idea is focused on answering the question: to what end are forms of human capital used to better one's community? Lack of capital therefore leads to the lack of autonomy to teach content and experiential values to young people which is why a majority of the participants in this study left. Matsuda et al. (1993) stress the need for a "call to action" while Ledesma and Calderon (2015) speak of the "politics of action" in the context of Critical Race Theory or as many of the participants strove to accomplish-making a significant impact on their school community, which they found difficulties doing in their previous assignment. What good is content knowledge if I can't teach it? What good is experiential knowledge if I have no one with which to share it? Ultimately, these participants demonstrate that their reason for leaving was not due to a lack of human capital but the inability to use the capital to they possessed to help their community.

Second, social capital or the quality of relationships with others, school culture, teacher value (Mason & Matas, 2015) fails to address the social aspect of shared kinship based on

common experiences and social upheaval. Several facets of Critical Race Theory speak to the

shared experiences of Black people, particularly Black males including the endemic nature of

racism in this country and the focus on narratives of marginalized individuals (Taylor, 2009).

The participants in this study shared a common trait with each other which also connected them

to their Black male students. Though people's experiences are unique, Black people share a

common plight of oppression and racism regardless of other characteristics which often suggests

a shared kinship of determination and raced based experiences. This often manifests in seeking

out individuals who share common experiences yet keeps in mind the idea that people have

varied backgrounds. Instead of social capital which generalizes the bond between individuals,

kinship capital seems more appropriate. This is the feeling of belonging through connections to

co-workers, students, and the larger community. Many of the participants spoke about the

immediate kinship they shared with fellow Black male teachers, in fact, research shows that

Black male teacher retention is higher when there are other Black male teachers in the same

building (Bristol, 2015a) The participants in this study also sought out other Black male teachers.

Bruce hired four Black males to his school, Clark attempted to get an old colleague of his hired,

and Arthur was referred to his position by another Black male. Kinship manifests in the

recruitment of more Black male teachers, the seeking out of minority students, the respect in

strong leadership, and the desire of camaraderie with community members that the participants

relayed in their responses. Lack of kinship capital appears on the surface as lack of individuals

who "look like me" and manifests into feelings of alienation and difficulty fitting in as supported

in the research (Bristol, 2015a; 2015b).

Third, structural capital or the facilities, practices, rules, administration, county policies

(Mason & Matas, 2015), fails to situate the causes of structural deficiency based on societal

inequities, segregation, and systemic racism that still has an effect on schools in urban communities of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Mason and Matas provide the parameters for social capital but not the context or the variance from school to school. A structure should not and cannot be analyzed in a vacuum. It is first important to note that schools and the issues therein are a symptom of deeper systemic issues especially schools in the most disadvantaged areas. Moreover, Critical Race theorists acknowledge the fundamental reasons why these debilitating structures continue to be in place through the understanding of Whiteness as property and interest convergence (Harris, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). This means that things will not get better because of the benefits being dependent on the needs of those in power, and as such the commodity they possess is always what is seen as valuable. Applying these to Mason and Matas' structural branch of the framework shifts the focus from the structures to the root of the disciplinarian issues and practices that are put in place (dissonance between teachers and facilities and the policies therein). This capital should not be measured by the lack of agreement with these policies but the depth of understanding of the root causes of these issues and the size of the positive impact on the main victims of it: i.e. the students. Many of the participants reported leaving their position not because of the students' behavior but the lack of procedures designed to curtail these issues and an administration with the fortitude and the insight to lead them towards change: as Wally noted, "I loved the kids, but the discipline we had to deal with was criminal." When asked what he meant by discipline he stressed "the policies that were used to discipline the students were inadequate." These participants therefore sought to reverse the flow of the School to Prison Pipeline, which is the collection of school curricular and disciplinarian policies that are herding students into the prison system (McGrew, 2016; Noguera, 2003a; 2003b). Inadequate procedures for discipline and the lack of power in disciplining

students in the way that was practical and not playing into the over-criminalization of Black boys the literature suggests. Many of the participants even talked about similar patterns of over-disciplining because of the disconnect between their White female co-workers and many of the Black male students. The lack of Reverse Pipeline Capital is the lack of support because of poor policies in support in dealing with behavior issues in class, input in working with immediate administration, disconnect of district policies and procedures, and lack of autonomy to impact school and community culture and climate. The idea is that if the School to Prison Pipeline is a one-way flow of Black boys from school to prison because of discipline disparities, lackluster curriculums geared towards students of color, and other discriminatory practices (McGrew, 2016; Noguera, 2003a; 2003b), these data suggest that individuals desire capital that is based on how much they are able to impede or reverse this flow. Therefore, in leaving their previous districts, these participants made a move that allows them more capital to do so.

Lastly, positive psychological capital or personality, grit, resilience, and other psychological factors (Mason & Matas, 2015) are limited because they fail to address the source and motivation behind positive psychological attributes. This capital also puts the focus on the experiences the person amassed as a teacher and not their experiences in their everyday lives which in-turn may have been the catalyst that created resilience and grit and the need for psychological armor. Critical Race Theory scholars would suggest that through examining these Black male teachers' counter-narratives and microaggressions, we may be able to better understand their profile and their impetus to stay in the profession (Taylor, 2009). Also, the foundations of this branch of the framework is from a Eurocentric lens of what psychological fortitude looks like, ignoring the fundamental issues of applying psychological health norms of

the oppressed from the standpoint of the oppressor (Baldwin, 1992; Fanon, 1963; Waldron, 2012). Instead of positive psychological capital, to adapt to these participants, I include Baldwin's (1992) dual model of Black psychological disposition to propose a capital based on Afrocentric-consciousness and sharing this philosophy with students. Unlike the positive psychological capital Mason and Matas (2015) propose, this consciousness extension capital takes argument back a step, considering that through the proliferation of counter narratives and micro-aggressions, Black people develop "grit" and "resilience" in their everyday lives; in this case, Black psychological fortitude is the understanding that they are "African biologically, psychologically, and culturally and perceive the survival of Africans as a priority and where they respect, engage in, and foster all things African" (Baldwin, 1992; Waldron, 2012). Simply put, this capital is the extent to which people accept their heritage, be conscious or "woke," and develop a mission to act. This, like Mason and Matas' original psychological branch, is one that is arguably independent of the school environment and invariably teachers develop them through their experiences and bring with them wherever they go.

In summation, the conclusions drawn from this study are clear. Black male teachers left their predominantly Black, disadvantaged school districts because of an overwhelming lack of not just structural capital, but the lack of power to change the inadequate structures put in place in disadvantaged areas. Many of them felt powerless in the inability to stop the flow of the School to Prison Pipeline that inundates the most vulnerable students in the areas of greatest need. Human capital was not an issue however the ability to be able to use human capital (content knowledge, teaching experience, and real world experience) to help people in their communities or what Hilliard (1995) coins as African socialization was essential. Also, social capital, or the connection with students, teachers, and community members is important but

when the racial dynamic is added the shared experiences create a sort of kinship between people of a shared cultural history. Though intersectionality stresses the uniqueness of our experiences, the permeation of racism in this country and its ordinariness has created shared experiences of discrimination and other microaggressions. Participants therefore longed for kinship with fellow Black male teachers to relate to, and Black male students with whom to share their experiences. So, though all of the participants migrated from a predominantly Black school district to a predominantly White one, they still ended up in the predominantly Black school within the county. Lastly, positive psychological capital or the characteristics personality, grit, and resilience assumes that personality and other character traits helped determine whether a teacher stays or leaves. One could argue that for these participants this psychological armor comes not from negative experiences in the school system but negative experiences in society. The measure therefore is to what extent have they accepted and embraced their African identity, are conscious of the plight those in the diaspora share, and are committed to the changing it for the better (Baldwin, 1992; Waldron, 2012).

Nevertheless, the school in which they found themselves was comparatively better than their previous county though many did admit that with an abundance of resources they expected students to be doing better than their less affluent counterparts. Participants also had a strong desire to increase their human capital and use their skills, relationships with the students and community, and unique experiences to have a more significant impact on more students by going into administration. These factors have substantial implications for policy recommendations and reform.

Implications for Educational Policy and Recommendations

This paper began with some of the rampant issues that Black male students are having in the public school system. As cited earlier, Black male students are falling behind all of their racial counterparts in urban and suburban areas (Kena et al., 2015). Their issues include lower academic performance compared to their racial counterparts (Kena et al., 2015), higher drop-out rates and suspension rates (Musu-Gillete et al., 2016), underrepresentation in gifted programs (Grantham, 2004; 2011; Whiting, 2006; 2009), an overrepresentation in special education programs (Kunjufu, 2005) as well as many other issues.

Research shows that Black male teachers have a certain kinship with Black male students and pairing the two leads to success for the latter (Easton-Brooks, 2014; Milner, 2016). Studies also show that Black male teachers are beneficial to all students (Goings & Bianco, 2016). However, with a high number of turnover rates (Sealey-Ruiz & Lewis, 2011), an increase of Black male teachers leaving low-income and high minority areas and an increase of minority students overall (Ingersoll et al., 2017), it is essential that more is done to recruit Black males into the profession. Also, studies have shown that predominantly Black schools with numerous Black male teachers have seen improvements in instruction (Bristol, 2018). This increased presence is not only true in predominantly Black schools and with Black students, but the benefits of Black male teachers positively affect all students (Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2014; Milner, 2005; 2007; 2010). Therefore, the first obvious solution is to recruit more Black male teachers. Though this endeavor has already been underway for quite some time, the numbers still show that minority students vastly outnumber minority teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Though the increase of Black male teachers is the most obvious policy recommendation, it will be addressed last in this section.

Furthermore, the experiences of the participants in this study further support these data

and their negative attitudes towards their previous suggest that more should be done to retain the

teachers currently employed in counties where they are arguably needed the most yet seem to

have the most problems. As stated earlier, one of the main reasons why Black male teachers

enter into education is to help young people in their community. In this case, these teachers have

left counties and schools with a majority of minorities and low-income populations to

predominantly Black schools within a PWSD, primarily to teach without having to face the

typical obstacles that come with counties with challenging demographics. However, when

probed, I found that the issue was not with the students but the administrative procedures that

were used to deal with behavior. Attrition is the best definition to use since these individuals

have left in more ways than one. These individuals cut ties with districts, schools, and students of

areas they wanted to help the most, that arguably needed them most, and in the end, lacked

sufficient structural capital to keep them there. Participants yearned for a platform to reach more

students with structural support that helped them achieve this goal. They also had a strong desire

to amplify this reach by making plans to leave the classroom to go into administration. Studies

show that many Black teachers plan to move out of the classroom to other positions in education

(Feistritzer, 2011). The data suggests that students in urban disadvantaged areas must reevaluate

their discipline procedures and allow for more teacher input to increase buy-in. Also these

participants' desire to increase their impact provides policymakers and administrators with much

need task of providing opportunities for teachers to advance in their profession in positions that

give them more power and autonomy to elicit change in their school and community. but they

also have to consider these teachers' motivation behind teaching and understand their desire to

continue.

Plainly stated, Black males are leaving the areas that arguably need them most because of the administrative conditions in predominantly low income, urban schools. Many still are planning to go into other areas in education other than the classroom. The data in this study suggests that Black male teachers believe they can make a more significant impact outside of a district with lower support, outside of the classroom where their influence will have a farther reach and will move to a county where the human capital, in this case, professional development and progression, may be more palpable.

In addition, though all of the participants in this study chose to go from a predominately Black school district to a predominantly White one, and all but one, whether intentionally or unintentionally, ended up teaching at majority Black schools within the PWSD. Their general conclusion was the same: participants loved their new position and cited reasons such as more student engagement, more parental support, more resources, and stronger leadership. However, this affection arguably came from comparing their former county to this present one. Participants had a much easier time with the same population partly because of the primarily Black clientele they served, but also because they had a different perspective.

Lastly, considering the positive effects that Black male teachers have on students of color and all students (Bristol, 2014; 2015; Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2014; Lynn, 2002; 2006; Milner, 2005; 2007; 2010; Thomas & Warren, 2017) and their unmissable commitment to helping students in disadvantaged districts (Wimbush, 2012), based on the participants in this story, more needs to be done in recruiting Black male teachers. Attrition is an obvious issue, however, losing from an already small pool of highly qualified Black male teachers requires

districts to be more intentional and take more initiative in their recruitment approach. Attrition in this regard is especially evident in the content areas. All of the participants admitted that they had plenty of Black male P.E. teachers and coaches, but few if any, had Black male content teachers. Increasing the number of Black male content teachers could promote responsible behavior, deeply examine the portrayal of Black men, and expose young male students to Black male role models in an academic context.

As a result, this could thereby help young Black male students develop a sense of cultural and historical pride in Black male accomplishments (Grantham, 2004; Lee, 2006) especially outside of sports and entertainment (Hebert, 2002; Sailes, 2004). It is also important for policymakers to do more to recruit Black males because of the positive impact it has on the retention of other Black males in the same building (Bristol, 2018). More Black male teachers could also influence Black male students to become teachers (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

Limitations and Continuing Research

It is important that researchers address issues and limitations in their research. Heurism and other reflexive studies have been criticized as "encouraging self-indulgence, narcissism, and solipsism" (Etherington, 2004, p.62). Hiles (2001) admits that the process may seem haphazard and unorthodox, however, "Heuristic inquiry is not a process without order. Instead, it requires the researcher to engage in a disciplined pursuit of fundamental meanings connected to significant human experiences' Both passionate and disciplined commitment to studying of human experiences is necessary to ensure trustworthiness" (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010, p.1572). So, though heuristic inquiry seems like it lacks structure, the techniques employed

within the methodology and the steps and phases help ensure rich data and trustworthiness.

More notably, there are some inherent issues with studying people who are employed in the same county as I. Glesne (2011) warns of the inherent problems with "backyard research" including the expectations that may skew data and confuse participants with which role you are inhabiting and when. However, this backyard is a part of my identity; essentially, I am what I do. Part of my coming to work in this county is a part of what Etherington (2004) explains, "As someone who also has a story to tell, my own stories become part of the data" (p.49). Also, "More traditional research methodologies impress upon us the importance of excluding ourselves from the research lest we 'contaminate' the data by our presence" (Etherington, 2004, p.49); however, heuristic inquiry shatters this notion by valuing the researcher's experiences, including their experiences and data, and analyzing their transformation throughout the process as well. This form of analysis and reflection makes the researcher's growth and change as much a part of the study as the experience of the participant.

More crucially, the subgroup of Black males in this PWSD is sparse. It is not difficult to see a Black male teacher in a county with demographics like these; however, it was difficult to make sure I identified all of the participants that fit the criterion. There was also the issue of mobility and attrition among teachers. Some teachers may have moved out of the county or transferred to another school within the county. In one case, the only Black male content teacher interviewed in one school has moved to another position within the district and is no longer a classroom teacher. Though the ten participants represented the eleven total content teachers who teach in the county, this data only represents a sample from one of the numerous counties. Finding more Black male teachers in other predominantly white school districts may have

impacted some of the conclusions an added more perspectives.

There are two major limitations I need to address in this study. One is the lack of data from the experiences of non-content teachers. Many of them have been in the county for over twenty years and could probably speak more to the changes in the county over the years. Another delimitation was the fact that only one county was researched based on a specific characteristic. This study did not include predominantly Black school districts that are affluent or predominantly White school districts that have a high low-income population. These experiences and the conclusions drawn from them are limited to the participants in this particular county. Further studies could be expanded to include Black male teachers who left their previous school districts for other desirable factors, not just more affluent PWSDs. Also, because this was a subset of a larger pool of Black male teachers, more research needs to be done on those Black male teachers who are still in urban, predominantly low-income school districts who did not leave.

Lastly, this study employs the use of a heuristic methodology however I chose not to include an important aspect of the method: creative synthesis. I focused instead on the inclusion of my own experience and my transformation over the process through phenomenological interviews and methodical qualitative methods of coding and extracting themes. In the future I plan to use these data to craft a creative synthesis that speaks to the experiences of the participants in the authentic way that Moustakas (1995) suggests, accurately reflecting how their experiences and my own change over time.

Conclusion

Superman, in all his heroic deeds, still felt a longing to save his doomed people on Krypton, but he was powerless. Batman risks his life day after day to help others, driven by the lives of his own family he was powerless to save: in a city that is arguably too far gone to save. The Flash had similar feelings of guilt in not protecting his mother; all of the Green Lanterns carry some emotional baggage; even J'onn J'onzz the Martian Manhunter felt guilt for leaving his people on a planet in the midst of an apocalyptic end. The motif here is the lack of power these individuals felt they lacked to help their respective communities. Likewise, the participants in this study migrated in order to regain the sense of power and control to make a positive impact on young people. The superhero pontification was not intended to be a form of self-aggrandizement but a comparison with multiple layers. The parallel is part play on words, highlighting the paucity of Black male teachers; part maintaining my own secret identity in this heuristic endeavor; part tragedy of individuals trying to do the right thing based on their abilities.

This study started as an exploration of my feelings of guilt for leaving the so-called hood to teach in an affluent county. I no longer feel guilt and regret. I, like the participants in this study, ironically felt powerless because of the lack of power or structural capital or agency to change the inequitable structures in the schools and communities I left. In the end we all migrated seeking the ability to use our superpowers; i.e., our knowledge and experiences to help those in need; find other students and teachers like us to develop a kinship and community; overcome the structures that were working against students and not for students and seek institutions were we could actually do some good; and continue to do the right thing for the right reason, in the right space.

I began this paper with a clip of Green Lantern, trying to reconcile why he was saving other species across the universe while different races among his own species still struggled and suffered. I think in the end, the allegory in this excerpt is just as relevant here at the close of this manuscript as it was in the beginning. Like all of us, I do not think that Green Lantern's leaving Earth and traveling through the cosmos fighting tyranny, crime, and evil in foreign galaxies is a cop out or a reason for him to feel guilty; I think that the writers are right, it easier to go save some other corner of the universe then it is to stop systemic racism and inequality in our own backyard.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant Email

Hello,

My name is Brian Harmon and I am gathering participants for a research study that focuses on black male teachers. You have been selected because you are a black male teacher in a predominantly white school district.

If you agree to participate in the study you will be interviewed for 1 hour about your experiences in teaching. You may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview, not to exceed an hour, if more information is needed.

This study will hopefully provide stakeholders, policymakers, and administrators a look at the different experiences, both positive and negative, that black male teachers experience in these spaces. This study may give policymakers insight into recruiting, and retaining more black male teachers in the classroom.

To maintain privacy, all interviews will be conducted in a private conference room at Georgia State University's Library, unless the participant prefers a conference room at a location closer to their residence, such as a public library.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please respond with your intentions. If you want to proceed, I will contact you to set up a date, time, and location for the interview.

Further information about the study can be found in the formal request below.

Thank you,

Brian Harmon, Ph.D Candidate
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Demographics

    1. What college did you graduate from?

2.   How old are you?

3.   How long have you been in education?

4.   Where and what is your position currently? (probe - tell me about any other positions, schools etc…)

5.   Do you like it? (Probe-why)

6.   Why did you choose education as a career? Is there anything specific that happened, maybe family, teachers, what was it? (probe-previous careers or career choices-why did you not pursue those)

7.   If someone were to ask you what kind of teacher are you, maybe in like one word -2 if you have to-what would you say? (lead: disciplinarian, coach, cool, funny, engaging, passionate, caring, etc…)

*Shift - **Current Position**

8.   Where did you work before or have you always been in this position. (probe- different schools, subjects, levels, positions, etc… why the change)

9.   What are some of the differences between this district and others you have previously worked? (probe- may need to illicit a dichotomous line of questioning for comparison)

a.   Is this new position more to your liking? Why or why not?

          b. Can you tell me any incidents that may have happened which prompted your move? Can you explain them.

10.   Why did you choose this district? (probe)

a.   Is there any specific reason why you left your previous assignment (probe)

        *Shift
        Experiences in School

11.   Tell me about your experience in school as a child? What kind of school did you attend? Is it similar to the one you are teaching at now? If not, how is it different? (probe- elementary, middle, high school - we will discuss college later)

12.   What kind of student were you? (probe)

13.   Do you remember any teachers that stand out in your schooling, at any level? (probe)
a.   Can you tell me any particular story your remember of a memorable interaction?
b.   Did any of them have an impact on what you wanted to do after school? If so explain.

14.   Were there any other factors about school at any level that had an effect on your choice in a career? Any outside of school? (probe)

15.   Do you use any of these experiences in your instruction and/or interaction with students in your current position? (probe)

*Shift **Challenges**

16.   Back to your position now. Are there any other black males in your school? Do you interact with them? Explain your relationship with them.
17.   What type of challenges do you face in your current position (probe)
a.   Can you tell many any specific incidents that have happened? (probe)
b.   How are these challenges similar to those in your previous assignment(s)?

18.   What type of challenges did you face in your old position (if applicable) and how are they different?

19.   Did you face any similar challenges growing up or maybe outside of education as an adult?

20.   Does any of this affect your interaction with students or your job? Explain. (pedagogy question)

Shift - **Pedagogy**

21.   What is your overall goal in your position? (Clarify if needed: what is your purpose in your position?)

a.   If you had a mission statement what would it be? (clarify - if you had one or two important mission objectives in your position, what would it/they be?)

     b.   *May need to go with philosophy of teaching

22.   What are some of the ways you instruct/interact with students? What is the motivation or overall goal behind this interaction? (probe)

a.   Can you tell me any specific things you do or any examples of your instruction?

i.Why do you do this? From where did it come

*Shift - **Changes in District**

23.   Do you see any changes in the district where you are? Can you explain what you have experienced as far as change? (probe)

*Shift - (Last few questions) - **Recruitment and Retention**

24.   So you went to (name of college); did that school have any impact on your career choice?

25.   In college or beyond were there any recruitment strategies used to hire you? (probe for other systems the participant may have worked-same question)

a.   Were there any incentives in you going into your position or any previous positions? (probe)

26.   Can you tell me a little about how you were hired? (probe)

a.   Why did you apply? (reliability question)

     b.   Was it challenging to get hired in this district? (probe)

Appendix C

Follow-Up: Phenomenological Interview Questions

I have your transcript here but I also want to go over some of your responses and ask you some

questions about your experiences.

Question stems: Choose 5 salient parts of the interview and ask probing questions based on their

earlier responses.

When you said [ ], was this the actual reason you left or was there some other reason?

When you said [ ], why did you provide this particular story?

What did you mean when you said, [ ]?

After hearing your responses what are your feelings now on leaving your previous position?