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LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF MALE AFRICAN-AMERICAN

SECONDARY URBAN PRINCIPALS: THE IMPACT OF BELIEFS,

VALUES AND EXPERIENCES ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

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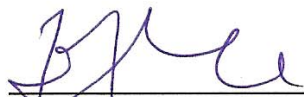
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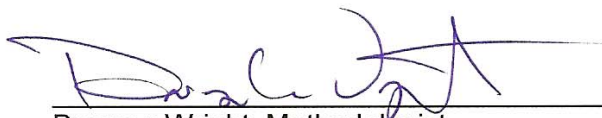
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Urban Studies

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF MALE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SECONDARY URBAN

PRINCIPALS: THE IMPACT OF BELIEFS, VALUES AND EXPERIENCES ON SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN NORTHEAST OHIO

GREGORY D. HENDERSON

ABSTRACT

Uneasiness about leading ethnically diverse urban schools implies that principals of color may have an important role in accomplishing their schools' goals. Findings from this study revealed that in areas of image administration and relationship development African-American principals and European American principals in urban schools perceive their principals' leadership in a different way. Results revealed that (a) African-American male principals were critical in creating an inclusive school among groups of ethnically diverse groups of students; (b) due to their racial affiliation, African-American principals played an important role in mentoring and providing an atmosphere of love and support; and (c) African-American male principals were responsible for ensuring that a belief system that encourages self respect, unwavering values and a student focus approach to leadership will help to ensure a positive and supportive learning milieu for all students in an urban school setting.

Our schools are undergoing immense challenges as they evolve from mono-cultural non-diverse contexts to ones that contain ethnically diverse, multilingual, and cost-effectively poorer children.

In leading urban schools, African-American male principals must possess administrative skills to mobilize a diverse teaching staff so children in urban schools will

succeed academically. Thus, if African-American male principals are to play this

significant role, what critical functions of effective leadership are needed to work with a

varied group of followers? The intent of this qualitative study will be to inspect the

beliefs, values and leadership practices that African-American principals' endorse to

lead successful urban schools.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Black male principals are an endangered species. Not because of the dearth

number that accept the challenge of the principalship or the copiousness number that

are deeming retirement from the principalship, but they are endangered because their

hope of being an effective African-American principal holds sway to a systemic

framework of a standard that suggest that the African-American principal adapt a

reciprocal-effect leadership model that forces principals to change their thinking and

behavior in order that their leadership be viewed as an adaptive process rather than a

unitary of independent force (Pitner, 1988) Nevertheless, it has become increasingly

obvious that perception about the African-American male principal must change in

order to meet the demands of the new millennium, and concomitantly, so must our

understandings of school leadership. Our urban schools are becoming increasingly

diverse and the challenges are being made to the status quo where school leadership,

curriculum, and pedagogy are concerned. (Anyon, 1997; Carlson & Apple, 1998; Darling-

Hammond, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Dimitriadis & Carlson, 2003). Urban schools which are

defined as being located in large central cities. They are characterized by high rates of

poverty, crime drug use and low achieving students. Most of the nation's immigrant children for whom English is a second language are taught in the urban schools. Finally, urban schools are often disproportionately funded by state, federal and local government. It now holds sway, that students of educational leadership must have a paradigm shift in order to navigate the complexities of the twenty first century urban school.(Capper, 1993; English, 2003; Larson & Ovando, 2001; Maxcy, 1995; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).With critical theory, anti-foundational tenets of pragmatic thinking, and post-modern thought interrogating the traditional canon of educational administration; educational leadership has had to, even if reluctantly, include voices of alternative perspectives in its discourse (Dantley, 2003a; Dantley & Rogers, 2001; English, 2003; Foster, 1986; Giroux, 1996, 1997; McLaren, 1999; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).

Concomitantly, the browning of America's schools has caused some to see, with more precision and an unvarnished sobriety, disparities that have been blatantly clear to others (McNeil, 2000; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001; Parker, Deyhle & Villenas, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). The overpopulation of Black males in special education, the tremendous disparities between African-American and White student achievement, and the fact that suspension rate for African-Americans is higher than that of any other ethnic group gives reason to pause and reflect. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported in 1999 that 38% of public school students are people of color - an increase of 16 percentage points since 1972; within this demographic context, President George W. Bush has launched a campaign to "leave no child behind."

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) also known as NCLB

is a federal law that reauthorized a number of federal programs aiming to improve the

elementary and secondary schools by increasing the standards of accountability for

states, school districts and schools, also providing parents more flexibility in choosing

which schools their children would attend.

In Northeast Ohio, The urban districts include consist of seventy two percent of

the total minority make up, fifty nine percent of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)

students. They educate more than 27% of Ohio's total special education population and

38% of the total low-incidence special education students.   There are eleven urban

school district in Northeast Ohio with the largest being Cleveland Metropolitan school

district with 55,635 students and the smallest being East Cleveland with 3,831 students.

The urban districts that provide educational services to the larger minority student

population have the greater percentage of African-American administration.

However, in Northeast Ohio, according to the 2005-06 Ohio Department of

Education website (ODE), there is a total of 83,150 African-American students, with less

than 5% percent African-American male secondary principals. This under-

representation of culturally congruent leadership can bring about a transmogrification

in the achievement of the non-white student as well as paralyzing the hope for students

needing a strong and influencing African-American male role model to increase

probability of educational success. This ineffable statistic enfolds not just North East

Ohio but nationally, with only 11% of principals being African-American and less than 4%

being male, (Digest of Education Statistics, 2004) our nation is and will continue facing a paralyzing construct of a depreciatory student identity for our minority students.

Although there exists small numbers of African-American male principals, the small number does not clarify the positions African-American male principals' value in their responsibility as a principal. The notion that principals have different roles based on their ethnic background and experiences gained in popularity (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Scholars found that a person's socialization has an impact on the perception of and interaction with people who are ethnically, culturally, and socially different. Therefore, as people are socialized about others dissimilar to themselves, they make value judgments, character assessments, and stereotypical comments (Banks, 1991). Banks (1991) contended that this socialization about others leads them to make cultural assumptions, especially about people of color. These global labels manifest themselves in how people treat and respond to each other in the organization; therefore, concerns about leading diverse schools imply that being an African-American male principal may play an important role in accomplishing the schools goals (Cox, 1994). However, due to stereotypes about African-American principals that followers may have about them, these principals' credibility may be damaged. Sizemore (1986) found that African-American principals have loyalty issues (i.e., leadership image, bureaucratic ideologies) in the organization that clash with their own socialized beliefs (ethnic kinship, culture).

Essential Beliefs

Beliefs influence the way we perceive the world and guide our behavior. Further, when beliefs change, perceptions and behaviors change. Kuhn's (1962) work regarding scientific paradigms is relevant to such change in education. A paradigm is a way of seeing; it is a lens through which individuals experience the world, only perceiving what makes sense and filtering out what cannot be understood. Paradigms are organizing principles that help individuals or groups reduce the complexity of experiences to manageable systems for understanding and decision making.

Therefore, the principal's ability to provide a culturally and intellectually stimulating teaching and learning environment must understand the issues of nurture, love and care and not loose site of the sense of community and belonging among the job intimidated by superintendents, board members and other higher-level administrators. They must learn quickly how to understand this hierarchy, manage these relationships comfortably parents, students' teachers. However, many new African-American male principals enter and must learn to manipulate the system to ensure that personal and site needs are met. In many districts they also must learn which of the overwhelming top-down mandates and expectations must be heeded and which can be safely ignored. They must learn to assess their own power and authority, which grows as they gain trust and earn the confidence of staff and community.

 The definitions of leadership can be placed on a continuum from hierarchical to transformational. At the hierarchical end, leadership is viewed as one of "power over," the ability to exercise authoritative dominance over others through hierarchical

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position, physical might or control of resources. African-American leaders who exhibit

genetic qualities have been commonly and traditionally described as aggressive,

ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, self-confident and competitive.

Because of the subordinate position of African-American relative to Whites in

America,., African-American leaders have been faced with the dual task of organizing

internally within the African-American community while simultaneously 'mobilizing' the

community to develop the pressure on the majority.

For many years, African-American male principals were perceived as followers

under the tutelage of European American principals, and for decades their talents were

measured as subpar (Foster, 1995). This inferior perception of the African-American

leader was prevalent in school systems throughout the United States. These

exclusionary practices created an African-American educational leadership vacuum

throughout the country until the start of the Civil Rights movement. Rooted in the dual

school systems of the past, European American colleagues considered African-American

principals as insignificant in leadership roles (Delpit, 1995). Sizemore (1986) also found

that African-Americans were perceived by their counterparts as "lesser leaders" in the

world of school leadership.

Counter to these beliefs about African-American principals Lomotey (1989)

discovered differences in leadership approaches between African-American principals

and European American principals. He noted that African-American principals have a

strong commitment to African-American students and a deep understanding that these

students can learn. Being somebody was just as important as learning the mechanics of

figures of speech, such as metaphors and similes. History was taught not only to enhance the memory but also to inspire the heart. Substantive discussion, reflective written and verbal narratives, projects using multiple intelligences, and activities designed to serve others all worked together to wed academic achievement with communal advocacy. Lomotey also noted that African-American principals placed a higher priority on community involvement than their European American peers. Valverde (1987) discovered that African-American principals functioned as role models who encouraged positive principal-student relationships in the classroom. Additionally, Pollard (1997) noted that an African-American principal's ethnic identity shaped the social constructs of his or her administrative role and defined his or her mission for schools. As a result, life experiences have a major impact on a person's leadership orientation (Lomotey, 1989).

Unable to explain the success of African-American principals despite barriers and social constructs through traditional leadership characteristics models, researchers sought alternative approaches. Banks (1991) found the traditional approaches to leadership, such as power-influence, traits or characteristics, behavioral, or situational (contingency) models rely too heavily on the individual perspectives of the Eurocentric view of leadership. Many of these models focused on the leader as the key to the success of the organization. However, the new approach based its explanation not on the leaders' individual leadership characteristics, but first on the comparative perspective of community. In short, African-American male principals look to the community to assist in their efforts to change the academic and social climate of the

school. From this new approach, a second notion regarding success by African-American male principals was developed.

The notion that principals have different roles based on their ethnic background and experiences gained in popularity (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). From the literature, scholars found that a person's values, beliefs and socialization has an impact on the perception of and interaction with people who are ethnically, culturally, and socially different. Therefore, as people are socialized about others dissimilar to themselves, they make value judgments, character assessments, and stereotypical comments (Banks, 1991). Banks (1991) contended that this socialization about others leads them to make cultural assumptions, especially about African-Americans. These global labels manifest themselves in how people treat and respond to each other in the organization.

Educational leadership is ranked as the number one key variable associated with effective schools (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Campbell, 1994; Kirner, Vautour, & Vautour, 19931, and the principal is the instructional leader for all programs within the school, including education services (Van Horn, Burrello, & DeClue, 1992). The principal established the overall climate and influences instructional practices; in fact, the key predictor of a program's success is the principal's attitude toward it (Kirner et al., 1993). This is particularly true in the administration of High Schools. The principal's attitude toward education and the concern expressed for the needs of children with disabilities influence the success of special programs (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1992; Liebfried, 1984). Generally, African-American principals who value diversity in the student

population support programs that meet individual needs. These programs provide unique opportunities for all principals and students to reach new understandings and learn valuable skills about living and working with people who have diverse needs.

Historically, the largest group of professionals to provide leadership within the African-American community was the educators. While the leadership provided by African-American ministers, from Richard Allen in the late 18th century to Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 20th, has been widely discussed and studied, almost no attention has been paid to the role of African-American male educators. Yet elementary, secondary, college, and university principals and administrators served as leaders within Black communities throughout the country (Childs, 1980; Harris, 1987; Hicks, 1977; Swift, 1989; Young, 1977). Given this historical and cultural context, school African-American male leaders in our urban schools may wish to ground their work in what Cornel West (1982) calls "prophetic pragmatism." Prophetic pragmatism is a form of thinking and seeing the world centered on democratic practices. It is an intellectual process built on the premise of existential democracy and requires one to be self-critical and self-corrective as well.

Notions of existential democracy emanate from the thinking of John Dewey (Eldridge, 1998), who believed that democracy as compared with other ways of life is the only way of living that uses the power of experience as both an end and means. He argues, "For every way of life that fails in its democracy limits the contacts, the exchanges, the communications, the interactions by which experience is steadied while it is also enlarged and enriched" (p. 343). Educational leaders who subscribe to notions

of prophetic pragmatism understand this powerful dichotomy, which constitutes West's ideas of self realization within community; this is certainly present within the dominant culture but is more striking and poignant in the community for Black students. Students in this environment are challenged to achieve academically. But they are then encouraged to use their individual academic prowess in bettering the life of the community. A school setting that is grounded in prophetic pragmatism sees that the individual and community are inextricably linked in an effort to see a greater demonstration of democracy in the community.

All those in the learning community become transformative or oppositional intellectuals (Giroux, 2003). Giroux (2003) defines oppositional intellectuals as educators who do not reject authority but engage it critically in order to develop a pedagogical methodology aimed at inspiring students to learn how to govern rather than to be governed, "while assuming the role of active and critical citizens in shaping the most basic and fundamental institutional structures of a vibrant and inclusive democracy" (p. 7). The African-American male school principals clearly understand that academic achievement increases the possibilities to effect radical, positive change in the community. Principals and teacher-leaders in these schools align what happens in the school to celebrate the events of the community. They clearly understand the political nature of the work that takes place in the schoolhouse. Leaders of schools for African-American children must carry a heavier professional responsibility. They facilitate a learning environment that mandates the marriage of curriculum and pedagogy with culture. Principals in these schools recognize their commission to see that the events

that take place in schools have a broader significance than merely the acquisition of academic achievement.

Purpose and intention must also be aligned with the teaching-learning project. The experiences of enslaved and free African and African-American workers in the United States led them to place a high value on education in general and schooling in particular. Education was valuable not merely as means for social or economic advancement, but as an end in itself. Most African-Americans came to believe that, although they might acquire land, money, property, civil rights, and social status, once they acquired an education it could not be taken away (Franklin, 1984; Webber, 1978). At the same time, African-Americans who acquired literacy or advanced training often recognized an obligation to pass that knowledge on to others within their family, community, and cultural group. This was part of an "ethos of service" that developed among middle- and upper-status African-Americans who recognized that their fortune was inextricably tied to that of the entire group. Many ministers, journalists, lawyers, and successful business persons, at one time or another, served as principals in local public and private schools (Du Bois, 1900; Edwards, 1959; Neverdon-Morton, 1989; Woodson, 1970 [1934]). Thus, in any survey of African-American professionals the educators would be the largest group, not merely due to numerical strength (though school principals surely outnumbered other professionals), but because so many other professionals spent some time teaching.

Before the civil rights campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s, which brought voting rights to previously disenfranchised Americans, the number of African-Americans in

elective office was negligible. Indeed, from the 18th century through the 1950s, other

African-American professionals, especially ministers, journalists, lawyers, and educators,

served as the leading spokespersons for the social, political, and economic interests of

African-Americans in the United States. Together this group of educated professional

elites served as an intelligentsia for the African-American population. They provided

cultural meanings, values, ideals, and objectives drawn both from their extensive

training and from the social experiences of the masses and elites of African-Americans

descent in this society (Cavanaugh, 1983; Franklin, 1984; Marable, 1985; Wilson, 1980).

Finally, African-American male principals must believe that they are responsible

for the education of all children in their building (Van Horn et al., 1992). The African-

American male principal must continue to build effective relationships between all

responsible for student growth and achievement including the students. They must be

an effective communicator to those that are similar a concept known as homophyly and

to those that are different. They cannot lack confidence or comfort in their leadership

practice, for this tendency could cause them to be less vocal and less directive (Allen,

1973)

This writer takes the position that a surfeit of studies on educational leadership

has been completed without much consideration of the African-American male. This

study has dealt specially with African-American male principals and researched and

answered the questions:

1.   What are the systemic perceptions and myths that influence an African-

American male principal?

2. What are some of the belief systems held by African-American males' principals in school leadership positions that impact the success of the educational environment in urban schools?

3. What are some of the practices exhibited by African-American male principals in school leadership positions that foster an effective educational environment in an urban school?

4. How do African-American male principals in school leadership positions influence the deep-rooted beliefs of leadership in the urban educational setting?

Some argue that the various influences, beliefs, values and experiences of African-American males have a significant influence on their leadership practices as school administrators. This study investigated this and related educational issues and how they impacted on African-American male principals. This study will, at a minimum, increase the awareness that being an African-American male principal has a significant role in the continuum of school leadership thought and practice.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the background of the research problem, which is to examine the principal's leadership practices that have been impacted by the beliefs, values and practices of African-American male school principals. The purpose and significance of the study were discussed as well as a defining of terms. Chapter 2 review the literature associated with the research problem; Chapter 3 present the methodology for accomplishing the purpose of the study; Chapter

4 discusses the findings derived from the study data; Chapter 5 offers conclusions and

recommendations that derive from the study as well as indicating further avenues of

research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Very few researchers have carried out empirical investigations addressed to the specific question of whether teachers' race exerts an influence upon their perceptions of the educational leadership of African-American male high school principals. This is not surprising given the long-standing neglect shown by researchers towards African-American educators in general. As Dillard (1995) noted the "experiences of African-Americans and other people of color have been conspicuously absent in the literature surrounding teaching and the principalship" (p.539). Since the early 1980s a substantial corpus of studies about multicultural education has come into existence, and some of these works touch upon the roles of African-American (and other minority-group) school leaders in fostering multiculturalism among their European-American colleagues and students (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006). Nevertheless, as Gooden (2005) has recently observed, "research in the area of African-American secondary principals is scant" (p.630). He elaborated on that point by noting that the handful of scholars who have approached this topical domain have concentrated their efforts on African-American

principals who head elementary schools (Gooden, 2005, p.631). For example, is a set of

qualitative case studies, with a preponderance of them dedicated to African-American

female principals viewed from a feminist perspective? But there is little information

available about how African-American male high school principals perform leadership

roles, and with two noteworthy and recent exceptions (Jones, 2002; D. Brown, 2005),

none of these studies has operationalized teacher race as a variable affecting

perceptions of and experiences with African-American male principals.

To some extent, the paucity of scholarly works directed toward the African-

American male principal leadership is an artifact of the continued under-representation

of African-Americans within the principalship. According to Canada (2006), current

estimates indicate that within the 105,000 public schools of the United States there are

approximately 12,600 minority-group principals, with European-Americans accounting

for over 83 percent of all school-site administrators in the nation. More importantly

however, the research on principals as educational leaders embodies the prescriptive

literature's tacit premise that principal race and gender per se has no impact upon how

African-Americans function as educational leaders or on how "effective" African-

American principals may be relatively to their European-American peers. Indeed,

according to Alston (2005), "historically, researchers incorrectly assumed that findings

from studies in educational leadership with White male participants could be

generalized to help us understand the experiences of females and persons of color in

leadership positions" (p.678).

The notion that African-American principals exercise educational leadership in the same way as European-American principals do was first challenged by Kofi Lomotey in the late 1980s. In a status update on his heuristic investigation of "black" principals, Lomotey (1987) reported that his preliminary observations and interviews had yielded two tentative generalizations: (1) black principals positively affect the academic performance of black students, and (2) "black leaders---black principals in particular---lead differently from their white peers" (p.173). Two years later, in what remains the most frequently-referenced source on the subject, African-American principals: School leadership and success (1989), Lomotey affirmed the second of these points. In subsequent works (Lomotey, 1993; 1994) he elaborated and speculated about how the attitudes and behaviors of African-American principals depart from those of their White colleagues. Admittedly grounded in a thin data base, Lomotey argued that African-American principals (or at least those who work at primary schools with predominantly African-American student populations) differ from European-American principals in their commitment to, assumptions about, and attitudes towards the African-American students and communities that they serve. None of Lomotey's works have demonstrated any explicit connection between principals' racial status and the academic achievements of African-American students, nor do they conclusively demonstrate that the leadership style of African-American principals differs from that of their European-American peers.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) initiated their well-known review of the literature on principal effects by stating that "the belief that principals have an impact on schools is

long-standing in the folk wisdom of American educational history" (p.5). It is still widely

assumed that principals make a difference in student and school outcomes. Research

studies published in the 1970s and 1980s provided substantial empirical backing to the

propositions that principals are crucial to school improvement efforts and that strong

administrative leadership is positively associated with student learning (Hallinger &

Heck, 1996). Neither Hallinger and Heck's (1996) review nor Leithwood and Jantzi's

(1999) large-scale study furnished unqualified support for such beliefs; however. Rather

than exercising a direct influence, the effects of principal leadership in these studies

were mediated by an array of situational and contextual variables, including teacher

responses to principal behaviors.

As Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) commented, "much of what is known from

empirical research about school leadership practices is more accurately, knowledge

about (primarily) teachers' perceptions of such practices" (p.681). This is not to say that

principal leadership is an illusion. Nonetheless, despite some observational studies and

the use of leadership self-report instruments in samples of school administrators, our

understanding of how principals perform leadership functions comes chiefly through

members of their respective teaching staffs. This is not necessarily a handicap since the

general thrust of leadership studies has been toward the acknowledgement that

leadership, is, at bottom, a subjective phenomenon, or, as Leithwood, Tomilson and

Genge (1996) put it, "if followers do not `feel' leadership, there isn't any" (p.801). At the

same time, teacher perceptions of principal leadership are bound to be influenced by

both culturally-variable prototypes of what a genuine (or effective) organizational

"leader" should "be" as well as by various cognitive distortions, including racial stereotypes and biases. As Lomotey (1987) noted in his seminal essay, teachers may react differently to principal leadership depending on whether the latter is a member of the same or of a different racial group. It is quite possible, then, that European-American teachers will see, evaluate, and experience the leadership of an African-American male principal much differently than African-American teachers do. Consequently, this study's research problem has two dimensions. First, the leadership style(s)/practices of African-American high school principals may in fact vary from that of their European-American peers; second, part of this variation may be ascribed to the subjective perceptions of teachers which are, in turn, impacted by racial affinity/bias and by cultural similarity/dissimilarity.

As Hallinger and Heck's review demonstrated, when set alongside the thin corpus of works on African-American principals, the accumulated body of research on principals as educational leaders is vast and continues to expand at a fairly rapid pace. Indeed, with the advent of the "new leadership" theories in the 1980s and 1990s (of which transformational leadership is a salient exemplar); the subject of principal leadership has enjoyed mounting scholarly interest. Of late, the possibility that principal race and/or racially-defined culture, affects their actual and/or perceived educational leadership has gained increased attention, chiefly, but not exclusively, among African-American researchers. There is a broader force behind the latter's momentum in the form of a sea change that is taking place in the racial composition of American public school students. The trend at hand has been referred to by Dantley (2005) and others as

the "browning" of the nation's collective student body with a growing proportion of all children attending schools in the United States belonging to racial/ethnic minority groups. In Dantley's estimation, the "browning" of America's student populace is "challenging the status quo in school leadership" (p.651). On this count, Pat Williams-Boyd (2002) has written that "today, educational leaders are challenged to educate a growing and diverse student population; to be responsive to the needs of an expanding underclass; to address the broader needs of students and their families…"(p.4). Regardless of their own racial backgrounds or cultural affiliations, principals must deal with the issue of racial differences and their correlates in both American society at-large and, even more urgently, within their schools. By the same token, educational researchers are now moved to examine whether the leadership of African-Americans principals, including secondary school administrators, is, as Lomotey claimed, different from European-American principals, and whether teacher race has any influence on teacher perceptions of the former.

The Historical Context of the African-American Principalship

Historically, African-Americans have been underrepresented in school administration (Brown, 2005). Before the Civil War, the vast majority of African-Americans resided in the South as slaves for whom no type of formal schooling was available. Following the Reconstruction Era, the majority of African-American students attended racially-segregated schools that were under the supervision of African-Americans and that typically relied upon teaching staffs comprised exclusively of African-Americans (Pollard, 1997). While these schools operated under severe resource

constraints, they enjoyed strong leadership on the part of individuals with deep and

direct ties to the community (Foster, 2005). As Morris has observed, "historically, many

segregated all-Black schools were embedded in the Black community" (p.585) in which

they served a stabilizing function. Along with African-American churches, these schools

were looked upon by community members as pillars of strength, as sources of pride,

and, as integral parts of extended families. According to Foster (2005), the sense that

schools headed by African-American principals were part of an extended family

contributed to and, in turn, was reinforced by an emergent culture built upon the

"fictive kinship" of all African-Americans as "brothers and sisters." While there is very

little evidence about the "leadership style" of the African-Americans who headed

segregated schools between the 1870s and the mid-1950s, it is reasonable to assume

that it was paternalistic (or maternalistic) in nature; these principals (and their teachers)

assumed parental roles in relationship to the students they taught and they actively

collaborated with willing parents in the academic, social and moral development of

students under otherwise difficult conditions. In the North, similar bonds between

school and community were in apparently in place. Thus, in Bloom and Erlandson's

(2003) interviews with three female African-American principals who currently head

urban schools in Chicago, all three women recalled a time when African-Americans lived

in tightly knit communities organized around local schools and churches.

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court issued its landmark public school

desegregation ruling in Brown v. Board of Education. While the decision's

implementation proceeded slowly in the face of substantial resistance in the South and

while its long-term effects were reduced by existing residential segregation along racial/socio-economic lines, Brown set in motion a series of events that had adverse consequences for many African-American educators, particularly for principals (Karpinski, 2006). In response to court-ordered racial integration, school districts in the South dismissed or demoted thousands of African-American teachers and principals from their positions at all-Black schools, replacing them with Whites. In Alston's (2005) estimation, during the eleven years following Brown, 38,000 African-American teachers in 17 Southern and border states lost their jobs (p.676). In the "deep South," the impact was delayed but ultimately even more severe.

According to Brown (2005), between 1967 and 1970, the number of African-American principals in the public schools of North Carolina declined from 670 to 170; during that same time span, the ranks of African-Americans among Alabama's principals fell from 250 to 40, and in Louisiana their numbers declined from 512 to 363 (p.586). The decimation of the African-American principalship ended in the early 1980s and there has been some recovery since that time. Nevertheless, the proportion of public school principals who are African-American (currently estimated at between 8 to 9 percent) is lower than the percentage of African-Americans within the total U.S. populace, and substantially lower than the percentage of African-Americans who attend (or are eligible to attend) public schools across the nation (Brown, 2005).

The under-representation of African-Americans in the principalship has shown no sign of abating. In historical context, school de-segregation weakened or even severed the long-standing bonds between predominantly "Black" schools and their local

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communities, and it disrupted professional and social networks among African-American educators, thereby curtailing opportunities and resources for the hiring of qualified African-American principals and the advancement of African-American teachers into the principalship.

Parallel to the displacement of African-Americans from all-Black schools in the South, the distribution of those who kept their posts shifted towards a concentration in major cities, notably in neighborhoods/districts having a predominantly African-American populace. At present, "it is in… large, urban districts with many single-race schools that African-Americans are most likely to assume leadership positions" (Brown, 2005, p.585). This national pattern of African-American principals serving in schools that have a preponderance of non-Whites in their student bodies is replicated on a local level. In her doctoral study of 77 minority (African-American and Hispanic) and 77 White principals working in the St. Louis metropolitan area, Ward (1998) found a direct correlation between principals' minority racial/ethnic status and the likelihood of their serving at schools in which non-Whites comprised the majority of students. Ward's interviews with six district personnel directors confirmed that a candidate's race was a factor in the hiring and deployment of principals to schools in the St. Louis area, with the prospective principal's African-American race raising the likelihood of hiring for or assignment to "inner city" schools.

The racial match between African-American principals and the racial composition of the districts in which their schools are located has not led to a restoration of the bonds that once joined Black schools with Black communities. As Loder (2005) has

pointed out, over the past quarter century or so, many large urban school districts in the United States have suffered sustained economic, fiscal, and social declines. Within many of these locales, European Americans have "fled" to the suburbs and they have been joined of late by upwardly-mobile African-Americans. This trend has undermined community solidarity and the potential for school principals to connect with and mobilize African-American communities on behalf of their children. The environment in which most African-American principals labor has become increasingly difficult, making an already challenging position nearly "impossible" (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000). "In addition to the sheer difficulty of the principal's job in any school setting," Kimball and Sirotnik have remarked, "a long list of social conditions plaguing urban centers and schools can turn this job, if taken seriously, into a nightmare" (p.536).

The array of conditions that impair the capacity of African-American urban school principals to exercise effective leadership is daunting. It includes widespread poverty, an inordinate number of single-parent households, crime, substance abuse, and an oppositional youth culture that combines aggression with despair. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that fewer and fewer qualified African-American teachers aspire to the principalship, particularly given that they now enjoy more objectively attractive career opportunities within and outside of public education (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000).

While the job attributes common to serving in beleaguered inner-city schools have deterred African-American educators from seeking positions as principals, additional factors have depressed the number of African-Americans who hold office as

school site administrators. Two decades ago, Cole (1986) complained that the decline in the African-American principalship had been exacerbated by a "neurotic obsession" by state educational officials with principal competency testing on evaluation instruments that embody European-American assumptions about what principals should know. More recently, Brown (2005) has ascribed the inadequacy of the current African-American principal "pipeline" to the hegemony of European Americans over professional support systems and its deleterious impact upon mentoring, coaching, and collegial social network participation for prospective African-American principals.

Bloom and Erlandson (2003) asserted in their study of African-American female principals that, "despite more than 30 years of extant scholarship of contradictory and alternative findings, the myth remains that the ideal leader for most schools conforms to a White, masculine stereotype, especially at the secondary level" p.346). Quite obviously, this myth operates against the selection of African-Americans (and women) for school leadership positions and it also influences the perception of incumbent Black principals in the minds of their colleagues and, as will be brought forth later in this chapter, in the minds of their European American subordinates, including classroom teachers. Delpit (1995) asserted that many European-American principals harbor a stereotypical and condescending attitude toward their African-American peers, viewing them as "lesser leaders."

The pattern of hiring African-Americans to fulfill principal positions in predominantly African-American schools reinforced this perception of their second-class status, implying that these educational leaders have attained their posts by default. As

early as 1973, Haley wrote that when African-Americans were appointed to district superintendencies it is "often just because the district is unattractive" (p.380). At the principal level, school district superintendents and school boards tend to offer administrative opportunities to African-Americans within schools that are experiencing crises as reflected by poor and declining measures of student achievement, high drop-out rates, and rapid teaching staff turnover (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). According to Bloom and Erlandson, this tactic provides district officials with political cover: in the unlikely event that a newly-hired African-American principal succeeds in turning his or her school around, they can claim a portion of the credit for selecting a "messiah"; if the principal fails, then he or she can be used as a "scapegoat." In effect, principals of color typically emerge as leaders of urban schools that are "under-supported and economically depleted" Murtadha and Larson (1999) have written, that "they are expected to establish and carry out educational agendas that clash with what they and the community see as vital to the education of African-American children" (p.6). By this, Murtadha and Larson mean that African-American principals are often unfortunately expected to enact "race neutral" educational practices developed for use with European-American students from middle-class households.

Focusing on the racial composition of urban school teaching staffs, Foster (2005) has noted (2005) that in many schools headed by African-American principals a majority of teachers are of European-American descent. In her estimation, this may generate a tension between schools and African-American parents that was absent under the traditional "Black school/Black community" model.

When there were critical masses of African-American teachers within the schools, parents could be relatively assured that these teachers would reinforce positive images and perceptions for their children. Today, African-American parents cannot be assured that this pedagogical approach will or can inform the instruction in schools where the majority of students are African-American (2005, p.696).

Another aspect of this situation was highlighted by Loder (2005) from her interviews with five veteran African-American female principals, all of whom began to work in Chicago's inner city schools during the 1960s. As one of Loder's study participants noted, in the 1980s and 1990s, she and her teachers encountered mounting problems in attempting to mobilize parents to support school goals and/or their children's academic progress. Some parents displayed disinterest, but others adopted an adversarial stance towards school officials, making insistent and unrealistic demands upon principals. Such conflicts, in Loder's analysis, intensified with the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988. Enacted under the banner of "democratic schooling," the basic premise of that measure was that school principals had too much power over the lives of school children, and that the old "parental" model of African-American leadership undermined the rights of parents and students. As part of the Act, parents were given a direct role in school governance, bringing them into repeated conflict with site administrators whom they no longer trusted as surrogate parents.

Against a backdrop of deeply-troubled "low-performing, high-poverty" public schools, some observers have called upon urban school principals to take the initiative in restoring cooperative relations with local community members, notably parents. Bell

(2001), for example, surveyed a dozen "high performing, high poverty" schools in California and attempted to identify those shared features that contributed to their success. Bell cited principal leadership as a powerful determinant of student learning performance, noting that within these "hi/hi" schools "the principals articulated and modeled their own vision of what a successful school ought to look like and communicated that vision to staff, students, and parents" (p.10). In essence, the successful principals embraced a "transformational leader" role that is congruent with the literature on the "best practices" of effective educational leadership, and, consistent with that model, "collegiality, collaboration, inclusion and a sense of community were an integral part of how the schools conducted business" (p.10). Interviewing an African-American principal who heads one of these exemplary schools, Bell reported his emphasis on embracing the wider community by promoting a "family feel" within his school and strengthening ties with parents and other community members.

  According to Dantley (2005), since the mid-1980s, the literature on educational leadership in minority schools has witnessed a resurgence of two inter-penetrating themes that first emerged during the civil rights era of the 1960s; community and political power. As noted immediately above, proposals for the remediation of performance deficiencies in African-American schools have often argued for greater parental and community inclusion. This prescription has exerted an influence on conceptions of American public schools as a whole. Thus, inter alia, the prominent educational theorist Thomas Sergiovanni (1992) has questioned whether schools should be viewed as formal organizations or as communities. Among many African-American

scholars, the call for "community" is associated with the placement of schools in minority group neighborhoods in a social and political context in which principals have a broader mission. Dantley (2005), for example, has asserted that "schools that serve a predominantly urban, African-American, and Latino children need a leadership that not only stresses academic achievement but also does so within the purposeful content of inevitable social change and critical democratic citizenry" (p.652). Consistent with this larger mission, Foster (2005) has argued that the effectiveness of African-American principals in predominantly Black schools hinges upon their adoption of "leadership styles that do not disregard race and color as salient features of teaching and learning" (p.698). As will be discussed , despite the advent of multi-cultural education and the celebration of diversity within schools, many European-American educators, including teachers who work under African-American principals, eschew this assault upon institutional racism, assuming a "color blind" approach towards their students that conflicts with the current call for "color consciousness" on the part of African-American educational leaders.

Relevant Aspects of Leadership Theory

To understand the role and function of African-American male secondary principals, it is necessary to review relevant aspects of leadership theory. In this way an understudy of the complexity of the issues faced by the African-American male principal can be established. As Martin Chemers noted in 1993, "the leadership literature has often been described as fragmented and contradictory," and this is partially because there "are as many definitions of leadership as there are theorists" (p.293). Chemers

himself defined "leadership" as "a process of social influence" and glossed the term "effective leadership" as "the successful application of (that) influence to mission accomplishment" (1993, pp.293-294). Chemers "integrated" theory of leadership will be discussed extensively in this section as a model that is especially relevant to the study of African-American leaders, A model that has been used as a theoretical framework in studies of African-American principals and how their leadership is perceived by teacher "followers." The scope of this section is confined to leadership models that are currently pertinent to educational leadership () and the assessment of school principals as educational leaders.

During the first half of the twentieth century, organizational leadership was generally construed in terms of administrative functions that leaders performed in a dispassionate, objective and rational manner to enhance operational efficiencies. In their dealings with subordinates, leaders were directed toward a social exchange model in which they furnished "goods" that their followers needed or valued in exchange for their compliance with policies, programs, and procedures. This model was augmented after World War II by the observation that the needs and desires of individual followers varied: "individual consideration" became the human relations dimension of effective organizational leadership set alongside the rational structuring of work. In 1978, however, James McGregor Burns delineated the now well-known distinction between transactional and transformational forms of leadership. He argued that transactional leadership (which has since been equated with "management' by some scholars) conforms to the "exchange model," while transformational leadership entails efforts to

elevate followers' needs beyond personal objectives to organization-wide or greater

ends that have a moral or normative caste. The crux of this distinction was captured by

Leithwood and his colleagues (1996) in a passage that reads:

> Transactional practices foster ongoing work by attending to the basic
>
> needs of organizational members. Such practices do little to bring about
>
> changes in the organization, however. For this to occur, members must
>
> experience transformational practices, in addition. Enhanced
>
> commitment and the extra effort usually required for change, it is
>
> claimed, are consequences of these experiences (p.787).

Extensive empirical research has generally affirmed that transformational

leaders can alter subordinates' orientations from self-interest to commitment (Chemers,

1993, p.295), through such practices as enlisting their support for a unifying

organizational mission or vision, leader modeling of desired behavior, provisions for

participation in decision-making, professional development, and personal growth,

nurturing a positive organizational culture and so on. From their review of empirical

studies on transformational leadership in public schools, Leithwood et al. (1996)

concluded that "the claim that (transformational) leadership contributes to

organizational improvement/effectiveness, teachers' perceptions of student outcomes,

and organizational climate and culture is beyond a reasonable doubt" (p.833).

Since the publication of Burns' seminal text, organizational scholars have

identified many leadership functions and practices as aspects of transformational

leadership; some have also identified what they take to be defining facets of

transactional leadership. This has given rise to considerable and ongoing debates about what constitutes genuine transformational leadership, e.g., the unresolved issue of whether transformational leaders are necessarily charismatic (with Burns himself taking the position that personal charisma is not an inherent, or even a desirable, component of transformational leadership). A representative transformational leadership model (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997) that has been formulated for and applied to public school settings is discussed later this review. Considerations of space and relevance preclude a delineation of all the major variants on transformational leadership that have appeared during the past quarter century and the same considerations militate against examination of associated leadership models (servant leadership, inspirational leadership, self-sacrificial leadership, and the like).

What is significant for this study's purposes is that Burns distinction between transformational and transactional leadership led some scholars to conceptualize these models as opposite ends of a continuum along which leaders could be categorize leaders as being either transactional or transformational. This approach to assessing transformational leadership along a unified continuum was challenged by Bernard Bass (1985) and his colleague Bruce Avolio (Avolio & Bass, 1988). They presented a "two-factor" model in which transactional and transformational leadership practices are not conceptualized as alternatives, arguing that organizational leaders do (and should) engage in both transactional and transformational leadership functions. Their Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MFLQ) encompasses two sub-scales, respectively measuring transactional and transformational leadership dimensions. The underlying

claim is that transactional leadership is necessary for organizational maintenance and

stability, while transformational leadership practices add value to performance,

particularly during periods in which organizational change is required or otherwise

sought.

As interpreted by some researchers (and contrary to Bass and Avolio's "two-

factor" conception), transformational leadership is construed as inherently and

universally superior to transactional leadership, serving as a paradigm for a "one best

way" to lead. In this context, Chemers (1993) has observed that "theorists continue to

present arguments favoring universally effective leadership patterns" (p.295).

Alternatively, Chemers embraced a contingency approach to leadership, based on the

empirically-supported premise that "different kinds of (leader) behaviors or strategies

will have different effects on group outcomes depending on situational parameters"

(p.302). Situational parameters encompass objective circumstances such as the

availability of resources, but they also include subjective phenomena, notably followers'

perceptions. The contingency approach advocated by Chemers acknowledges that

leadership is a social construct, that depends upon "a person's behavior being

recognized or at least tacitly acknowledged to be "leadership" by others, who cast

themselves into the role of followers consenting to be led" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999,

p.681).

Leadership of any kind, then, is partially contingent upon the perceptions of

followers, and those perceptions, in turn, are subject to an array of cognitive biases,

including conscious or sub-conscious presumptions about how a leader's race influences

his or her qualifications to lead and performance of leadership practices. As Chemers commented after explicating his "integrated" leadership model, from his perspective, "almost none of the perceptions that fuel the leader-follower relationship are anchored in any reality outside the subjective world of the participants" (p.312).

In his integrated leadership theory, Chemers (1993) drew together elements of various contingency models (e.g., House's path-goal construct) and "new" leadership theories (transformational leadership models) to conceive of leadership as three major processes: (a) image management, (b) relational development, and (c) resource utilization (p. 297). Image management, he explained, involves leader efforts to instill perceptions of themselves as competent, trustworthy, and legitimate leaders the eyes of their current and/or prospective followers. "Because the processes underlying image management are primarily perceptual and cognitive," he observed, that "they are extremely susceptible to bias and distortion" (p.298-299). How do followers assess whether an individual is an "authentic leader" who is worthy of being followed? Alluding to the findings of social psychology, Chemers (1993) asserted that "perceptions of an individual's `leaderliness' are partially governed by the extent to which the traits and behaviors of the individual match the cognitive prototypes held by observers" (p. 297). He proceeded to state that "if the leader's projected image overlaps sufficiently with the observer's prototype, the observer will attribute to the leader all of the characteristics related to the prototype" (p. 297). Leadership prototypes are formed through socialization processes that valorize and implant culturally-specific norms. As a

consequence, the traits that characterize a leader in the minds of followers vary

substantially across cultures.

Turning to the process of "relational development," Chemers (1993) first noted

that "the exchanges or transactions by which leader and follower develop a relationship

have been the crux of traditional leadership research" (p .299). Leaders must fulfill

follower needs, and in Chemers model, they conduct this process through three core

functions. First, they provide the direction and support needed by followers for task

accomplishment, by setting clear-cut objectives, by providing direction/guidance, and by

coaching their followers. Second, leaders develop relations with followers by facilitating

and participating in two-way communication with their subordinates. As for the third

mechanism, Chemers designates it as a "transactional exchange" process, in which the

leader furnishes incentives and imposes sanctions in response to individual/group

performance, with the key criterion being perceived fairness in the perceptions of

followers. Ironically, it is under this heading that Chemers introduces transformational

leadership as a "high quality" form of exchange that furthers relational development,

writing that "leaders who interact with their subordinates in ways that are seen by the

subordinates as being intellectually challenging, sensitively considerate and supportive,

and expressing an inspiration vision of their collective mission are classified as

transformational" (Chemers, 1993, p. 301).

Here again, culture and cultural differences obviously including race and gender

play a key role in determining the quality of a leader's relationship with his or her

followers. Cultural norms exert a powerful influence upon what individuals construe to

be fair and appropriate behavior in the leader's part. In this context Chemers cites the work of a Dutch organizational leadership theorist who argued that perceptions of leadership behavior vary along several dimensions. Thus, for example, in Hofstede's work, "power distance" refers to the extent to which members of different cultures accept large differences in power; they range "low" power distance (or "egalitarian") cultures (such as that of the United States) to "high" power distance (or "authoritarian" cultures (such as that of Japan) power distance cultures. Additionally, relations between leaders and followers are influenced by the relative degree to which a follower's culture privileges "individualism" as opposed to "collectivism" or "communalism." The key point here is that cultural differences affect the relational development dimension of leadership.

Lastly, what Chemers (1993) designated as the leadership process of "resource utilization" is "much less subject to social construction" (p. 304). It involves the leader's establishment of decision-making structures and delegation of decision-making authority. On this count, Chemers (1993) noted that "the effective deployment of the resources and of the group will largely determine how much of the motivation and commitment of leader and follower are translated into group performance" (p. 302).

In a summary passage, Chemers (1993) wrote that his integrated model generates three key points concerning follower expectations:

Followers hold expectations about the kinds of behaviors that leaders should display to be considered as good leaders. This is the image issue that was discussed earlier. What is included in the followers' ideal leader

prototype is heavily influenced by cultural values. Second, the follower

holds particular goal-related expectations about the tangible benefits

that the follower hopes to attain in any exchange with the leader. The

leader's competency to move the group toward task completion or goal

attainment falls under this category. Finally, the followers have emotional

needs, many of which may not be conscious or rational, but which

strongly affect the followers' responses to the leader (p. 311).

When an individual leader consistently fulfills a follower's culturally-conditioned

prototype of what a leader "is," he or she will be identified as a leader; when that same

leader is viewed as consistently fulfilling follower expectations about goal-related

activities, he or she will be perceived as an effective or "good" leader; when the leader

satisfies the follower's personal, emotional needs, he stimulates loyalty and

commitment through a process of personal identification which yields follower's to

conclude "`that's my leader'" (Chemers, 1993).

Several scholars who have investigated the African-American principalship

(Brown, 2005; Jones, 2002; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002) have explicitly alluded to

Chemers' leadership model, focusing upon the process of "image management"

conditioned by cultural stereotypes that are racially biased. In their study of how

African-American principals perceive inter-group conflicts in their schools, Madsen and

Mabokela (2002) noted "that follower perceptions of a leader of color are often checked

against prototypes. That is, leaders of color undergo scrutiny to determine their

capabilities and professional contributions" (p.36). In a follow-up study testing Chemers'

model, Chemers and Murphy (1995) found that racial stereotypes affected followers' views of, interactions with, and collaboration with African-American leaders. They noted that even in organizations that are formally committed to workforce diversity, when persons of color assume leadership positions in predominantly majority organizations, they often face misperceptions by followers who question their effectiveness as leaders. By doing so, they directly compromise the leader's capacity to accomplish substantive goals and divert them from mission fulfillment activities by creating a need for the leader to prove him or herself.

What must be emphasized at this point is that in conceiving of leadership as a contingent socially-constructed process that is heavily influenced by culturally-determined "prototypes" of what leaders "are," including racial stereotypes, Chemers' model is directly relevant to teacher perceptions of leadership by African-American principals.

Principal Leadership Theory and Research

Chemers' (1993) observation about the fragmented state of leadership studies in general applies with equal force to educational leadership theory and research. Approaching this domain, Williams-Boyd (2002) claimed that in her preliminary survey of the field she encountered more than 400 definitions of "educational leadership" (p.5). The accuracy of this count may be suspect, but is apparent that scholars have defined educational leadership in numerous ways and that these definitions have often reflected the values and presumptions of school reform/improvement movements, such as the site-based decentralization model of shared leadership, "effective" educational

leadership, and "instructional leadership." Boyd-Williams (2002) gloss the term

"educational leadership" as "a collaborative process of engaging the community in

creating equitably possibilities for children and their families that result in academic

achievement" (p. 5). This definition plainly embodies the current trend toward shared

leadership undertaken in a community context with a strong emphasis upon inclusion.

The key problem is that there are so many definitions and models of educational

leadership that practitioners are bound to experience confusion. Moreover, as Seifert

and Vornberg (2002) stated, there are glaring contradictions and counter-indications

within the literature on the "best practices" of public school principals and other

educational leaders. In this context, Seifert and Vornberg (2002) observed that the

demands placed on public school principals are not entirely congruent, that the public

expects school site administrators to efficiently meet day-to-day administrative

challenge and, concurrently, to guide and inspire the school as a whole toward the

realization of a long-term vision (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). Even within a single

leadership model, there are prescriptions for principal leadership that appear to be at

odds with each other: principals are exhorted to be "directive" in formulating a vision

for their schools and, at the same time, to be "democratic" or "empowering" towards

teachers, staff, parents, and even students.

As noted in the opening section of this review, the literature on educational

leadership continues to highlight the role of the principal as an individual whose actions

can exert a strong, if not a deciding, influence on student outcomes. Thus, for example,

in a 2002 issue of Educational Leadership, Uchiyama and Wolf touted the power of

principals to affect student performance in satisfying state- and federally-mandated

educational standards. From time to time, however, scholars have questioned the value

of specific educational leadership models. In 1990 Dantley wrote a critique of the then-

regnant leadership model under the title of "The Ineffectiveness of Effective Schools

Leadership." Two years later, Holzman (1992) went so far as to question whether

schools really need principals to function as leaders, and provided hypothetical models

of how teachers and secretaries could manage schools without the benefit of principal

functioning as mere "station-masters." According to Leithwood and Jantzi (1999),

"quantitative evidence about principal-leadership effects is surprisingly tentative"

(p.680); indeed, both their study and comprehensive reviews on principal effects

showed that principals do not have the powerful direct effects on student learning

outcomes attributed to them, but indirectly impact such outcomes through mediating

variables.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of principal effects published to date

was conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1996). They surveyed forty quantitative studies

on the role of principals in promoting student academic achievement and came to the

conclusion that direct principal effects are weak. Nevertheless, Hallinger and Heck noted

that principals do exert an indirect or mediated effect on student learning through

internal school processes. Elaborating on this point, Hallinger and Heck apprised their

readers that: "these internal processes range from school policies and norms (e.g.,

academic expectations, school mission, student opportunity to learn, instructional

organization, academic learning time) to the practices of teachers. Studies based on a

mediated-effects model frequently uncover statistically significant indirect effects of principal leadership on student achievement via such variables" (p. 38). It is noteworthy in passing that in one of the studies examined by Hallinger and Heck; succession in the principal's office had much stronger effects on schools in low socio-economic status (SES) neighborhoods than did changes in principal's office in schools located within high-SES districts.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) derived two crucial points from the findings of their review. First, principal leadership can influence student learning, but both this effect and the leadership practices that are most likely to yield favorable outcomes are influenced by contextual factors, particularly "facets of the school's socio-economic environment (which) appear to influence the type of leadership that principals exercise" (pp.37-38). Second, the principal effects research strongly suggests that no single leadership paradigm is universally effective in all school contexts.

Thereafter, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) investigated the influence of both principal leadership and teacher leadership upon student engagement with school in a large, urban school district. They sent leadership questionnaires to principals and teachers in 123 schools, of which 110 responded with sufficient data for inclusion in the final sample, and they also mailed questionnaires to student parents of students inquiring about aspects of family educational culture (parental attitudes toward education, involvement in children's homework and the like). The direct effects of teacher leadership upon student engagement with school were statistically insignificant and, consistent with Heck and Hallinger (1996) review findings, the direct effects of

principal leadership were also small. Moreover, the correlation between principal

leadership and teacher leadership was quite modest, with the former accounting for

only 12 percent of the variance in the latter. The most important finding of the study

involved the degree to which family educational culture mediated principal effects on

student engagement with school. Analyzing their results in detail, Leithwood and Jantzi

wrote that "the exceptionally large portion of student engagement explained by family

educational culture raises the possibility that differences in school outcomes may range

considerably in their sensitivity to family as compared with school variables" (p.699).

The practical implication of Leithwood and Jantzi's (1991) study was that "schools clearly

cannot do it alone" (p.701); they must reach out to families to enhance the engagement

of students in the educational process.

Since the late 1980s, transformational leadership has appeared with increasing

frequency within educational theory and research, and numerous scholars have adapted

it for application to school principals. Embracing a "two-factor" approach, Leithwood

and Jantzi (1997) constructed a model of transformational educational leadership

(which they termed "leadership") having six dimensions: (a) symbolizing good

professional practice; (b) developing collaborative decision making structure; (c)

providing intellectual stimulation; (d) providing individualized support; (e) holding high

performance expectations; and (f) fostering development of vision and goals. They also

developed a model of transactional leadership (designated as principal's educational

"management') comprised of four domains: (a) establishing effective staffing practices;

(b) providing instructional support; (c) monitoring school activities, and (d) providing a

community focus. While there are many alternative schemas, Leithwood and Jantzi's

(1997) transformational/transactional (or leadership and management) model is

representative and the 10 subscale measurement device that they developed to assess

principal leadership/management in light of their model, the Leadership and

Management School Survey Instrument (LMSS), has been used extensively.

Even as Leithwood and his colleagues refined the LMSS, critics were asserting

that various transformational leadership models being implemented within American

public schools were ill-conceived, ambiguous and contradictory in their implications for

actual practice (Gurr, 1996). Leithwood and his associates (1996) analyzed the findings

of 34 empirical and case studies of transformational leadership in elementary and

secondary schools. From a sub-set of 20 investigations providing quantitative results,

Leithwood et al. deduced that "transformational leadership, as a whole, is strongly

related to (teacher) satisfaction with the (principal) leader and to positive perceptions of

the leader's effectiveness" (p. 828). With regard to teacher perceptions of principals'

effectiveness as a leader, their responses to four transactional (management) leadership

sub-scales explained 19.6 percent of the variance, while teacher responses to the six

sub-scales measuring transformational leadership explained an additional 44 percent.

With respect to teacher satisfaction with the leader, transactional (management)

practices explained 20.8 percent of the variance, while transformational functions

accounted for an additional 54.6 percent. The results of 8 studies that tested Bass's two-

factor model lent strong support to its premise that transformational leadership "builds

on" or represents "value-added" to transactional leadership (Leithwood, et. al., 1996).

The claim that effective school principals engage in both transformational and transactional leadership processes has been affirmed in studies of principal leadership that have not employed the MFLS or the LMSS. Powell (2004), for example, surveyed teachers working at 11 Virginia (primarily urban) high schools with a high proportion of students deemed to be "at risk" of educational failure/dropout. Using an author-constructed instrument, Powell found that principals who exercised both transformational and transactional leadership practices headed schools that had lower rates of educational failure and student withdrawal than those headed by principals who scored high on either transformational or transactional processes alone. Follow-up interviews with teachers indicated to Powell that "effective" principals switched back and forth from a "collaborative leader" role to a "benign dictator" role.

The findings that principals who are perceived to be effective by teachers, who contribute to teacher job satisfaction, and who exert an influence upon student failure rates use both collaborative (or transformational) and directive (or transactional) leadership practices tempers the prescriptive literature's heavy concentration on shared school leadership. Reflecting the "new leadership paradigm's" rejection of hierarchical, bureaucratic command, the normative literature on school improvement has consistently urged school site administrators to share decision-making power with their teaching staffs. Indeed, from a review of more than 250 recently-published works on how principals can enhance the performance of their schools, Seifert and Vornberg (2002) reported that the single most prevalent recommendation was collaborative/participative leadership. According to Pounder and her associates

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(Pounder, Ogawa & Adams, 1995), from the mid-1980s onward, educational leadership

models have generally moved from a nearly exclusive focus upon school principals

toward broader constructions that encompass teacher leadership. The call for

participatory school leadership is entirely congruent with democratic values, but as

Seifert and Vornberg (2002) have pointed out, the available research suggests that a

substantial proportion of public school teachers do not want to assume school-wide

leadership functions, while Heck and Hallinger's (1996) review suggests that teacher

leadership does not have strong direct effects upon student academic achievement.

Based on this body of literature there is substantial cause to doubt that a single

leadership style or orientation characterized by a closely-defined set of functions or best

practices can function as a universal practice model for school principals. The effects of

principal leadership on student performance are mediated by contextual, situational

and inter-personal factors that vary substantially. Several scholars who have

investigated leadership among African-American principals have asserted that

theoretical models of educational leadership have failed to take contextual and

subjective nature of leadership into account (Brown, 2005; Dillard, 1995; Madsen &

Mabokela, 2002). Thus, for example, Madsen and Mabokela (2002) have asserted that

the study of educational leadership by African-Americans must encompass "social,

racial, and cultural issues that are outside organizational boundaries, but affect leader-

member interaction inside the organization" (p.37). Principal leadership practices that

are effective in one context, in predominantly white middle-class schools for instance,

may be far less effective in alternative context, in inner-city schools serving minority

group students and communities for example. Within a specific school site, principals

may need to shift from one leadership orientation to another, from directive to

collaborative leadership, for example, depending upon the task or situation at hand. At

the same time, teacher perceptions of and responses to principal leadership may well

vary according to culturally-determined leadership prototypes that encompass

assumptions about how the leader's race impacts his or her leadership, and such

variance is likely to be heavily influenced by the follower's race. In analyzing and

evaluating the leadership of African-American principals, then, the adoption of a

contingency approach that takes racial and cultural differences between leaders and

followers into consideration may generate research findings that have a higher degree

of explanatory and predictive power than studies which proceed from the premise that

there is a universal model of leadership against which principal effectiveness can be

objectively appraised (Brown, 2005; Jones, 2002). The tandem questions of whether the

leadership approach embraced by African-American principals is, in fact, different from

that of their European-American counterparts and whether cultural/racial issues have

an impact on how African-American principals perform leadership roles have been the

subject of the still small, but rapidly growing, body of empirical investigations reviewed

in the next two sections of this chapter.

Observational and Self-Report of African-American Principal Leadership

The current body of research on the leadership of African-American principals is

comprised almost exclusively of qualitative studies that rely upon researcher

observations and/or principal self-report information elicited through author-

constructed interview protocols, with case or multiple case designs dominating the field. The validity, the reliability and the comparability of their findings is substantially lower than that of the much larger corpus of empirical studies on principal leadership in which race is not used as a criterion of subject eligibility and/or an independent variable, most of which utilize quantitative data-gathering techniques. Nevertheless, the available work on African-American school leaders is descriptively rich and it accords with the fundamental assumptions of the contingency approach to leadership studies, i.e., that leadership is a subjective phenomenon and that a leader's effectiveness varies according to contextual and situational factors.

Based exclusively upon his informal observations, in 1987 Lomotey tentatively advanced the proposition that African-American principals are more effective in schools that have a predominantly African-American student population than are European-American principals, In attempting to explain the purported difference, Lomotey referred to shared cultural background and its impact upon inter-personal communication as its primary rational He argued that African-Americans have a culture that is distinct from that of mainstream, European-Americans, and then cited the concept of "homophyly," which suggests that "people who have homogeneous beliefs, values, attributes, education, or social status tend to interact and communicate more effectively with each other" (Lomotey, 1987, p.175).

When African-Americans interact or communicate with one another, he claimed, "their shared beliefs and values suggest that homophyly occurs, bringing about greater information usage, attitude formation, attitude change and behavior change" (Lomotey,

1987, p.175). Lomotey (1987) did not specify whether this cultural enhancement of the communication process involved African-American principals interacting with students, with teachers, or with both. In that same piece, Lomotey stated that "black principals lead differently from their white peers" (p.173), but the only evidence that he furnished in support of this assertion were anecdotal reports that African-American principals tend to attach a higher priority to community involvement in their schools than European-American principals.

Two years later, Lomotey (1989) reiterated these hypotheses and claimed that they had received partial confirmation from his own heuristic research. His 1989 study focused on just three African-American (two males and one female) principals. Each of these subjects headed a school with a predominantly African-American student populace and the schools were handpicked by Lomotey because they had consistently enjoyed academic success as reflected by above-mean scores on standardized tests, awards received for outstanding performance, and general reputation. The schools were located what Lomotey characterized as "urban settings," but African-Americans comprised a majority of the teaching staff in only one of them. The study's methodology included Lomotey's observations, principal and teacher interviews, and the administration of an author-constructed survey instrument to teacher participants. This device measured four facets of principal leadership that Lomotey derived from the works of Chester Barnard and Philip Selznik: (a) development of goals, (b) energy harnessing, (c) two-way communication facilitation, and (d) instructional management.

In addition, Lomotey stated that his study would identify "other facets of (principal) leadership that may affect students' academic achievement" (Lomotey, 1989, p.35).

Oddly enough, Lomotey's study did not compare the leadership style of the three African-American principals with that of their "white peers." Instead, it highlighted differences in the leadership among his study's principal subjects. Two of the principals in the study were given high scores by teachers across all four dimensions of leadership embodied in the study's survey instrument, with the highest ratings being accorded to their role in goal development. Interviews conducted with teachers who worked under these two principals confirmed the survey's results. Summarizing the study's findings for these two African-American principals, Lomotey (1989) wrote that "generally, these two principals have provided assertive leadership, creating a school climate that is conducive to encouraging teachers to exhibit appropriate behavior for the improvement of academic achievement" (p.146). As for the third principal in the study, however, teacher survey ratings were substantial lower across all four leadership dimensions; teacher interviews and the researcher's own observations suggested that he followed a laissez faire, management-by-exception style of leadership. Claiming to have established variance in the leadership orientation of the three principals, Lomotey then turned to the question of the "qualities" that they had in common. He identified three "facets" of their leadership: (a) commitment to the education of African -American children; (b) compassion for, and understanding of, African-American children and their communities; and (c) confidence in the educability of African-American children (Lomotey, 1989).

In a third study, Lomotey (1993) modified these three "qualities" by substituting "all children" for "African-American" children, but more importantly, he took the four dimensions of what he had referred to as principal leadership---goal development, energy harnessing, communication facilitation and instructional management---as functions associated with principals' role identities as a bureaucrat/administrators, and he associated the three "qualities" that he has discerned in his 1989 study as manifestations of an ethno-humanist role identity. Lomotey then used his makeshift dichotomy to characterize the leadership approaches of two African-American principals. He reported that "the principals often moved back and forth between these two identities. They were rarely focusing only on the bureaucrat/administrator role or only on the ethno-humanist role" (Lomotey, 1993, p.399). Taken collectively, Lomotey's studies (1987, 1989, and 1993) did not directly establish that African-American principals exert a stronger or more positive influence upon African-American students than their European-American peers. Moreover, his finding that effective African-American principals move back and forth between leadership roles, does not, in itself, demonstrate that they differ from European-American principals. Nevertheless, Lomotey's research did suggest that African-American principals are distinguished from their European-American counterparts by their, commitment to, compassion for, and positive assumptions about African-American students.

Despite the exceedingly limited nature of Lomotey's work, his bureaucrat/administrator and ethno-humanist role dichotomy has been used in subsequent investigations of African-American principals Furthermore, commitment,

caring, and high expectations for African-American students has become a focal point for scholars attempting to identify the characteristics that distinguish African-American from European-American principals.

Gooden (2005), for example, conducted a single case study of an African-American principal (identified by the author as "Mr. Grant") leading an urban high school in the process of a school district-initiated, technology-based reform/restructuring program. Located in a Midwestern city, 68 percent of the school's students were African-Americans, while most of the remainder (29 percent) was of European descent. Prior to the incumbent principal's tenure, the school had consistently recorded a student drop-out rate that was above the district mean while the scores of its students on standardized achievement tests were consistently below district-wide means. Grant's predecessor, a European-American principal, had been unable to influence the school's disappointing performance, and district officials hired Grant to effectuate a turn-around. Three years after this succession, the school's drop-out rate had fallen dramatically while student mean scores on standardized tests were significantly above those of the district as a whole. Gooden conducted informal interviews with this school leader, several teachers, administrative staff members and students to gain insight into Grant's approach to leadership, using Lomotey's bureaucrat-administrator/ethno-humanist dichotomy as a template to guide inquiry and interpret study results. Consistent with his bureaucrat-administrator role, Grant established new schools goals that were readily understandable, he harnessed energy of teachers by offering expanded opportunities for professional development, he created

leadership teams to facilitate communication, and he set high standards for instruction

that he actively monitored. At the same time, Grant enacted an ethno-humanist role by

working long hours, engaging in personal face-to-face communication with students,

and establishing a Saturday school that furnished students with tutoring service as an

alternative to after-school detention. Perhaps most telling of all, Grant moved into a

nearby housing project where many of the school's African-American students lived.

Gooden's chief finding was that this highly effective African-American principal enacted

both of Lomotey's two roles; he established clear-cut structures and standards that

were firmly enforced, while consistently tempering this "bureaucrat/administrator"

orientation with an "ethno-humanist's" commitment, compassion and concern for the

school's students and the African-American community.

Loder's (2005) interviews with five veteran African-American female principals

elicited retrospective auto-biographical narratives in which the participants disclosed a

strong "ethno-humanist" leadership approach that the researcher characterized as

"othermothering." Loder drew this term from its African-American cultural roots, and

defined it as women "who work on behalf of the Black community expressing ethics of

caring and personal accountability, which embrace conceptions of transformative power

and mutuality" (p. 305). (All five of the Loder's subjects recalled using on a

"maternalistic" approach to school leadership that combined a firm, even authoritarian,

stance towards their students with the maintenance of strong, personal bonds to

parents and other community members.) As Loder put it, "in the spirit of community

othermothering, these African-American women principals viewed teaching and leading

as deliberate acts of love, nurturance, guidance, and community rebuilding" (p. 308).

Unfortunately, Loder's interviewees expressed despair about the deterioration of

African-American communal solidarity in the inner-city neighborhoods of Chicago, and

their "othermothering" practices became a source of contention with a new generation

of militant African-American parents.

Several studies have explored the motivations behind the decision of African-

Americans to serve as principals in troubled inner-city schools. When Kinsler (1994)

asked nine African-American principals why they had taken their demanding positions,

her informants cited three inter-related motives: (a) a desire to "make a difference" in

African-American communities; (b) love of African-American students; and (c) a desire

to serve as role models for African-American students.

Similarly, Canada's (2006) in-depth interviews with 17 African-American

principals heading schools in East Tennessee revealed that these educational leaders

accepted the challenge of working in low SES communities because they wanted to

"make a difference" in lives of African-American youths. Several of Canada's informants

said that they had been "called" to the principalship, with the researcher describing

such experiences as "quasi-religious vocations." In response to Canada's questions

about whether they had encountered any barriers in their career paths to the

principalship, nine informants said that they had not faced any obstacles, but six of the

participants responded that they had experienced overt racial discrimination. One of the

male principals recalled being told by a European-American district official that as a

"black man" he was not suited for a high-level school position because he could not

expect to enjoy the same respect from teachers accorded to "white men." Several of the women in Canada's study stated that they had suffered both racial and gender bias. Four of the interviewees explained that they had not experienced direct racism in their rise to the principalship, but that they were nevertheless handicapped by the dominance of European-Americans over informal professional networks. These subjects told the researcher that they still felt that they were excluded from the "network loop" and thereby disadvantaged in their access to job information and professional recommendations. Nonetheless, all of the African-American principals with whom Canada spoke said that they were willing to endure any and all forms of racial discrimination because they believed that they could (and had) positively affected the African-American students attending their schools.

A salient theme that emerges from across interview studies with African-American principals is the importance of the African-American community in both their career decisions and in their effectiveness as educational leaders. Lomotey (1989) recognized this community orientation as a distinguishing characteristic of African-American principals, and he speculated that "in African-American schools it is possible that (African-American principals') emphasis on the larger community may be a key ingredient in bringing about improved academic performance for African-American students" (Lomotey, 1989, p.5). In her study of two African-American principals heading reform initiatives at their urban schools, Bryant (1998) concluded that one of her two subjects was more successful in the implementation of the restructuring program than the other because she dedicated more effort at enlisting parental and community

involvement. Kimball and Sirotnik (2000) asked an African-American principal at an "all-Black" low-performing/hi-poverty school urban school what she would do to improve student performance if she were given a completely free rein by the district. The informant replied that she would transform the school into a neighborhood support center with a food bank and a day care program, explaining that "once these needs were taken care; kids would start to love learning" (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000, p. 539).

An equally if not more prominent strand in qualitative studies of African-American principal leadership revolves around conflicts with and resistance from teachers to their principal's enactment of an "ethno-humanist" role. In some instances, the researchers have reported teacher discontent with the additional effort demanded of them by caring, compassionate African-American principals who hold high expectations for African-American students. Thus when Gooden's (2005) Mr. Grant established a Saturday school and expanded teacher tutoring hours, some of his staff members voiced their complaints. But the bulk of the tensions between African-American principals appears to be race-specific, and revolve around the issue of whether educational professionals should be "color conscious" or "color blind" in their treatment of students and/or in their relations with staff members (Dantley, 2005: Foster, 2005; Mabokela & Madsen, 2005; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

In this context, Dillard (1995) conducted a case study of a female African-American principal at a high school located in a major Northwestern city. The principal recalled that she was assigned to this school during a period in which the majority of its student populace was African-American, for the specific purpose of "cleaning up" the

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"mess" that her predecessor (a White male) had created. She recounted that the former

principal had begun to work at "Rosefield High" when the community it served was

predominantly White, but owing to the flight of European-Americans to surrounding

suburbs, the racial composition (and the socio-economic status) of the students had

changed, and the administratively-oriented White principal was unable to cope with this

transition. Like the women in Loder's (2005) Chicago study, Dillard's informant referred

to her leadership style as "othermothering." She explained that her adoption of a

maternal role towards her African-American students was intended to compensate for a

lack of nurturance in their households. Her efforts to serve as a "parent-advocate" for

African-American students generated conflict with European-American teachers,

particularly those whom she called the "old guard" of teachers who began to work at

the school when the student populace was primarily White and remained in their posts

following the demographic shift. The members of this group announced their opposition

to Natham's "color conscious" orientation at the first staff meeting that she held,

declaring their staunch disapproval of busing and other student race-related district

mandates. Over time, Natham was able to replace some members of the "old guard"

with young African-American teachers who shared her color-conscious outlook. In her

relations with teachers, Natham allowed that she maintained a "professional distance"

from the European-American teachers whom she supervised, but she cited two

exceptions to this rule. She warmly embraced, mentored and supported all teachers

who displayed a commitment to the values of diversity and cultural pluralism; she

intervened forcefully when she detected a lack of effort or racial inequity in her

teachers' work with non-white students. In one instance, for example, she compelled a

White teacher to apologize to an Asian student. At the conclusion of her interview with

Dillard, the principal averred that her leadership approach was unabashedly aimed at

the creation of a culture within the high school that served "the good of Black folks," of

students of color and of all students generally (Dillard, 1995).

Most of the field research on African-American principal leadership has taken

place in schools with student bodies in which non-Whites constitute a majority. As a

noteworthy exception, Madsen and Mabokela (2002) interviewed four African-American

principals who headed desegregated suburban schools in which majority of students

were of European-American descent. The focal point of this study was principal

perceptions of inter-group conflict, primarily conflicts between the "color blind" stance

adopted by European-American teachers and the "color consciousness" of the African-

American administrators. Comprising a majority of the faculty at all four schools, the

European-American teachers in this study rejected principals' suggestion that they

examine the subtle bias of their "color blind" orientation and the assumptions

underlying their claim to "racial neutrality." From their interview responses, Madsen

and Mabokela (2002) concluded that "these school administrators were unable to shift

the mind set of their school participants (White teachers) to accept issues of diversity in

school" (p. 45). One of the study informants stated that the European-American

teachers resented his authority, his advocacy on behalf of African-American students,

and, above all, his efforts to recruit more non-White teachers. All four of the

participants reported that their legitimacy as leaders was questioned, and that the

European-American teachers had confronted them about "whether they were going to be loyal to school participants' collective interests or promote an ambivalent relationship with African-American students" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002, p. 47-48). None of the four informants in this study consider themselves to be effective in their formal leadership positions. Not only were they unable to overcome resistance from "color blind" White teachers, they were diverted from the pursuit of their goals by the need to continuously defend their color consciousness.

In a follow-up study, Mabokela and Madsen (2005) conducted interviews with three principals and four assistant principals, of whom three were of European Americans (all females) and four were African-Americans (three males and one female). All three of the European-American subjects identified their position on student race as "color blind," while all four of the African-American administrators said that they adhered to a "`color conscious' (leadership) process, where race was always in the forefront in confronting inter-group differences between them and other school participants" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2005, p.193).

The six principals who participated in Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) study of multi-cultural leadership were all European Americans. Charged with infusing their respective schools' curricula and organizational cultures with multicultural values, three of the participants were committed to diversity goals and recognized race/cultural as a factor in student achievement. The other three subjects, however, simply implemented the diversity tasks set out for them by their school districts without making a serious

effort to embrace multiculturalism, with one of the principals in this group telling the researchers, "`I don't see color, I teach children'" (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006, p. 578).

As part of his 1993 study, Lomotey spoke with two female African-American principals about their efforts to implement a district-wide multicultural infusion project. Both of these study subjects said that they encountered disinterest in the project from European Americans on their teaching staffs. Their responses to these "color blind" teachers varied. One participant told Lomotey that she disregarded their indifference, did not try to argue for the project's importance, and simply worked around it. The other principal, however, asserted that in her mind the success of the project hinged upon the active involvement of all teachers, and that she applied a great deal of pressure on those who failed to accord a high priority to celebrating cultural diversity.

As an outgrowth of a Leading for Diversity Research Project in the public schools of San Francisco, Norte (1999) investigated the experience of African-American (and other minority group) principals as they incorporated diversity into the instructional programs of their schools. All of the principals in Norte's study were able to meet Project benchmarks, but several of them reported difficulties in dealing with veteran European-American teachers, some of whom came to their current schools during a period when students of color were in the minority. Paraphrasing the remarks of one of the study's interviewees, Norte wrote that "members of this core group had taught at the school or in the district for more than a quarter of a century and had watched the school demographics shift dramatically; however, they persisted in delivering the same instructional program with increasingly poor results" (Norte, 1999, p. 470).

Conflicts erupted between principals and "old guard" teachers over curricular changes aimed at promoting diversity and multi-cultural values, and, even more acutely, when European-American teachers proved ineffectual in teaching African-American/Hispanic students. The majority of Norte's interviewees said that they had dismissed one or more of their European-American teachers due to their intransigence and their lack of sensitivity toward students of color. These incidents came at "a great cost to principals, both personally and in terms of their relationships with other staff members who are sympathetic toward the removed teachers" (Norte, 1999, p. 474). Even after the most openly defiant teachers departed, these principals experienced residual animosity and distrust from Whites who believed that their colleagues had been forced out of jobs for the sake of the principal's racial agenda.

In addition to principal-teacher conflicts over the importance of multi-culturalism/diversity programs, the literature on African-American principals highlights two additional areas in which these educational administrators have experienced tensions related to their "ethno-humanist" leadership role: student assessment and school disciplinary policies. In Dantley's (2005) view, genuinely effective African-American school leaders, "are sensitive to the over-labeling of African-American male students as being intellectually deficient and socially deviant" (p. 665). On the whole, African-American principals have opposed the use of standardized testing and especially the use of scores in their assignment of students to curriculum tracks (Dantley, 2005).

In her collective case study of eight African-American principals, Mitchell (2004) reported that they held negative opinions about standardized reading tests. When

Mitchell broached the subject of student literacy evaluation, her study informants adopted a defensive posture. They asserted that these tests yield culturally- or racially-biased assessments, and they were determined to protect their students from "school track" placement decisions based upon European-American literacy skills. All of the interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind program and several characterized it as a reintroduction of racial segregation into American public school systems. It is worth noting that the principals with whom Mitchell spoke were assiduously aware of and sympathetic towards barriers to learning that students of color faced in their homes and communities, and that like Lomotey's principals, they "code switched" between a "color blind" administrator leadership orientation and meeting the race-specific needs of their minority group students.

Serving in urban neighborhoods that are plagued by poverty, crime, drugs, gangs and deficiencies in parental/adult supervision, African-American principals encounter an inordinately high number of incidents in which serious disciplinary measures may be warranted. At least some of the African-American middle school principals that Mukuria (2002) spoke with adhered to very strict disciplinary standards and imposed severe sanctions (including suspensions and expulsions) upon students for a wide range of behaviors. Dunbar and Villarruel (2002) examined how differences in principal race affect their implementation of "zero tolerance" policies within an urban school district. The occasion of this investigation was the enactment and subsequent amendment of a "zero tolerance" regimen toward student possession of weapons in public schools by Michigan educational officials. Under this mandate, principals at all public schools within

the state were directed to permanently expel students who brought guns, knives, or other lethal weapons onto their campuses. This policy was later expanded to include strong sanctions for the possession of drugs (including aspirin), student acts of insubordination and chronic disruptive behavior in class. Within the district that Dunbar and Villarruel studied, classroom teachers were empowered to exercise "snap suspensions" of unruly students, and the impact of "zero tolerance" program fell most heavily upon African-American pupils. During the 2001-2002 school year, 25 students were permanently suspended within the study district, of which 23 were African-Americans while only 2 were European Americans. Dunbar and Villarruel's study sample encompassed 36 principals, of whom 22 were African-American and 14 were European Americans. The researchers reported that the former were less likely to impose suspensions on African-American students than the latter, and that African-American principals were much more likely to override "snap suspensions." On the whole, the African-American participants "exercised compassion and common sense when it came to dispensing punishment" (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2002, p.101). In doing so, however, they came into conflict with both European-American principals in the district and with European-American teachers. While several of the African-Americans in the study reported efforts to explain to colleagues and subordinates that some of the African-American students judged to be chronically disruptive came from troubled families, they noted that this did not reduce the rate of "snap suspensions" for even comparatively minor infractions.

Females comprise a majority of the subjects in most of the empirical

investigations of the African-American principalship published to date. Intersecting

gender and race, many of these studies have been conducted from a feminist

standpoint, and, on the whole, they have reported that African-American women who

serve as principals have suffered dual discrimination as a consequence of their failure to

fit the customary White male prototype of school site administrators. In Bloom and

Erlandson's (2003) aforementioned study of three African-American female principals

from Chicago, the researchers noted that "each woman's story suggests that sexism is

probably a more powerful and personal agent of discrimination in the work world than

racism" (p.355). These veteran urban principals apprised the researchers that they had

encountered male chauvinistic attitudes from both European-American and African-

American males on their teaching staffs.

During the past decade, several qualitative and case studies of African-American

female principals have been undertaken by doctoral candidates. Thomas (1997) found

that the African-American high school principals in her study experienced challenges to

their competency as a result of the dual "stigma" assigned to them. From her interviews

of 10 African-American female principals working in four Southern California urban

school districts, Hodo-Haley (1998) reported that all of them suffered difficulty in

balancing teacher expectations and the symbolic roles attached to their race and

gender. The life histories of the six female African-American principals recorded by

Nicholson (1999) disclosed encounters with racism and gender bias before and after

they achieved their administrative positions, while the subjects in Hobson-Horton's

(2000), study of African-American female principals working in urban schools said that both race and gender impacted their approaches to leadership, to instruction and their interactions with district superintendents.

Empirical Works on Teachers' Race and Perceptions of

African-American Principals' Leadership

As noted earlier in this review, much of what is known about the leadership of school principals in general is derived from surveys of or interviews with teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Simply by virtue of the difference in their respective role positions within schools, the views of teachers about the practices that constitute effective school leadership may depart from those of principals (Hsieh & Shen, 1998). Nevertheless, in a survey encompassing 585 teachers and 260 principals working at 179 elementary and 179 secondary schools, Bagwell (2002) found a high degree of congruence between principals' and teachers' conceptions of what practices characterize "effective" educational leadership on the part of principals. Several studies, including a survey appearing in Blasé and Anderson's text on the Micro-politics of Educational Leadership (1995) have asked samples of teachers to identify the salient attributes of "effective," "successful" or "transformational" school principals. Despite modest variance among them, the resultant rosters tend to mirror Blasé and Anderson's findings, with honesty, mutual respect, fairness, and open communication identified as essential characteristics of effective principal leaders.

The inclusion of a racial factor into the study of teacher perceptions of principal leadership introduces a subjective, culturally-conditioned variable that divides teachers

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into identifiable groups. According to Howard (2000), the racial attitudes of European-American teachers can be categorized under three rubrics. Those holding a "fundamentally White orientation," insist that African-Americans must conform to the same standards as European Americans. Teachers displaying what Howard designated as an "integrationist White orientation" are more tolerant of racial differences, but they tend to be condescending toward educators/students of color, and above all, they avoid confrontation and conflict over racial issues. Finally, a small proportion of all the European-American teachers that Howard surveyed were categorized as "transformationist White orientation," which he defined "as "a paradoxical identity which allows them to acknowledge their inevitable privilege and racism while at the same time working to dismantle the legacy of white dominance" (Howard, 2000, p.17). From findings reported in several of the qualitative studies surveyed above, it may be concluded that most European-American teachers hold a "color blind" orientation, allowing them to see themselves as "racially neutral" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

Within the schools in which African-American principals are most likely to work, that is, urban schools located in communities with a high proportion of minority group members, instructional faculties typically include African-Americans and European Americans. In these settings, intra-staff conflicts along racial lines appear to be common. Bell (2002) spoke with 10 African-American and 10 European-American teachers working in a school district in a Southern state. She found a high degree of tension stemming from the incompatibility of goals held attendant and roles performed by teachers in these two racially-defined study groups. The African-American teachers

expressed a strong commitment towards their non-White students, and saw themselves as cultural translators and role models. By contrast, the European-American teachers that Bell interviewed looked upon their assignment to schools with predominantly African-American student bodies as a temporary stepping stone towards more favorable positions (that is, teaching positions in predominantly White schools) and they saw themselves as authority figures working to maintain classroom control. The majority of the European-American teachers in Bell's study were reluctant to discuss racial issues with their African-American colleagues, fearing that they would be labeled as insensitive to institutional or subtle forms of racial/cultural bias. At one school, moreover, according to the responses of both groups of teachers, the African-American teachers formed a working alliance with an African-American principal, while the European-American teachers simply remained silent.

This researcher found two published studies investigating how teachers' race influences perceptions of leadership by African-American principals. Using Chemers' integrated leadership model as the basis for developing a semi-structured interview schedule, Jones (2002) spoke with 30 teachers (15 African-Americans and 15 Whites) working at seven urban schools that were headed by African-American principals. At the outset of his study, Jones mentioned the difficulty she experienced in recruiting European-American teachers as participants, noting that most of the White teachers whom he approached declined to take part in the study given its controversial focus on race. Jones's primary finding was that "teachers of color perceived their African-American principals' leadership differently than their European American counterparts"

(p.16). Differences emerged on multiple fronts. The African-American teachers in the study perceived their principals to be legitimate leaders chiefly because they had risen to the organizational rank of the principal's office. Given the upward career barriers facing African-American educators in general, these teachers reasoned that their African-American principals must possess outstanding leadership capabilities to be hired as site administrators. On the other hand, the European-American teachers felt that the African-American principals in their schools were legitimate educational leaders by virtue of their individual characteristics, yet they also felt that their principals had been appointed because of their race due to "political" factors or that they had come to their positions by default, that is, because no European-American candidates applied for the positions.

Both sets of teachers in Jones's study considered their African-American principals to be trustworthy, but here too differences were discerned. The African-American teachers reported that they quickly developed trust in their respective principals owing to bonds of "ethnic kinship." Their European-American counterparts indicated that they had learned to trust their principals, but that this trust was compromised when principals promoted culturally relevant responses to students of color. They were especially hesitant to disclose their actual attitudes towards multi-cultural initiatives, fearing that they would be viewed by principals as "subtle" racists and that this would impact upon their professional evaluations and career prospects. As a result, while the African-American teachers developed deep personal bonds with their principals, the European-American teachers maintained cordial, professional relations.

According to Jones, the European-Americans in his study limited their contact with their

principals because they feared "being labeled as insensate to students of color and

avoided one-to-one communication with principals in situations in which racial issues

might arise (Jones, 2002, p. 28). Most of the teachers in both study groups considered

their principals to be "fair" in the treatment of staff. Nevertheless, some of the

European-American subjects told Jones that the fairness extended to them was

conditional upon their having "proved themselves" in being responsive to the needs of

minority group students. Among the European-American teachers who received "poor"

evaluations from their principals, Jones found two distinctive explanations. "One side

believed that their low ratings resulted from their lack of success with students of color.

The other side felt that poor evaluations were a result of personal conflicts with their

African-American principals" (Jones, 2002, p.27). Reflecting an individualism/collectivism

dichotomy in cultural norms, some of the European-American teachers expressed

disappointment at the scant positive feedback and praise that they received from

African-American principals, but the African-American teachers did not mention any

problems on this count, and indicated that their principals often extended praise to

teams of teachers or to the school staff as a whole. Finally, the African-American

teachers told Jones that their principals were effective leaders because of their ethnic

kinship bonds with students and the inclusive values that they instilled in school

cultures. The European-American teachers cited their principals' ability to obtain

resources from the district, to garner awards for the school, and to solve problems that

affected working conditions as the primary reasons that their principals were "effective" educational leaders.

The sole quantitative study of teachers' perceptions of African-American principals' leadership in which teacher race was operationalized as an independent variable was conducted by Darlene Brown (2005). Her sample consisted of 164 teachers working under 32 African-American principals in schools located in twelve states and was designed to determine whether teachers' perceptions of principal leadership varied by teacher race, gender, years of teaching experience and/or years working with the incumbent principal. Each of the participants in the study completed a version of the LMSS and a brief form inquiring about the subject's demographic and career background.

The broadest finding reported by Brown was that teachers as a whole gave high marks to their African-American principals on both the "leadership" ("transformational" leadership) and the "management" ("transactional" leadership) dimensions of the LMSS. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 representing the most positive rating), the mean score for the 32 African-American principals on the "leadership" portion of the LMSS was 4.20, while the mean score on the "management" section came in at 4.18.

As hypothesized, teacher race proved to be a significant factor on both of these counts. On the leadership portion of the LMSS, the African-American teachers rated their African-American principals at a mean of 4.32 while the European Americans in the sample rated these same principals at a mean of 4.07. Similarly, African-American teachers were slightly more favorable in their perceptions of principals' management

practices than were the European-American subjects: the mean score provided by the former came in at 4.32, while that of the latter stood at 4.04. The results indicated that the African-American teachers rated African-American principals somewhat higher than European-American teachers on both the leadership and management sections of the survey, but the effect sizes were small, explaining only about 3 percent in the variance in leadership and 4 percent of the variance in the management ratings. Within each of the six subscale embodied in the "leadership" section of the LMSS, the African-American teachers gave higher marks to African-American principals than the European-American teachers did, with the largest mean differences being found on items tapping into perceptions of principals' performance in developing collaborative decision-making structure and the smallest difference being recorded for principals' holding high student performance expectations. In like manner, the African-American teachers also rated African-American principals higher on all transactional leadership subscales, with "providing instructional support" having the largest mean difference and monitoring school activities displaying the smallest mean difference.

Teacher race was a stronger predictor of perceived principal leadership/management than teacher gender, but the results for this variable were constrained by the gender composition of Brown's study sample, with nearly 90 percent of the survey respondents being female teachers. The male teachers in Brown's investigation did give male African-American principals' higher mean ratings on both the leadership and management scales of the LMSS than the female teachers did. The

women in the sample gave virtually identical ratings to male and female African-American principals.

Although years of subject's experience as a teacher did not display any significant correlations with perceptions of principal leadership and management, with the exception of "holding high performance expectations," there were direct associations between the years that teachers spent working with their current principal and all of the leadership sub-scales. The more time that the teacher spent working with an individual African-American principal, the higher the ratings of his or her leadership performance. Similarly, with the exception of "monitoring school activities," "years working with principal" significantly and positively influenced assessments on all management sub-scales. Taken collectively, these results indicate that teachers who work with African-American principals longer tend to have stronger beliefs that these administrators exercise leadership and management skills.

Conclusion

Despite the scholarly attention that has been dedicated to the examination of principal leadership, current knowledge of the leadership orientation of African-American principals is limited and even more limited are the purposeful studies of the African-American male principal. This study will examine this specific area; some of the following tentative findings will be examined. Consistent with a contingency perspective, it can be reasonably presumed that both the actual and the perceived effectiveness of African-American principals varies according to contextual and situational variables and that no single model of leadership will prove effective under all

circumstances. Teacher attributions and assessments of African-American principal leadership are likely to be conditioned by culturally-determined prototypes and values, and these, in turn, are likely to be affected by whether teachers share the same racial background as the principals. The empirical work on African-American principals suggests that they are distinguished from their European-American counterparts by the in degree of commitment to, concern for, and empathy toward African-American students and communities. It also suggest that in their enactment of color conscious "ethno-humanist" roles, African-American principals often come into conflict with European-American teachers. A very limited corpus of works indicates that teacher perceptions of African-American principal leadership vary by teacher race. At present, then, there is some cause to suspect that African-American principals embrace leadership orientations and practices that differ from their European-American counterparts and that these differences account for some of the variance in how their leadership is assessed by African-American teachers compared to European-American teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

This chapter will explain the overall design of the study which will use qualitative inquiry method to explain how African America male principals deal with challenges facing urban secondary schools in a section of the Ohio public school system. Male African-American urban school principals face very interesting and challenging sets of operations. Oftentimes they have, through vision, initiative, and persistence, battled bureaucracy and entrenched mindsets to establish and meet the unsatisfied needs of teachers, students and community and battle with racial stereotypes. In other contexts, they have been forced to establish innovative educational practices that were met with the burden of bureaucratic obstacles and hierarchical oversight.

The researcher explored school leadership through narrative inquiry, examining changes in the demographic, scope, purpose, and function of the principalship through the agency of a single alternative, the African-American male principal. It asked, and answered, the questions:

1.   What are the systemic perceptions and myths that influence an African-American male principal in their practice?

2.   What are some of the belief systems held by African-American males' principals in school leadership positions that impact the success of the educational environment in urban schools?

3.   What are some of the practices exhibited by African-American male principals in school leadership positions that foster an effective educational environment in an urban school?

4.   How do African-American male principals in school leadership positions influence the deep-rooted beliefs of leadership in the urban educational setting?

This chapter explicated the methods to be used for gathering and interpreting data and delineate the role of the researcher in this inquiry. It will also explain how data was gathered and how sampling and participant selection was performed. For establishing reliability, the researcher use Methodological triangulation to help evaluate this study. Lastly, a focus group will be utilized to further clarify the participants' answers to the research questions.

Research Method: Narrative Inquiry

Creswell (1998) asserts that qualitative methods, including narrative inquiry, lend themselves appropriately to topics that "need to be explored" with some depth. Also, qualitative research, and especially narrative inquiry, is used to produce a detailed view of the topic by studying the participants in their natural setting, and it has the

benefit of emphasizing the researcher's role as an active learner who can tell the story from the participants' point of view rather than as an outside expert who passes judgments on participants. Thus, the choice of a qualitative methodology is consistent with the researcher's desire to participate in the process of participants' sharing their stories, providing an audience receptive to new insight gleaned from actual practitioners (Creswell, 1998).

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interactions within various milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in its midst and progresses along with participants in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the experiences that make up people's lives. Simply stated, narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry is uniquely appropriate for a research study investigating the values, beliefs and practices of the African-American male principal because of its long intellectual history both in and out of education; it is increasingly used in studies of educational experience. One theory in educational research holds that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Thus, using the narrative inquiry approach provides this researcher with an inimitable study of the ways my participants will view their principal-ship practices. This general conception is distinguished into the view that education and educational research is the edifice of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are raconteurs and characters in their own and other's stories.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also assert that narrative inquiry method in education is appropriate since educators are interested in life whose chief occupation, according to John Dewey, is education (p. xxii). Educators thus are interested in participating in processes of learning and teaching and understanding how those processes take place. They are interested in lives, values, attitudes, beliefs, social systems, institutions, and structures and in investigating how these components are all linked to learning and teaching.

These authors further explain the use of narrative inquiry in their chosen field of social science inquiry, stating forthrightly that "experience is the starting point and the key term for all social science inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxiii). In this context, they reaffirm that "when one asks what it means to study education, the answer – in its most general sense – is to study experience" (p. xxiv). Narrative inquiry seems the most appropriate method for exploring and relating these experiences and is uniquely qualified to explore the range of issues presented in African-American male principals' leadership in high school administrative roles, because it is premised on the belief that "humans are storytelling organisms, who individually and socially, lead storied lives," and because it is "sociologically concerned with the groups and the formation of community" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3).

A focus group is also appropriate for research of this type. "Scrimshaw and Hurtado (1987) define a focus group as a discussion in which a small group of participants, guided by a facilitator talk openly and spontaneously about themes relevant to the research". Focus groups were originally called "focused interviews" or

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"group depth interviews." The technique was developed after World War II to evaluate audience response to radio programs (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Since then, social scientists and program evaluators have found focus groups to be useful in understanding how or why people hold certain beliefs about a topic or program of interest. Concerning this study, the focus group allowed the researcher to delve into the role of the secondary African-American male principal. Questions begin the inquiry process and allowed for follow-up questions designed to probe for important details that emerge during the discussion.

The term can be defined as a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue. A focus group is typically seven to ten people who are unfamiliar with each other. These participants were selected because they had certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group. The focus group took place in a mutually selected place where the participants felt comfortable talking openly and in a location that was neutral in term of the interest of the research.

Setting and Participants

The setting for this study was chosen for its proximity to the researcher and further determined by the locations of the participants. Six principals, specifically male, African-American public school administrators, from six different secondary urban schools in northeast Ohio served as participants. Each of these administrators had at

least 3 years experience in a principal role at the secondary level with an urban school district for at least 3 years.

The participants for this study were chosen through purposive sampling, "an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations" (Neuman, 2000, p. 198). It is called for when the researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for an in-depth investigation that is a part of exploratory research. Creswell (1998) writes that purposive sampling allows the researcher to "select cases that can show different perspectives on the problem" (p. 62). It may allow the researcher an opportunity to select "ordinary cases, accessible cases, or unusual cases" (p. 62). It relies on the sensible judgment of the researcher to select appropriate cases to study. In this study, it means selecting individuals who are able to answer the research questions. For the purposes of this study, the sample of six present or former African-American male urban secondary school principals is purposive.

1. Each person satisfied the attributes of an "African-American male principal" as defined in Chapter One.

2. The schools they lead also satisfy the requirements of "urban settings" as clearly defined in Chapter 1: the school is located in an urban area rather than a rural, small town, or suburban area.

3. The school has a 50% or better poverty rate (as measured by Free and Reduced Lunch data provided by the district).

4. The school has a 50% or better proportion of students of color (as reported by the districts data).

The subjects have varying years of experience as an African-American secondary principal within an urban district. Due to this variance, some unique opportunities for research existed. Those principals who are new to an administrative role offered offer a more accurate perspective inclusive of political and societal expectations. Principals, who were more seasoned, having more than 10-plus years of experience, are expected to bring a more longitudinal perspective to the study. Data gleaned was representative of these two groups. This blending of years of experience should culminate a robust data set that represents a variety of viewpoints including information on how educational systems have changed and evolved over time. In order to ensure that there was a voice of multiple decades; one of the subjects met the criterion of being retired. This perspective provide contrast and allowed for multiple points of view to be compared and analyzed thus enhancing the authenticity of the study.

Identification of Participants

Consistent with the practice of purposive sampling, the researcher identified subjects via professional contacts developed over a seven year period. Subjects have been identified through personal and group associations occurring as a result of attending professional educational conferences. The researcher has been a member of the National Association of Black School Educators and has as a result met and collaborated with a number of professional members who are secondary principals in Northeast Ohio. Networking has enabled the researcher to identify and develop a professional rapport with a number of African-American secondary male principals who meet the criteria for this study.

An initial mailing consisting of fifteen letters was sent via United postal. This letter request names and contact information of colleagues who have established themselves as African-American male urban secondary school principals.

The researcher stipulated several additional criteria for the selection of participants. Primary among these were that:

1.   Participants will have a minimum of three years experience as an urban school principal. (not assistant principal)

2.   Some of the participants should have at least five years experience as a principal working in an urban secondary school.

3.   Participants should have at least three years teaching in an urban secondary school.

4.   At least one principal should have been a retired principal in an urban secondary school or have at least twenty-plus years experience as a principal.

Negotiating Entry

In narrative inquiry process, the procedure of negotiating entry reflects the outreach and enrollment of participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10). For this study, after the six potential participants were identified for the purposive sample, the researcher solicited the actual participation of these people through a form letter requesting their assistance (see Appendix A for sample copy of the letter). This contact described the research and specifies conditions for participation including provisions made for confidentiality, and requested involvement.

Method of Data Collection: The Recording of Field Texts

In order to gather data for this study, the researcher used a sequential set of activities. The initial survey interview was concluded as soon as an affirmative response was received from the participants. This short questionnaire/survey establishes certain biographical information, such as level of education, experience, professional accomplishments, and general background information about the secondary school, such as size and ethnic composition. Then an interview was conducted individually with each participant following the receipt of a completed instrument. Interviews were held at a location that was comfortable for the participant, my campus office, at a time and date that was mutually convenient. Before administering the interviews, the researcher reviewed the conditions of participation, including issues of confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the research project. The interviews, a "widely used method of creating field texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 110), was consistent with a structured list of questions addressed individually to each of the 6 participants (see Appendix B).

The semi-structured questions were phrased in an open-ended manner allowing each participant to establish his own relative importance to the issues addressed through the relation of his personal story of leadership. Thus the interview is "semi standardized" (Berg, 1995, p. 33). In a semi standardized interview, "…questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized

questions" (Berg, 1995, p. 33). Thus follow-up questions did clarify, but also extend

answers. The researcher remains mindful that the emphasis should not be on asking

pre-selected questions to elicit information, but on interaction with the participants.

The result of the interview was a narrative dense with thick, rich description.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) cautioned, "the way an interviewer acts,

questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and therefore the ways

the participants respond and give accounts of their experience" (p. 110). Specifically,

interview conditions such as place, time, and degree of formality by the interviewer

impinge on the field text. Therefore the researcher was cognizant of these factors when

interpreting the field text.

The interviews were recorded on cassette tape. The tapes were transcribed in a

timely manner. A member check was conducted with the transcript and sent to the

participant as soon for correction and editing. Three physical copies of the final,

corrected interview transcripts will be generated and reserved: one for the interviewee

to have upon his request; one upon for the researcher to make notes and record

observations; and a clean copy retained for further research purposes.

Keeping Record

The researcher will store field texts for a period of one calendar year. These

records will be stored in the locked file cabinet in his office at the researcher's place of

employment. Access to this area is restricted with only the researcher and the official

school secretary in possession of keys. In any case, identities of the participants are

masked and details that might point to the eventual identification of the participants

camouflaged. The key to the identities of the participants is kept in a separate locked storage area in the same building. In the event that the research findings are published in any form, the researcher will retain these materials for a period of one year following date of publication.

Focus Groups

The interviewer designated a most neutral environment that was, to the extent possible, enabling and nurturing. The position of the researcher was to be to encourage different perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote, plan, or reach consensus. This researcher asked the interviewees to select preferences of the most fitting location to conduct these focus groups. The group discussion was conducted one time with the African-American principals involved in the study to help identify trends and patterns in perceptions. Careful and systematic analysis of the discussions provided clues and insights that related to the research questions. (Krueger, 1998).

Data Analysis

The researcher coded by hand all the field text. He then interpreted the field texts by looking for recurrent themes that emerge in the single interviews and focus group. Triangulation of interviews, focus group content, and the review of the literature was used to identify relevant content within the data sets. Isolated phenomena was also be identified and analyzed. The interpretations that emerged from the data had the effect of making meaning of the experiences of the African-American male urban secondary school principal.

Using Triangulation

The uses of interviews, the researcher's field notes, and focus groups will be used to collect data and triangulate the data to increase dependability of the study. The term "triangulation" in qualitative research refers to the utilization of more than one approach for exploring a research question in order to enhance confidence in the subsequent findings. The idea of triangulation has become associated with measurement practices in social and behavioral research. An early reference to triangulation was in relation to the idea of unobtrusive method proposed by Webb (1966), who suggested, "Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes" (p. 3). Denzin (1970) broadens the scheme of triangulation past its conservative association with research methods and designs. He distinguished two forms of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies including interviews, a focus group and the researcher's field notes, allows data to be accrued from multiple sources featuring a variety of personal viewpoints and perspectives.

2. Methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of focus narrative, uses more than one method for gathering data.

The type of triangulation that is appropriate for this study is the Methodological triangulation. This method draws a distinction between within-method and between-

method triangulation. It involves the use of varieties of methods to investigate a research issue (Denzin, 1970)

Constructing a Research Relationship

In the process of narrative inquiry, it is important that all participants have a voice. However, "it is important that the researcher listen first to the practitioner's story, and that it is the practitioner who first tells his or her story"; this is done so that the "practitioner, who has been long silenced in the research relationship is given time and space to tell his story so that it too gains the authority and validity that the research story has long had" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). Thus a relationship between the researcher and the storyteller, based on mutual respect, had to be constructed. This relationship will be revisited repeatedly during the research process to guide the unfolding of the practitioner's story.

As an African-American male principal, the researcher is well aware of the complexities and contextual components related to subjectivity. The researcher's background and professional experiences are similar to the subjects who too are working in urban districts as principals. As a researcher, two important dynamics are in place. As an etic (outsider), the researcher's educational experiences were in states other than Ohio. Accordingly, some of the researcher's viewpoints and perspectives may differ from those of the subjects. As an emic (insider), there is a high probability that the researcher may share a common set of beliefs, values, and practices that have evolved during tenure as a secondary principal in an urban secondary school. This commonness of experience may well allow the researcher to understand the unique roles, dynamics

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and phenomenology associated with African-American male principal leadership practices. Additionally, the researcher's commonness with subjects may serve to further the understanding of the data gleaned and analyzed for this study.

Limitations

Due to the personal qualities (e.g., gender, race, role) of the subjects several limitations exist. All subjects are African-American males who are principals in urban secondary schools in Northeast Ohio. As such, data gleaned has limited applicability. For instance it is not possible to generalize findings to other areas of Ohio or to other urban areas of the nation. Findings will relate best to urban as opposed to suburban and rural districts. Additionally, findings will relate better to African-American male principals as opposed to African-American female principals. Additionally, the sample size is small and as a result it may be that varying viewpoints and other sources of information are not gathered within the data of the study.

Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

In qualitative research, to ensure the reliability of the study, there must be an examination of trustworthiness. While ensuring a good quality study through reliability and validity, in qualitative research Seale (1999) states the trustworthiness of the research report lies at the heart of the issues. Contrary to that statement, Stenbacka (2001) indicates that the concept of reliability is misleading in qualitative research. He suggests if a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good" (p. 552). However opposing Stenbacka statement was Patten (2001) who states that validity and reliability are two factors which any

qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. Many researchers use the term dependability as a replacement for the term reliability. The idea of dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. Therefore, for this study this researcher referred to all measures of (reliability) to measures of (dependability) The research is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study.

The major provision for the dependability of this study will be the clarification from the focus group session transcript and the member check of the interview transcripts. Individuals who were interviewed were allowed to read a draft transcription of their interview and can revise, correct or clarify any remarks. Also, a journal kept by the researcher recording his thoughts on the research process, by providing continuous reflective and reflexive commentary will be a third provision used for dependability

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to delineate the methods and procedures that where used to accomplish the goal of this research, which was to explore the Beliefs, values and practices of African-American Male principals in a secondary urban school. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the most appropriate method to inquire into the research problem. The subsequent chapter will present the data derived from the research.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and responses of the study's participants addressing the study's central research questions:

1. What are the systemic perceptions and myths that you influence as an African-American male principal?

2. What are some of the belief systems held by African-American males' principals in school leadership positions that impact the success of the educational environment in urban schools?

3. What are some of the practices exhibited by African-American male principals in school leadership positions that foster an effective educational environment in an urban school?

4. How do African-American male principals in school leadership positions influence the deep-rooted beliefs of leadership in the urban educational setting?

A Methodological triangulation was used to draw distinctions between within-method and between-method triangulation. It involves the use of a variety of methods to investigate a research issue (Denzin, 1970). Findings emerged from the individual interviews, focus groups interviews, field notes and the review of the literature.

The participants were asked a series of nine questions in a semi-structured format. The researcher and the participant sat at a table across from each other; this seating arrangement was acceptable for both the participant and the researcher. The researcher talked openly and specifically about the research project and answered all questions from each participant in order to yield data germane to the central research questions. Summarized responses to each of the nine questions are presented along with a brief profile of each participant and student demographics.

Profile of Participants

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) is a black male appearing to be in his mid to late thirties. He was most excited about participating in this interview and also cleared his calendar for the group discussion. He started his work in urban schools in 1996 in the state of Michigan and has been a teacher an administrator in several cities in Ohio. The researcher has the distinct privilege of working in the same district as participant 1 (James).

Participant 1 (James) taught five years in an urban school and has spent eight years as a secondary administrator in an urban setting. His school population totals

1400 students, with approximately 80% on free and reduced lunch. Five percent of the student body speaks a second language.

<p style="text-align:center">***Participant 2 (Detrick)***</p>

Participant 2 (Detrick) is a black male who is in his mid sixties. Detrick indicated that since he retired, he spends most of his time traveling and visiting with his children. Detrick made himself available on what turned out to be one of the coldest and snowiest days of the year. The researcher went to Detrick's home to conduct the research. He was also available at the researcher's discretion for the group discussion. Detrick made the researcher feel very relaxed and offered food and drink. He was very much in control of this interview. The researcher noticed that Detrick sat at his dining room table with his hands collapsed together as if to say, "I'm ready whenever you are." A colleague nominated this person for inclusion in this study because of his record of implementing innovative instructional strategies, working with student diversity, promoting a program reflecting principles of social justice and care, and having led urban schools for over two decades. Detrick is originally from Michigan and moved to Ohio to attend college. He is a retired 30-year veteran principal with five years of teaching experience at the middle school and high school levels. Over his tenure, he estimated that 85-90% of his students received free or reduced lunch and that 70-75% of his students during the years in which he was an administrator were African-American.

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant 3 (Marcus) is a black male in his mid to late thirties; he is approximately six feet tall and weighs approximately one hundred and eighty pounds. Marcus did not have many opportunities to conduct the interview; however, he cleared his calendar for what he called a "lunch break" to participate in the interview. Coming from industry, Marcus exuded a plethora of confidence in working in his urban school but displayed a very stoic demeanor throughout the interview. It was very difficult to bring to light his emotional scars, if any, during the interviews. He views his school as a movement of reconstruction from urban collapse. He indicated that his son was the reason for becoming an urban principal and that he wants to give his son a sense of hope for his future. Marcus was recommended by a mutual friend, who is also an urban secondary principal. He has eight years of teaching experience and has been a principal for approximately seven years. He currently leads a school of approximately 800 students, 78-80% of whom receive free or reduced lunch. Thirty percent of the student body speaks a second language.

Participant 4 (Luther)

Participant 4 (Luther) is a black male in his mid to late thirties. He cleared his calendar to meet with this researcher at the end of his work day. When the researcher arrived at his school, he was greeted warmly by several students and was asked if they could help him. The researcher acknowledged the students and requested direction to the office. After arriving at the office, the researcher was greeted by the secretary and asked if she could be of assistance. After waiting approximately ten minutes for the

principal, the researcher was told he was on the third floor awaiting the interview. The

principal met and greeted the researcher with an African-American culturally acceptable

handshake and a warm smile. Several chivalries were extended prior to and after the

interview. The participant's disposition was jovial throughout the interview. When the

researcher inquired about his apparent joy, the participant simply stated that he is

getting married.

Participant 4 (Luther) is the principal of an urban middle school with 600

students. He has been a principal for five years at the secondary level and taught at the

secondary level for eight years. Approximately 79% of the students at Participant 4

(Luther)'s school participate in the free and reduced lunch program, and approximately

50% of the students speak English as their second language.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) is a black male in his early fifties. He is working in the same

district in which he completed his education. Keith was the most vocal of all the

participants. He wanted to share his educational experiences form his days as a teacher,

to becoming an administrator. Keith cleared his calendar to meet with the researcher's

choice of days and times. Keith informed the researcher that he felt a sense of

responsibility and obligation to help those who would be replacing him in the near

future. Keith drove to the researcher's office; he noted that he needed an escape from

the trials of his position. Keith seemed very overexcited; it took him several minutes

unwind and demonstrate his readiness for the interview. Once the interview started, he

displayed a high level of excitement in his responses. Keith displayed great compassion

for his students and their outlook on their future. Keith is a husband and a father to three daughters. He was recommended by a former student of his who is currently an acquaintance of the researcher.

Keith has been a principal for over 15 years, and he was also an instructor for over 15 years. He currently holds the principalship at a high school with a population of approximately 1,400 students, 75% of whom participate in a free and reduced lunch program.

Participant 6 (Fred)

Participant 6 (Fred) is a black male in his mid thirties. Fred is from the western part of Ohio; he moved to the area because he wanted to work in a large urban district. The researcher met Fred at a national conference and maintained an ongoing professional relationship with him. Fred cleared his calendar to take part in the study and insisted that he travel to the researcher's office for the interview. After arriving at the researcher's office, Fred wanted bottled water and said he needed to get away, a sentiment that has resonated with other participants. Upon observing Fred, he appeared to be very stressed and bewildered. Once the interview began, Fred appeared to embrace the questions and was very tactical in his responses.

Fred leads a school with a total population of approximately 510 students. He has taught for six years and has been a principal at the secondary level for five years. One hundred percent of his students receive free and reduced lunch.

Response to Question 1

Are there any influences that affect your leadership practice because you

are an African-American male?

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) explained promptly that he was born in the inner city and grew up in a single-parent home. He explained, "…I do relate to that aspect for a single-parent home and the problem their kids are having."

Participant 2 (Detrick)

Participant 2 (Detrick) noted that his experience in an African-American collegiate environment, Central State University, influenced his approach to students and staff. In particular, this participant noted a sense of responsibility to his students: "…I found that I had to help and influence and give them some sort of guide and leadership at all times."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant 3 (Marcus) described systematic injustices as influences on his leadership practice and emphasized the responsibility he feels in correcting these inequalities, particularly the large number of African-American males in special education classes in addition to "lowered standards and no expectations." He mentioned the importance of being "ever so cognizant…in making sure that you are trying to do the right things at all times" in an effort to "undo…what damage has been done."

Participant 4 (Luther)

Participant 4 (Luther) explained that being aware of different personalities that he deals with on a daily basis (e.g., parents, students, teachers) is a major influence. He discussed that his decision-making and whatever influence he has in making decisions is influenced by his effort to be even, consistent, and fair.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) stated that coming from a large family influences his leadership practice, and the lessons he learned from his mother about choices and consequences also affect his practice. He applies the adage his mother taught him when working with students on the importance of making the right choices: "…if you make your bed you have to lie in it." Describing his work with students in this area, he commented, "force is out and persuasion is in."

Participant 6 (Fred)

Participant 6 (Fred) discussed personal influences and experiences that infuse his leadership practice. He described himself as "being the only black person in the class at a college institution…having to work twice as hard" and "trying to get over being in a class of certain positions in the military." Based on his experiences, this participant shared one of the "rules" he developed for himself as an African-American male: "[T]o help our children be prepared for what they are going to face once they exit the 12th grade."

Response to Question 2

What are some of the myths and misconceptions, if any, about African-American male principals?

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) responded that he encounters the myth that he displays favoritism toward African-American students, particularly males. He mentioned the perception that he is a more lenient disciplinarian toward African-American students and that he allows them special privileges, such as leaving campus during school hours.

Participant 2 (Detrick)

The myth that African-American male principals do not have the skills to be "great" leaders, particularly with "mixed" staff was cited by this participant. Because of this misconception, Participant 2 (Detrick) explained that he tried to incorporate fairness and honesty into his leadership style and applied these qualities in working with both African-American and White students and staff.

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant 3 (Marcus) discussed the myth that African-American principals are unable to balance instructional, statistical, and other aspects of the position and that they are unable to "successfully educate and do the curriculum and data to be able to make sound decisions." This participant shared his experience in witnessing others accede to the principalship based on their athletic background or other traits unrelated to qualifications for the position. He explained that because of these hiring practices, he has had to overcome the myth of insincerity that has been tied to the principalship and

convince the school community that "you really actually care for students and that you are here to make them achieve to levels to me that are endless in bounds." He described the students' familial perception of him based merely on the fact that he has communicated his expectations for them: "Students walk around the halls and call you dad, uncle and claim you as a family member. You are not related to them but they know you have expectations for them."

Participant 4 (Luther)

This participant explained the misconception that African-American principals treat African-American students with favoritism and that they are "more likely to take it easy on our African-American kids." He added that the myth includes less harsh disciplinary consequences for African-American students compared to Hispanic or White students. Because of this misconception, Participant 4 (Luther) explained that he makes a concerted effort to be consistent and fair and his heightened awareness of this issue when dealing with kids.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) discussed that he encounters a misconception of mistrust when individuals need to resolve an issue and ultimately are directed to an African-American principal. He explained that some parents look at him and request to speak to someone else, although because of his position, they are required to deal with him as a matter of course. In particular, this participant explained that the mistrust centers around White parents who might have an impression based on hearsay that the participant flirted with their daughter. He stated that the school's staff has found that

"…it is best not to try to battle with those fears and mistrusts. It is better to let them talk to who[m]ever and then we will deal with it."

The participant also shared the misconception about his level of knowledge; he explained that individuals are surprised to learn that his trade is electronics, and that he is also extremely knowledgeable about job placement.

Participant 6 (Fred)

The participant explained that African-American male principals are sent many students who have behavioral disabilities, who come from broken homes or who have no father in the home. This practice is based on the belief that African-American males are more successful at training African-American males. In actuality, Participant 6 (Fred) discussed, many African-American males in educational leadership roles also came from single-parent homes but also possess a "sense of pride, sense of accomplishment, and a 'can do' attitude."

Response to Question 3

What do you believe impacts the success of an urban school?

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) noted the importance of understanding parents' perception of the value of education so that parents can instill it in their children. He noted that students must now become responsible for creating a learning culture at home so parents will feel empowered to take on more responsibility for their child's/children's education.

Participant 2 (Detrick)

Detrick stated there has to be a commitment of all." He described an example of working with community venues, including a local church and YMCA to schedule convenient sessions for working parents between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. to address problems and resolutions if children were experiencing difficulty. Noting the success of this practice, the participant explained, "We were able to keep problems down because we had that communication going at all times."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant 3 (Marcus) stated that getting kids to believe in themselves is at the heart of a successful urban school. Citing the example of Joe Clark's leadership in the movie *Lean on Me*, he explained that changing the school culture to one that is infused with belief is "the hallmark of success" in urban schools. Discussing the lack of support system at home for some urban students, the participant described the additional responsibility placed on urban schools in order for students to compete with their suburban counterparts, who have stronger teachers and curriculum in addition to stronger parental expectations and involvement.

Participant 4 (Luther)

Parental engagement was stated as the "backbone" that impacts the success of an urban school. Participant 4 (Luther) explained that despite the prevalence of single parents as the family structure for his students, he continues to communicate the importance of parental involvement, even if he is only able to get partial involvement on the part of those parents.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) stated that students and parents will trust staff in an urban school if they think the staff cares. He stated, "If you care, it does not matter how much equipment you got, if you care they will trust you. If they trust you, they will move forward."

Participant 6 (Fred)

Readiness for kindergarten was cited as a key factor in the success of an urban secondary school. The participant explained that one of the "snowballing" effects of teen pregnancy is that youngsters do not receive support and instruction at home in basic skills such as letter recognition, learning colors, and learning how to spell their names. Because of this initial gap in learning, Participant 6 (Fred) indicated that some students are "years behind" by the time they reach the high school level. Participant 6 (Fred) viewed early learning activities at home such as exposure to parents' reading habits and playing games with parents as critical to success at the secondary level in an urban environment.

Response to Question 4

What belief systems do you subscribe to as an African-American male principal?

Participant 1 (James)

The participant began by asserting his belief that all students can learn. He also shared that he believes that African-American students use excuses that impede their progress or attempt to justify their lack of achievement: "I believe our kids have

excuses, whether it is whites doing this, whether society is doing this to him, whether they came from a single-parent home or anything of that nature happens to him and they show that as a correction on themselves."

Participant 2 (Detrick)

As the participant indicated in response to the second question, he discussed his belief in fairness and that skin color does not determine ability on the part of teachers or students. Attitude was also cited as a determining factor in success for both teachers and students. Participant 2 (Detrick) described openness to secondary students' thoughts and input so that they have a sense of contribution to the larger framework and system of their educational environment. He acknowledged that there were necessary limitations to this input, however: "They can't control, but I do believe in the input from all parts."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant three discussed his belief that everyone is capable of learning. He qualified that by stating that he has realistic expectations and that not everyone will become a doctor. However, he stated his belief that "…every student is educable in something, everyone has a talent and everyone is able to successfully be a good citizen and a contributing citizen to this democracy…."

Participant 4 (Luther)

The belief systems that Participant 4 (Luther) shared include every child's ability to learn and desire "to be told what to do in a positive way." He added that he strongly believes that "every kid is worthy of an education."

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) stressed diplomacy in response to this question. In addition, he emphasized the need for a broad range of knowledge and the ability to "wear many hats." Reflecting on the trust issue he mentioned in response to Question 3 and Question 2, he explained his belief that he must learn what people are afraid of, because fear causes barriers to form; he discussed that breaking down those barriers is a key element in his role as an African-American male principal.

Participant 6 (Fred)

Participant 6 (Fred) expressed the belief that all students need to have the tools to prepare them for educational, professional, and military experiences after they leave school. As a younger principal, Participant 6 (Fred) explained that he identifies with students through music and type of dress; he uses his youth as a means of staying connected with students to impart his experiences, although he admitted that at times, students still acknowledge the age difference.

Response to Question 5

What impact does this have on the success of your building?

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) discussed his view that not everyone shares the same belief in student's potential or has the same goals for all students. The deterioration of society was also mentioned as a contributing factor. The participant elaborated on the hypocrisy of dwelling on the importance of students becoming successful yet not providing the social assistance to engender and support success.

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Participant 2 (Detrick)

Participant 2 (Detrick) referred to his comments for the previous question and elaborated on the sense of collective ownership of the school environment and his belief that "the school was part of the home." In instilling this belief, the participant stressed the stability of the environment that stems from a sense of ownership: "I taught my students that the school was theirs, no one could destroy it, not even them." He also emphasized this perspective with teachers, calling the school their "home away from home."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

The participant described the importance of a shared belief system and vision among staff, parents, social workers, grandparents, guardians, custodians, and others involved in children's lives. He explained that the shared vision creates momentum for student success.

Participant 4 (Luther)

Participant 4 (Luther) described that his belief systems impact his building's success because kids realize that he cares about their achievements. However, he also describes a mutual respect formed because kids also understand that "there will be consequences when they do get out of line."

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) connected his primary mission of education to building trusting relationships with his staff. He explained that he tells his staff to focus on educating the students, and the reciprocal respect with their administrator will follow.

He instructs his staff, "…do what you are supposed to, do what you say you are going to do, the respect will come later. Make it about education." He also referenced his ability to wear many hats, which serves as an additional resource for his staff to ensure the success of a project or activity. He tells his staff, "I am here so that if you need to know something or you need something to make it successful, call me….When it is too tough that you cannot figure it out, then it is just right for me."

Participant 6 (Fred)

Participant 6 (Fred) provided statistics to demonstrate the success of his belief system on his school. The school's graduation rate is 95%; 80% of students pass the reading portion of the state's proficiency test; 88% of students pass the math portion of the state's proficiency test.

This participant also acknowledges that his door is "open to students" and the relationship that he has with students impacts the school's performance. He noted that some adults complain that he communicates more frequently with students than with them.

Response to Question 6

What are some of the practices exhibited by an African-American male principal that foster an effective educational environment in an urban school?

Participant 1 (James)

This participant expressed the importance of balancing academic and social roles, particularly in "connect[ing] with the community as well as with the student

body." He approaches discipline with firm consequences along with rationale to educate students about the social ramifications of behavior: "You suspend a kid for ten days for cussing somebody out…but let's understand why you cannot do that. . . .To understand there is a different method and a different way to handle a situation. A learning process needs to be developed."

Participant 2 (Detrick)

Three practices were described by this participant. First, the participant stated his belief in showing compassion that manifested itself in a strong student focus. For example, this participant stated that he stood at the door every morning to greet the students and every afternoon to show interest in them, their work habits, and their experiences at school. He explained that he asked them how their day was, whether or not they got their homework done, and other questions demonstrating that he took a personal interest in students.

Another practice that Participant 2 (Detrick) attributed to the success of an urban educational environment was taking home book bags and books every day. He instituted this policy to impress upon students that there were other activities to engage in when they went home instead of simply playing and not using time productively.

Finally, Participant 2 (Detrick) explained his philosophy that students should always be able to express their goals, particularly when asked what they wanted to "be." His rationale for this philosophy was to give students a basis for goal setting and a sense of accountability for their goals, even though he realized that most students would state unreasonable aspirations: "Some wanted to be doctors, lawyers, which

probably they will never reach, but if you don't reach for the sky, there will be very little you can grab a hold of."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Sternness, consistency, and fairness were included in the participant's response regarding the creation of an effective urban educational environment. He also indicated that acknowledging individual student's situations and difficulties is important but that it must be balanced by communicating strong expectations for the student. Participant three elaborated on the concept of strength and discussed that this demeanor is actually driven by student expectations. He explained, "…the kids expect us to come in strong, they expect us to be a role model, they expect us to be non-tolerant of the silliness and ignorance that goes on. We are to be strong in our decisions, strong in what we do and how we respond to situations and have high expectations for what they expect." In addition, this participant reflected on the "strong father figure" image that he described as essential for an effective urban educational environment: "We have to be in control of the family so I treat this building, my schools, everywhere I have been, even as a teacher that is my domain, I run this and kids respect that."

Participant 4 (Luther)

Participant 4 (Luther) responded that leading by example is a practice that fosters an effective urban educational environment. He explained that it is important for students of color to see an African-American male principal maintaining professionalism at all times and serving as a role model for them.

Participant 5 (Keith)

This participant's response underscored caring as a practice to foster an effective urban educational environment. Similar to his response to Question 3, he explained the collaborative spirit that develops with staff and parents when they are aware that the principal cares about the students and the school. Interestingly, this participant also commented on maintaining his health; he discussed the comments he receives from others about his energy, and they express an interest in how he stays in shape.

Participant 6 (Fred)

This participant described character development as a means of fostering an effective urban educational environment. He explained, "…we demand respect from our African-American boys….This is a man working with a young man to let him become a real man." Female students are treated like "daughters"; the participant stated, "…we teach them about self respect, about academic success to shatter that glass." The participant extended his comments to discuss the female and African-American presidential candidates and the impact that those individuals have on African-American students' perception of their capabilities: "…we have a female and we have an African-American male who [are] changing all the perceptions of what we can and can't do."

Response to Question 7

What are some of the best practices in urban education?

Participant 1 (James)

The response from Participant 1 (James) centered on a connection with the students and changing teaching practices to address short attention spans resulting

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from media bombardment. The participant discussed his current reading, Bill Cosby's

Come on, People, which describes students' boredom in the classroom due to constant

stimulation by television, video games, and other media.   Engaging students' interest

through topics relating to rap music and artists was one specific best practice stated by

this participant.

Participant 2 (Detrick)

In response to this question, Participant 2 (Detrick) reiterated his belief in the

importance of showing compassion to children. When he encounters former students

years later, this participant still greets them with handshakes and hugs. He explained

that compassion makes a difference with students because it communicates to them,

"…you are someone."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

Participant three acknowledged a disparity in best practices between urban and

suburban schools. He listed worksheets and lecture as practices still relatively common

in urban schools while citing cooperative learning as a "hallmark" of best practice.

However, he explained that hands-on activity is perceived differently by teachers in

urban settings; "precocious" African-American student in an urban setting are seen as

"unruly" and are reprimanded or disciplined for behavior that would be perceived as

"just learning" or "exploring" in a suburban environment.

Participant 4 (Luther)

Student grouping or teaming activities such as peer tutoring and peer teaching

under the aegis of the teacher was noted as a best practice.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) explained that a hands-on, "learn by doing" approach emphasized by his vocational school epitomizes best practices because learning is directly applicable to employment. He discussed that this methodology is also well-suited to African-American students because "A lot of minority students…want you to give them the answers." His school emphasizes the opportunity to try, make mistakes, and use the tools provided to develop independence for future performance on the job.

Response to Question 8

What are some elements of a healthy urban educational environment?

Participant 1 (James)

Participant 1 (James) described "checks and balances" as an element of a healthy urban educational environment, particularly with respect to community involvement, e.g., churches and outside organizations. More specifically, the participant explained organizations outside the school must provide services and opportunities that engage students on an academic as well as a social level: "…you have to have checks and balances to make sure these organizations are doing things….We have tutoring, but what percentage of kids engage in tutoring?"

Participant 2 (Detrick)

The participant returned to the theme of commitment in response to this question and explained that education develops best when commitment is all-inclusive: "It starts with the students and goes to teachers and with the administrator and custodial staff." He shared that he had his entire staff meet the students and establish

relationships in order for the youngsters to feel comfortable seeking out a staff member

to discuss school- or home-related problems. He described his intent for students to

perceive him as approachable and trustworthy, rather than an authoritarian presence:

"The youngsters did not feel I was a principal; I was a person first. So they come to me,

talk to me, and share things with me because I was not a principal but I was a friend."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

The participant named structure and involvement as elements of a healthy urban

educational environment. He also described critical thinking and opportunities for

students to do their own investigation as important elements for a thriving educational

environment.

Participant 4 (Luther)

This participant reiterated his belief that community and parental involvement

will foster a healthy urban educational environment because this participation

demonstrates to kids that "they do have adults that really care about them.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) linked achievement to a healthy school, healthy students,

and a healthy staff. Replacing carbonated drinks with water and providing snacks to

students who have not eaten breakfast were cited as examples of ensuring that

students' needs were met with healthy options in order for them to work at an optimal

level. However, the participant also explained that he reminds students that they have

to learn to work even if they're not feeling well at times. Participant 5 (Keith)'s school

also involves students and staff in a walking program.

In addition to proper nutrition and exercise, Participant 5 (Keith)'s approach to a

healthy school also involves discussing drugs and drug testing for employment with

students. He offers the school and staff as a resource for students who need to "get

straight" and admonishes the students about failing drug tests: "You can fool us and say

you're all right, but if you don't get hired because you failed the drug test, there is no

need to fool yourself."

Participant 6 (Fred)

Participant 6 (Fred) described a culture of respect and ambition as elements of a

healthy urban educational environment, but he also pointed out that the African-

American culture has always "invented" or "innovated." Given this perspective, he

commented that an African-American culture flourishes with holistic contributions as

opposed to restricting contributions based on a perception of society's needs: "We need

all the colors, all the glare, all the design and use what comes along with it….I think part

of the following that we have is that we are trying to take who we are and put it inside

this little box and contain it and say that this is what society needs…." In reflecting on

the African-American culture and the urban educational environment, Participant 6

(Fred) stated, "We are not a mundane people."

Response to Question 9

What lessons of leadership (if any) derive from your practice would you

commend to your cohorts in other urban schools?

Participant 1 (James)

In response to this question, Participant 1 (James) explained that learning is an ongoing process and that administrators and teachers must keep up with an ever-changing society. He described the impact that this society has had on students' approaches to learning, which has, in turn, affected the educational environment and even employers by stating, "It is not concrete as it used to be where students come in and they are supposed to sit down. We have to provide opportunities to our teachers and explain these things to our community and our businesses…." This participant also stressed the importance of teachers helping students prepare for the future so that they can progress beyond merely giving lip service to college. The participant reflected on his own experience in growing up in an urban environment and preparing for the college entrance process. He explained forthrightly, "Growing up in an urban society, I knew that my parents were not able to help me with ACT sores and they were not helping me with any kind of entrance exam. I can relate to where these kids are coming from."

Participant 2 (Detrick)

Commitment, leadership, and a sense of ownership were reinforced by the participant in his answer. To illustrate his ideas about the importance of a leader's sense of ownership, he likened the responsibility and care of the school building to homes, clothes, and cars, in which individuals have a similar sense of pride. Elaborating on his recurrent theme of commitment, Participant 2 (Detrick) discussed the long-term influence that principals can have on children, which necessitates a strong commitment to "the whole job because a child is a whole child…this child is not just yours for one

year or two years, but you influence that child and he will carry that for the rest of his life."

Participant 3 (Marcus)

This participant explained that he would advise his cohorts to "go in tough and ease up." Simultaneously, though, he recommended being observant and gathering information from others during the first year to "see what you need to face." He perceived discipline and behavior as issues that he could remedy immediately, but he recommended observing at least a year before implementing changes in curriculum and instruction. A final leadership lesson he discussed was to inspire others to "move in your direction" once a path of change was established.

Participant 4 (Luther)

Participant 4 (Luther) stated that the leadership lesson he would impart would be to lead by example and maintain consistency in both words and actions.

Participant 5 (Keith)

Participant 5 (Keith) described his school's service projects as a way to build students' leadership qualities while they "learn to earn." He views leadership as "someone getting done what they need to [get] done" as well as "waiting your turn to lead or following what [another] person is doing."   He also explained that the service projects reinforce a sense of accountability in students, and he involves the entire student body in projects such as gathering 10,000 pounds of food in one week to support a local food bank.

Participant 6 (Fred)

This participant explained that he would share the lesson that "you can't please everyone." He described the potential for hostility in any work environment that includes African-Americans and the need to balance the media's portrayal of African-Americans with an atmosphere of cultural respect. Participant 6 (Fred) also commented on the practice of clearly establishing and communicating the leader's areas of responsibility; he stated that this clarification will ensure that the staff understands the specific educational and operational functions for which the leader is accountable.

Focus Group

A focus group was conducted to further explore beliefs, values, and practices of African-American male principals in an urban school setting. Five participants, who also participated in individual interviews, responded to additional questions related to leadership approaches, reasons for choosing their vocation, advice for aspiring African-American male principals, and values of effective urban schools. Each participant was given an opportunity to answer each question, but there was no stated obligation to provide a response each during each discussion. Participant numbers for the individual interviews correlate with focus group participant numbers, with the exception of Participant 3 (Marcus), who left the focus group due to an emergency and was unable to contribute to the discussion.

Responses to Focus Group Question 1

Given your beliefs and experiences about urban school leadership, explain

your approach to leadership if you were in a suburban or rural school

district.

Participants 1, 4, and 5 mentioned perspectives regarding the importance of the

community. Participant 1 (James) commented that an understanding of the community

leads to familiarity with the issues the parents face, which could be manifested in the

issues that affect student learning. He mentioned the importance of learning about

circumstances such as rural parents losing jobs to increasing mechanization and

suburban parents seeking additional employment due to tax increases. By learning

about these situations, Participant 1 (James) explained that he would be able to ensure

counseling and other supportive resources, including his own open door, so that

students would be able to address troubling issues and focus on education.

Both Participant 2 (Detrick) and Participant 5 (Keith) spoke of building a

relationship with the community. Participant 2 (Detrick) indicated that he would foster

a relationship of trust by displaying a genuine, caring attitude: "…whatever your

leadership style is, if the staff knows that you care, if the students know you care, the

parents know that you care and employers know that you care, then trust begins."

Participant 5 (Keith) spoke about the needs of students in rural districts and noted that

they would be better served by multiple leaders, in addition to the principal: "We are

only principals and one person in our building, but our children are so needy within our

rural area[s] that it is going to take teachers, community members, [and] churches to help us in this fight for youth."

Participant 4 (Luther) also commented about the community and explained that a principal's leadership is integral to the community and, therefore, a principal's leadership style and image will be recognized. He explained, "…your style of leadership at that building will be a tandem amount to the community….They know you are a take charge kind of guy or lady and know that you are going to be that person to step up…." He also acknowledged that a community's taxes support his salary, which would also be an undercurrent affecting his approach to school leadership in a suburban or rural district.

Participant 2 (Detrick) mentioned the political landscape as a factor influencing his approach to a suburban or rural principalship. He indicated the importance of being aware of "all the different grammars, so to speak, because if you mess around it becomes very political…" Assimilating into a different environment was also discussed by this participant, and he described that the need to navigate carefully was heightened both by his status as a minority and an "outsider": "Everyone knows everyone else and especially coming in as an outsider…you have to really buy the nuance of that district and be able to maneuver that, whereas in urban schools you can kind of like blend in because there is a bunch of us and you have the support there."

Responses to Focus Group Question 2

What practices, beliefs, values, etc. prepare you as an African-American

male to be a successful principal in the urban school?

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Themes of personal responsibility and ownership permeated responses from Participants 1 and 2. Participant 1 (James) described ownership as an integral component of leadership and explained that it gave him "a different outlook of my philosophy of what I would or would not do." He also communicated a strong sense of shared ownership among teachers, parents, and students and stressed that this synergistic approach, rather than the efforts of a single individual, enabled students to learn and succeed.

Participant 2 (Detrick) described his belief in personal responsibility, particularly in the area of decision making. Focusing his decisions on the best interest of the children, he explained that he learned to make decisions and "do things right" for the students so that he maintained a sense of integrity. Revealing a process of professional introspection, he stated, "…as principals and leaders, right or wrong, we are going to have to sleep with ourselves at night and live with what we had to say, whether we blow off our mouths or not."

Participant 4 (Luther) also acknowledged the students as a priority in his beliefs and practices as an African-American urban school leader. In particular, he explained that his goals center on student achievement, but he also echoed Participant 1 (James)'s comments that a team approach is critical for student success. Nevertheless, he acknowledged his image as a leader must still be recognized by others, despite the collective effort: "Sometimes as a team leader you have to step back and let someone take the lead, but ultimately the buck stops with you and everybody should know that."

Participants 5 and 6 discussed human relations practices that prepared them to be successful African-American principals in an urban environment. Participant 5 (Keith) related that he employs a customer service mentality to diffuse "natural human tendencies to be defensive," particularly in his role as disciplinarian. He described balancing students' and parents' emotions as they receive information about disciplinary actions and consequences: "They may not leave happy but they leave comfortable. They leave with a suspension but they leave happy."

Participant 6 (Fred) emphasized consistency and fairness in dealing with parents and students. He explained that these practices help him to establish parents' respect, mainly because his consistency allows them to know "what to expect." He noted that even if parents do not agree with him, they respect him for his fairness and consistency.

Responses to Focus Group Question 3

Why did you become an urban school principal?

Participants 2 and 4 described a sense of identification with the students, based on shared experiences in similar neighborhood and school environments. Participant 2 (Detrick) grew up in the same community as his students and attended the same schools and explained that he experienced the same variety in teacher quality and even similar discomforts with the physical attributes of school buildings. He stated, "We have some teachers that probably should have been sweeping the streets or something as opposed to [being] a teacher. And then we had some teachers that probably should have won a crystal apple every year. We had the same scenarios…where we wanted to walk out because the…school was too cold."   Participant 4 (Luther) discussed his identification

with the adversity that students face and the mistakes they make: "When I was growing up, drinking, smoking, girls, you name it, it was all there. Staying out until 2 or 3 a.m.… not coming home for a couple of days, I was there."

In addition, both Participants 2 and 4 referenced the desire to prepare students for the future or provide an example of someone in their environment who has a professional career. Participant 2 (Detrick) described the choice he made to pursue the urban principalship and give back to students in his community and prepare them for the realities of life after 12th grade: "…we know where life is going to end up. We know that after 12th grade it is real now. We know that there is no one coming to hold your hand walking through." Participant 4 (Luther) discussed his experiences returning home after establishing a career as an educator. His response contains an underlying tenor of possibility and hope for the future that his students as well as friends and family in his hometown can ascertain: "When I go back home, they look at me and say I don't believe you even made it alive, so it can happen."

Participant 5 (Keith) also mentioned possibility and hope as he explained his invitation to the principalship based on his work study experience and relationships with employers. He explained that in developing employer sponsorships and helping students gain employment, he conveys the message to parents and students that "success is possible" and that developing this confidence is part of his purpose: "…we just have to move those barriers out."

Participant 6 (Fred) described a different path to the principalship. Originally pursuing a degree in physical therapy after serving in the military, he was advised to

have a second career option as an alternate. Although he never aspired to the principalship, he enjoyed his career in education and coaching and was eventually recommended for an assistant principal's position: "I got into the option, loved what I was doing, and continued to do it." He explained that his career path was a result of others' recognition of his leadership ability: "You have certain skills that you come up with as a person and those skills are leadership and directions that you send youngsters in, and someone saw that in me and recommended me for the position of going to assistant principal, [and] the rest was mov[ing] right on through my career."

Responses to Focus Group Question 4

What advice would you give an inspiring African-American male who

wants the challenge of becoming a principal in the urban schools?

Several of the participants shared the advice of embracing the challenge and satisfaction of helping students rather than seeking the notoriety or salary that accompanies the principalship. Participant 1 (James) explained that no amount of money compares to the satisfaction principals receive "if [they] do it right." He also stressed that helping others should be candidates' primary motivation and advised, "You should go into it with the desire that I am going in to help others…." Participant 2 (Detrick) shared that the value of the position is measured by the achievements of the students: "…seeing a kid graduate or seeing a kid that's doing better for themselves or going to college or working as police officers, those are rewards right there. It is worth its weight in gold just seeing a kid that overcame all the obstacles and everything else to do it."

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Similarly, Participant 6 (Fred) shared that future principals' aspirations should be based on the desire to prepare future generations and to develop students' independence and productivity. Amidst competing demands of disciplinary and operational roles, this participant stressed that aspiring principals must be focused on students' lives after graduation, insisting, "You have to get these kids ready, get them to think for themselves. Whether they want to go to work, college, military, or even if they sit in their house, sit productive, get the housework done, do something."

Participant 5 (Keith) also responded with advice that reinforced the utilitarian element of the position, particularly in assisting students and staff with problems. In addition to the enjoyable aspects of the job, this participant discussed that aspiring principals should be able to inspire confidence in others through approachability and resourcefulness: "…when someone has a problem, they gotta feel they can come to you." A response such as, "…sit down, what can we do, let's take it step by step" was recommended so that an administrator is seen as a leader who is supportive and involved.

The participants also shared practical advice about image and identity, work/life balance, and prioritization of day-to-day responsibilities. Participant 4 (Luther) indicated that he would advise aspiring African-American male principals of the longevity of the position and the identity associated with the position. He elaborated, "…once you have that position, you are in the community, when you are in church you are the principal. When you are in the grocery store, you are the principal. So you set up an identity that will carry you the rest of your life…." Participant 1 (James)

recognized the personal and professional investment made by principals, and while he described the "selfless" nature of administrators, he also acknowledged, "You must also at the same time not forget that you have a family…." Participant 6 (Fred) revealed that at times, the position can seem reductive and principals' motivation can become clouded by exhaustion and demands that distract administrators from the mission of "preparing future generations." He explained, "…the true challenge of being an African-American principal is remembering what the game is about….You are going to be made to feel like you are just a disciplinarian, being made to feel like you're worthless, made to feel like why am I doing this job some days." He encouraged a continued focus on the future of the students, as he candidly recommended, "Don't fall for the muck, [and] don't fall for the daily operation stuff. You have to get these kids ready…."

Responses to Focus Group Question 5

Now that you had the time to reflect on your interview questions, describe

what you believe to be the most important value of an effective urban

school. Take it from the perspective of an African-American male.

Participants' responses incorporated values centered on purposefulness, adaptability, achievement and success beyond the school environment, and community. Participants 2 and 5 focused on the value of applying lessons and abilities developed during school years throughout the years ahead. By communicating to students that they have value and a sense of ownership of their learning, Participant 5 (Keith) underscores purposefulness as a core value in his urban school. He explained, "One of the things that I have tried to stress at all times is that this is a place of learning and you

come for a purpose. That purpose is that you must have something that you can take from this place that will carry you the rest of your days...." Participant 2 (Detrick) also emphasized the value of student achievements beyond high school as evidence that they have been prepared to successfully negotiate other aspects of life. He noted that this value of achievement engenders confidence and esteem.

Participant 1 (James) also discussed achievement as the most important value in an urban school. Like the others who connected values of an effective urban school to students' accomplishments beyond their school years, Participant 1 (James) related achievement to relationships with employers. He explained that he describes school years to students as an "investment," and the achievements they accomplish pay dividends in establishing a strong reputation for themselves as well as the school.

Participant 5 (Keith) shared the value of proper planning for successful performance. He explained that he emphasized this theme throughout students' four years of high school and described a freshman mentoring system he implemented; this program fostered students' ability to plan while providing them with a supportive resource to help them navigate school experiences as well as personal challenges. In the same vein, Participant 6 (Fred) reflected on an ever-changing society and the need to stay "two steps ahead" in preparing for "the next evolution." As the participant described the value of adaptability in an urban education environment, he discussed that teaching practices must also evolve "to meet the needs of the students and reach out to them."

Participant 4 (Luther) cited the most important value in an effective urban school to be the mission. He clarified that the mission should not be just a "buzz word," but that the school's mission should be its central value. He explained that the central value of his school is inextricably tied to the mission of the entire community and explained that his school determines the culture of the neighborhood; the school's success influences others with the same values and beliefs to live in the community and perpetuate its mission. In describing the symbiotic relationship between school and community, this participant summarized, "So schools will carry out their mission and have a mission that is true to where their community is [and] what the community is about….That will be an effective school for you."

Major Findings

In response to the first research question, "What are the systemic perceptions and myths that you influence as an African-American male principal?" findings revealed participants' views of their influence on two areas of perception: (a) practices and abilities of African-American male school leaders and (b) the inherent motivation of African-American male principals. Themes that emerged regarding actual execution of responsibilities as well as intrinsic motivation were as follows: Participants discussed perceptions of their abilities and practices they influence as African-American male administrators while also describing intrinsic qualities they possess that influence systemic perceptions of the urban school environment.

As participants discussed perceptions of their abilities and practices, a subtheme of racial interaction was presented. This subtheme includes the following elements:

racial affinity with students and the influence of race on interactions with a diverse staff

and community. During the discussion of participants' influence on perceptions and

myths of African-American male principals' motivation, participants revealed a salient

subtheme: humanistic motivation vs. materialistic and egoistic motivation.

Emerging of Research Question One

Racial Affinity with Students

Participants discussed perceptions of their ability to relate to students based on

their race.   Participant 6 (Fred) discussed the prevalence of sending troubled African-

American male students to schools led by African-American males. He explained, "…a

lot of people…try to give us a lot of students who have behavioral disabilities or

students that come from broken homes or no fathers in the home." Participant 3

(Marcus) described his sense of responsibility to "undo the damage" for an increasing

number of African-American males placed in special education classes or who encounter

"lowered standards and no expectations." The researcher also noted that each of the

participants shared a common attitude about taking responsibility of becoming a single

voice for all students. Their tenet is to create a student centered environment that

encourages love for thyself, respect for others and a continued commitment to hope for

the future.

As these participants discussed their practices and attitudes in response to this

perception, they described a sense of responsibility they accepted in working with

students who were assigned to them based on gender and racial affinity. Participant 3

(Marcus) explained his mindset by describing the additional support that African-

American male principals provide to urban youth: "You are going from a system where some kids don't have the supportive system at home, so you have to be all of that." Participant 6 (Fred) illustrated the school environment he creates in order to cultivate respect in his African-American male students: "We are proud to know that this is not a fear factor situation. This is a man working with a young man to let him become a real man."   He nurtures the same sense of self-respect as well as goal orientation in his female students: "…we treat them like our daughters and we teach them about self-respect, about academic success to shatter that glass."

On the other hand, Participants 4 and 1 expressed a sense of cautiousness and heightened awareness of their treatment of African-American students because of the perception that African-American male administrators are more likely to "take it easy" (Participant 4 (Luther)) on African-American students or be "more lenient" (Participant 1 (James)) on them. Participant 1 (James) noted this perception to be more predominant when addressing disciplinary matters. Because of this perception, a heightened awareness was described to ensure equitable treatment of all students. Participant 4 (Luther) commented, "…it just goes back to being consistent and fair…."

The Influence of Race on Interactions with a Diverse Staff and Community

Participants 5 and 2 described perceptions and myths about African-American male principals' ability to interact with individuals of other ethnic backgrounds, especially Whites. Participant 5 (Keith) related his experience with mistrust from white parents based on a perception that he might behave flirtatiously with their daughters. As the administrator, he ultimately interacts with almost everyone who has a concern

about the school or the students, but he explained that he allows individuals to speak to the person of their preference in an initial interaction. He stated, "We have found that it is best not to try to battle with those fears and mistrusts. It is best to let them talk to who[m]ever and then we will deal with it." Participant 2 (Detrick) mentioned the perception that African-American male principals lack skills to be great leaders, "particularly in mixed staff." He explained that he counters this perception with fairness and honesty toward everyone and explained that with this approach, "you tend to get the best of it."

Participant 6 (Fred) also addressed this effort to maintain a harmonious environment in a diverse workplace and mentioned media portrayal of African-Americans as "aggressive…you know whatever the media portrays us to be right now." This participant described efforts to "make an environment where everyone can get along" and stated, "…I know how hostile the environment can become, not just education, but any workplace with African-Americans." His efforts seemed to include overcompensation through work ethic: "…you know we work twice as hard, twice as fast, you try to work in a way that you can still create an atmosphere of respect for one another."

Humanistic Motivation vs. Materialistic and Egoistic Motivation

In addition to myths and perceptions regarding their practices and abilities as African-American male principals in an urban school environment, the participants discussed perceptions of administrators' motivation to pursue the principalship. Several participants, either in individual interviews or the focus group discussion, acknowledged

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that salary and title are seen as motivators for those who aspire to the principalship.

During the focus group discussion, Participant 1 (James) stated, "…you should not go

into it for the position." Similarly, Participant 3 (Marcus) discussed the need to dispel

the myth of materialistic motivation by conveying that "you really actually care for

students and that you are here to make them achieve…." Participants 1 and 2

concurred with this sentiment and provided a description of a more humanistic

motivation. Participant 1 (James) asserted, "You should go into it with the desire that I

am going in to help others." Participant 2 (Detrick) described the position as a "reward"

without "Bill Gates' money" or "a Rolls Royce" and explained that witnessing students

overcoming obstacles, graduating, attending college, and "doing better for themselves"

is "worth its weight in gold." General conversations highlighted the respect for the

principal position as a means to live a culturally rich life whereby, also enjoying an upper

standard of living.

Emerging Themes from Research Question Two

In addition to discussing their influence on systemic perceptions and myths, the

participants also provided insight into their own belief systems in response to the

second research question: "What are some of the belief systems held by African-

American male principals in school leadership positions that impact the success of the

educational environment in urban schools?", Participants agreed that commitment,

involvement, student capability, and authenticity are the prominent paradigm of

exigency. This is supported by Blasé and Anderson's (1995) findings, with honesty,

mutual respect, and fairness, open communication, being committed and dependable as

being identified as essential characteristics of effective principal leaders. Consistent with

Blasé' and Anderson's research, individual responses as well as the focus group

discussion revealed motifs of commitment and involvement, student capability, and

authenticity.

The participants' comments on commitment and involvement reflected a

subtheme of collectivism, as multiple responses underscored the importance of the

collaborative involvement of parents, family, staff, and community. Participants'

discussion of students' ability to learn revealed a subtle subtheme of tension between

African-American male principals' belief in students' value and capability and students'

attitude of "excuses" based on race or socioeconomic status. Finally, as participants

described their beliefs about authenticity, two compelling subthemes emerged as

outcomes of administrators' genuineness: (a) student, parent, and staff motivation and

(b) a sense of trust that enhances relationships within the school as well as with

community stakeholders.

Collective Involvement

Participants who expressed the belief that involvement and commitment impact the

success of an urban educational environment emphasized the importance of a *collective*

commitment. Participant 2 (Detrick) explained that urban schools need "a total

commitment of all" and stated that both community and staff involvement were critical

to his evening communication sessions with parents at a local church and YMCA. This

participant also described the necessity of commitment throughout the school to

establish a viable educational culture. Describing a series of meetings that the entire

staff had with students at his school, Participant 2 (Detrick) explained that a support network was established throughout the building that required "commitment from everyone." He affirmed that commitment "starts with the students and goes to teachers and…the administrator and the custodial staff."

Similar to Participant 2 (Detrick)'s discussion of community involvement, Participant 1 (James) also mentioned the importance of churches and other organizations. However, he stated that the involvement must be purposeful and that any community group associated with the school must offer resources or programs that meet the needs of the students. He explained that "checks and balances" are needed to ensure that external programs support the students academically and socially. This participant reinforced his beliefs during the focus group session as he described collective ownership of the educational process: …everybody had a part of this whole picture of education. It wasn't just one person. So together working with all those parts together we can be successful."

Participant 4 (Luther) spoke of his belief in parental and family involvement as a critical element of a successful urban education environment. While he acknowledged the difficulty of parental involvement due to the predominance of single-parent families, he staunchly supported his conviction that family involvement or parental engagement "is the backbone of successful…urban schools." This participant also commented in the focus group discussion that the collective effort of a team is extremely important to student achievement.

African-American Male Principals' Belief in Students' Value and Capability vs.

Students' Attitude of "Excuses" Based on Race or Socioeconomic Status

While the commitment and involvement of parents, families, and external

community organizations was presented as a strong core belief, the belief in each

individual student's capability was also prevalent in the participants' responses.

Participant 3 (Marcus) stated that "everyone is capable of learning" and "every student

is educable in something."   Participant 1 (James) also expressed the belief that all

students can learn; however, his belief system includes the caveat that some students'

learning achievements do not correspond with their ability levels because they make

"excuses."   He mentioned excuses relating to racial prejudice, societal or systemic

inequities, and family structure: "I believe our kids have excuses whether it is Whites

doing this, whether society is doing this to him, whether they came from a single parent

home or anything of that nature happens…."

Participant 2 (Detrick)'s response also included comments about students'

attitudes along with his belief in their capabilities. Concurring with Participants 3 and 1,

he stated that "all youngsters can learn" and reinforced Participant 1 (James)'s remarks

about the influence of students' mindsets on their educational accomplishments: "If the

children come with the attitude that they want to learn then they will learn."

Referencing Participant 1 (James)'s belief that students' "excuses" impede their

learning, Participant 2 (Detrick) addressed the issue of race directly: "There is nothing

about the color of your skin as being a factor."

Participant 4 (Luther) made similar comments about students' ability to learn and added his belief about their desire to learn: "the majority of kids want to learn." He also discussed his beliefs about the communication style and instructional approach that is most compatible with this desire to learn: "…they want to be told what to do in a positive way." This participant's comments not only reflected beliefs about students' capabilities, but his remarks also revealed an underlying perception about each student's inherent value: "I strongly believe that every kid is worthwhile of an education."

Urban student, parent, and staff motivation as a Result of African-American Male Principals' Authenticity

Participant 4 (Luther)'s assertion of each student's significance and value conveyed his belief in the importance of caring and authenticity, qualities that were presented in the belief systems of several other participants as well. Participant 5 (Keith) described the efforts of students, parents, and staff that result from an understanding that the administrator genuinely cares about the success of the students and the school. He explained, "I think students and parents, everybody will walk a mile for you if they think you care." Similarly, Participant 3 (Marcus) shared an example of a student staying up late to finish assignments because the principal expressed an interest in him. This illustration poignantly described the influence of a caring administrator as this participant revealed, "If they know you care about them you already pricked their hearts and once you prick their hearts, you can get them to do anything you want them to."

A Sense of Trust and Enhanced Relationships in the Urban School and Community as a

Result of African-American Male Principals' Authenticity

Beyond the extra effort from students, parents, and even staff in response to a

caring administrator, Participant 5 (Keith) described the sense of trust instilled in an

urban school community by an African-American male administrator who demonstrates

genuine concern: "…if you care they will trust you. If they trust you they will move

forward. So I think caring is very important for urban schools." Participant 2 (Detrick)

echoed this response during the focus group session and added that a caring

administrator also inspires trust in employers. In addition to his comments about each

student's worth and importance, Participant 4 (Luther) noted that an administrator's

authenticity engenders respectful interactions and relationships with students: "I think

once you get across to them that you do care about their success….there is a mutual

respect that is formed and worthwhile relationships are gained through that."

Emerging Themes to Research Question Three

Whereas responses to the second research question revealed belief systems

containing emotionally intelligent themes such as compassion and authenticity, belief in

each student's potential, and facilitating collaborative involvement of internal and

external resources, responses to the third research question focused more closely on

the participants' identities and images as African-American male urban school

administrators. Messages of strength, paternalism, balance, consistency, and fairness

resounded in response to the question "What are some of the practices exhibited by

African-American male principals in school leadership positions that foster an effective

educational environment in an urban school?" Themes brought forth responses that disclosed the participants' insight into emotionally intelligent behaviors associated with their images and identities as African-American male urban school leaders.

In describing his interaction with students, Participant 6 (Fred) stated that he and his staff "demand respect" from African-American boys and that they teach "young ladies" about "self respect." The practice of teaching respect indicates deference to authority as well as an inner strength that an African-American male administrator could not successfully impart if he did not possess it himself. Participant 3 (Marcus) also commented that a stern demeanor and strong actions are critical to the success of an urban school environment: "We are to be strong in our decisions, strong in what we do and how we respond to situations…." He also recommended that African-American male principals "go in tough and ease up" because it is very difficult to "clamp down" later. This participant explained that the image of a strong African-American male was a part of his upbringing, and that African-American students need and deserve this type of leadership. He explained that not providing strong leadership behavior and decision making for students would portray him as "less a man as an African-American principal to give them any less than that."

The image of a strong African-American male was also connected to the identity of a role model and a father figure for two of the participants. Participant 3 (Marcus) stated, "So I think that one of the things that we bring is a strong father figure….very few of us are in this field, in these positions and so we serve as role models." This participant also described the influence that his father figure role has on his practices:

"We have to be in control of the family so I treat this building, my schools, everywhere I have been, even as a teacher that it is my domain, I run this and kids respect that." His description of casual, familial endearments that his students bestow upon him underscores the depth of responsibility that an African-American male urban school principal has for his students. His practices actually range far beyond a purely administrative role: "Students walk around the halls and call you 'dad,' 'uncle' and claim you as a family member. You are not related to them but they know you have expectations for them." Participant 4 (Luther) also commented that his practices centered on being a role model and leading by example. He discussed the importance of consistently exposing students to professional behavior as he explained, "Kids of color seeing you in your position not being unprofessional, just maintaining your professionalism at all times. Being that role model that you need to be for them is definitely an effective strategy…."

In addition to practices that distinguished themselves as role models for their students, several participants also described habits that reflect the multifaceted nature of the African-American male's role as an urban school leader. Participant 1 (James) discussed the need to establish relationships with the community as well as with the student body, which supports Participant 4 (Luther)'s comments in the focus group discussion regarding the strong link between the community and the school. In his interactions with students, Participant 1 (James) also explained his effort to balance academic and social elements of the educational environment, particularly in reinforcing behavioral or disciplinary expectations. Beyond enforcing rules and consequences for

behavior, Participant 1 (James) described discussions with students to coach them about socially appropriate behavior to help them understand the "rationale" behind acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Participant 5 (Keith) also discussed the practice of balancing multiple responsibilities to foster an effective educational environment. In the course of his interview, he described a disciplinary role, his role as the leader of the entire vocational school (including a separate job placement department), his role as a facilitator of leadership and anger management training sessions, and his role as the coordinator of a school-wide annual community service project to support a local food bank. He commented, "I wear a lot of different hats and…I have to be all inclusive." In his individual interview, Participant 4 (Luther) repeated the same phrase as he commented that a principal must "wear a lot of hats." He also described the level of knowledge that informs the variety of practices required of today's African-American male principals and made specific mention of instructional knowledge. He explained that a principal has to be "an instructional leader," and commented, "…you have to make the teachers aware that you are accountable for their teaching expectations and strategy in the classrooms."

The practice of balancing the all-inclusive responsibilities of the principalship also seems connected to the participants' practices of fairness and consistency. These elements were also mentioned frequently throughout individual interviews and the focus group discussion as habits that foster an effective urban educational environment. Integrity was the overarching response to this question. The collective voice of the

participants insisted that as leaders they should inflate honor regardless of challenges that are faced daily. Participant 4 (Luther) described a constant focus on making consistent, fair decisions despite "outside influences," "inside influences," and "political factors." This consistency and fairness seemed especially pertinent to his daily interactions with the "different personalities" of students, parents, and teachers. Similarly, in the focus group discussion, Participant 6 (Fred) commented about the importance of being "consistent and fair in your dealings," particularly with parents, who will "respect" consistency and fairness because they "know what to expect."

Participant 3 (Marcus) noted that African-American male principals must be consistent and fair, but they must also recognize and allow for extenuating circumstances and avoid an inflexible, sweeping approach to all situations. He cited an example of discovering that a student was disruptive in class because he had not slept the night before; he allowed him to sleep in the nurse's office and even offered his own office to the student, but he also reinforced the expectation that the student was to return to class and focus on his educational responsibilities once he awoke. An element of consistent and fair practices that Participant 3 (Marcus) illuminated, then, was a temporary allowance for an individual circumstance with an automatic reinstatement of regularly communicated expectations once the issue is managed.

Participant 2 (Detrick) expressed consistency in routine behavior as opposed to decision making (Participant 4 (Luther)) and expectations (Participant 3 (Marcus)). He explained that he makes a point of standing at the door and greeting all of his students in the morning. He allowed that he is unable to interact personally with each student

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through this approach, but he explained that he felt it was important for them to hear

someone saying "good morning" to them and "being interested in what they did" by

asking questions such as, "Did you get your homework done?" At the end of the day,

Participant 2 (Detrick) repeats the practice to reinforce his interest in the students'

experiences that day, asking them, "What did [you] do?" and "How was [your] day?"

Although unstated, this participant's practices seem to overlap with the father figure

role described by Participant 3 (Marcus); his comments about "totally showing

compassion" through his daily greeting and departure routine mirror the caring,

authentic elements of belief systems expressed by Participants 4 and 5.

Emerging Beliefs from Research Question Four

In describing their influence on systemic perceptions and myths, their belief

systems that influence the success of their respective urban educational environments,

and the practices to which they attribute the effectiveness of their urban school

settings, the participants provided current perspectives on the final research question:

"How do African-American male principals in school leadership positions influence the

deep-rooted beliefs of leadership in the urban educational setting?" Responses

throughout the individual interviews and focus group session offer data that is

consistent with the literature review while underscoring the broad scope of the African-

American male principal's mission in the urban school environment.

Deep-Rooted Belief of Urban Educational Leadership Number 1

Urban school leaders must address broader social and systemic issues

that affect student education and performance.

As noted in Chapter 2, Madsen and Mabokela (2002) promote the inclusion of "social, racial, and cultural issues that are outside organizational boundaries" in the study of educational leadership because of the effect on "leader-member interaction inside the organization" (p.37). Dantley's (2005) contention that schools serving urban, Latino, and African-American children call for leadership that "not only stresses academic achievement but also does so within the purposeful content of inevitable social change and critical democratic citizenry. (p. 652).

Data from the participants also reflect leadership orientations that heed this appeal for approaches that are broader in scope and consider urban children's education more holistically. Participant 3 (Marcus), for example, describes the responsibility of being "up against a system that has typically failed black males" and explains the extra care he takes in being "ever so cognizant…in making sure you are trying to do the right things at all times." Consistent with the concept of homophyly cited by Lomotey (1987, p. 175), Participant 6 (Fred) reflected on the concentration of African-American male students without fathers in the home or who have "behavioral disabilities" that are sent to schools led by African-American males. This participant also described a "snowballing" effect of teen pregnancy and school readiness in urban communities, which affects his instructional leadership at the secondary level because some students are "years behind, because of what did not take place in the beginning."

Participants 2 and 5 also discussed that meeting the broader needs of their students has informed their leadership styles. Participant 2 (Detrick) creates a solid infrastructure of support for students by involving his entire staff in developing

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relationships with students so that they are comfortable in approaching staff with issues

outside the school that affect their educational performance. Participant 5 (Keith)

described his school's emphasis on healthy practices, such as providing students with

snacks if they have not eaten breakfast, involving the entire school in "walking meters,"

and discussing substance abuse assistance available through the school. For this

participant, "getting the job done" means infusing a holistic approach to the health of

his students into his leadership practice, as he explained, "…that is why we go to that

mental aspect, nutritional, physically fit and chemical free. You are [drug] tested a lot.

In a lot of urban situations a lot of our kids gotta know that."

Participants 3 and 6 discussed the applicability of concepts such as participation

in a democracy and social evolution to their leadership practices in an urban educational

environment. Participant 3 (Marcus) linked students' participation in a democratic

society with his belief that all of his students have talents and the ability to "be a good

citizen and a contributing citizen to this democracy…." To prepare his students for their

responsibilities as citizens, he promotes critical thinking and "investigation" as

components of his instructional leadership. During the focus group discussion,

Participant 6 (Fred) discussed the need for educational leadership to "stay two steps

ahead" of a constantly evolving society and noted that "a lot of times we fall short in

this area." Describing the impact of society's evolution on his instructional leadership,

he stressed that teaching practices must evolve accordingly and that his leadership will

promote more proactive approaches on the part of teachers themselves as he

explained, "Teachers are going to have to…meet the needs of the students and reach out to them."

Deep-Rooted Belief of Leadership in the Urban Educational Setting Number 2

Successful urban school leaders employ an integrated leadership style.

The literature review in Chapter 2 describes a review of empirical studies by Leithwood and his colleagues on transformational leadership in the public schools with the conclusion "beyond a reasonable doubt" that transformational leadership contributes to organizational improvement/effectiveness, teachers' perceptions of student outcomes, and organizational climate and culture" (p. 833). Chemers' contingency approach to leadership presents the effect of "different kinds of (leader) behaviors or strategies on group outcomes" based on "situational parameters" (p. 302).

Responses from the participants reflect elements of transformational leadership, particularly those of enlisting support for a unifying organizational mission or vision and nurturing a positive organizational culture. Participant 2 (Detrick) discussed creating a culture at his school by communicating his belief in collective ownership and that "the school was a part of the home." He communicated a sense of ownership to the students, explaining, "I taught my students that the school was theirs." Conveying a similar message to the staff, he announced to them, "This is not a place where you work; this is your home away from home." Participant 4 (Luther)'s recognition that urban schools exist in communities, not in a "vacuum" also reflects the unification and shared vision of the transformational leadership model. In the focus group discussion, he discussed that a school's mission should include "bringing in a community, which

should include the achievement and values of every student across the stage." He

described an effective school as one in which the mission "is true to where their

community is" and "what the community is about." Participant 3 (Marcus) also shared

the importance of a shared vision that he endeavors to instill in his students: a belief in

themselves. He explained the impact that this shared belief has on an urban school's

culture: "If you change that culture by your belief and get to the very heart of them, to

me I believe that is the heart of success of urban schools."

Data from the participants also support the need for different leadership

behaviors based on "situational parameters" (Chemers, 1993, p. 302). Interview

responses from Participant 6 (Fred) reflect his efforts to create an "atmosphere of

respect for one another" in a diverse work environment, as he acknowledged the

potential for hostility in "any workplace with African-Americans" influenced by

inaccurate and stereotypical presentations by the media. He described the challenge of

establishing accountability and responsibility in his leadership role while maintaining

equilibrium in relationships with his staff: "Sometimes you have to let them know that

this is my responsibility, I am the one being held accountable for it. Trying to do it is a

fine line, it is a walk along thin ice, trying to get them to have a cultural respect and let

some things go and give them support."

Participant 5 (Keith) explained in the focus group discussion that he must

frequently adjust to parental dispositions and situations in students' home lives when

interacting with them for disciplinary reasons. He elaborated, "…they may be coming to

me with 'my gas is cut off,' 'my other son is in juvenile hall,' whatever, 'and now you call

me about this kid. You know I'm at my wits' end.'" He described his effort to be

successful with "making a person come in and leave comfortable" despite receiving

upsetting information that tends to put them on the "defensive." Participant 3

(Marcus)'s anecdote about the disruptive student who hadn't had any sleep also

exemplifies the significance of the contingency model in urban school leadership. He

specifically stated that although consistency and fairness are necessary for effective

leadership, he also acknowledged, "I think that we look at each situation different and

not just one big brush stroke that suits everybody."

Participant 2 (Detrick)'s practice of setting up evening sessions for parents at

local community venues also illustrates the contingency model in the management of

available resources. This participant explained that coordination of external resources

was a key to maintaining communication with parents because of their work schedules,

another contingency that significantly impacts school and home communication,

particularly for single-parent families. Utilizing two different locations to accommodate

parents residing on the east and west sides of Cleveland addressed the geographic

circumstances that affected home-school communication, as Participant 2 (Detrick)

accounted for east side families whose children were bused to the west side school.

Deep-Rooted Belief of Leadership in the Urban Educational Setting Number 3

Successful urban school leaders embrace the dualism of bureaucrat-

administrator and ethno-humanist roles.

The literature review in Chapter 2 details Lomotey's process of establishing

functions associated with bureaucrat-administrator and ethno-humanist roles. He

reported in a study originating in 1989 that two of the participants, both African-American male urban school leaders, "often moved back and forth between these two identities" (Lomotey, 1993, p. 399). Deriving functions of the bureaucrat-administrator role from the works of Chester Barnard and Philip Selznik, he identified four facets of this leadership role: (a) development of goals, (b) energy harnessing, (c) two-way communication facilitation, and (d) instructional management. Studying commonalities of leadership among a total of three African-American principals in the 1989 study, he established qualities that he attributed to an ethno-humanist role: (a) commitment to the education of African-American children; (b) compassion for and understanding of African-American children and their communities; and (c) confidence in the educability of African-American children (Lomotey, 1989).

The participants of this study described beliefs, values, and practices that demonstrated the fluid movement between bureaucrat-administrator and ethno-humanist roles. Participant 6 (Fred) discussed the goal of African-American male urban administrators to prepare students for life after high school as he explained during the focus group session, "The true role for us is to prepare our future generations to take our place." He described a "culture of ambition" as an element of a healthy urban educational environment. In addition to the goal-oriented aspect of his leadership role, he also described ethno-humanist sensibilities in referring to his ability to relate to his students because of his younger age: "…being young and African-American we are not so far away from them. …We listen to the same music, we go to the same stores, and we dress the same way."

Participant 2 (Detrick) related his emphasis on two-way communication as well as energy harnessing by facilitating the development of relationships with his staff and students at the beginning of the school year. He explained the comfort the students had in communicating with him because of his approachability: "So they come to me, talk to me, and share things with me…." This participant reflected ethno-humanist attributes as well, particularly in his comments regarding his commitment to his job and to the children at his school as he affirmed, "…a child is a whole child and this child is not just yours for one year or two years, but you influence that child and he will carry that for the rest of his life."

Participant 5 (Keith) described bureaucrat-administrator functions such as energy harnessing through his school's community service project for the food bank and a "learn by doing" approach to instructional management. This participant described a goal of developing students' self-sufficiency and independence, noting the tendency of minority students to "want you to give them the answer."   This administrator empowers students to learn from their mistakes and their own efforts, as he insists to students, "…we are not going to be there to give you the answer to work for this guy here. You gotta do it; you gotta try." From an ethno-humanist perspective, Participant 6 (Fred)'s emphasis on caring and trusting relationships with parents, students, and employers demonstrates his compassion and commitment to the education and success of African-American students.

As with all of the study's participants, Participant 4 (Luther) seemed to employ facets of both bureaucratic-administrative and ethno-humanist roles. He described

instructional management functions that emphasize his accountability for setting

expectations for teachers. Ultimately, he explained that "holding everyone accountable

for what takes place in your building goes a long way." His belief in the educability of

African-American students and acceptance of the responsibility of being a role model

for his students are hallmarks of the ethno-humanist role.

As an instructional manager, Participant 3 (Marcus) explained that he promotes

structure as well as inquiry-based learning as opposed to worksheets and lectures.

Throughout his interview, he referenced the need for more frequent and accurate

diagnostic approaches for learning disabilities and sharply criticized a "system" that

allows a predominance of African-American males in special education classes without

investigating it.   In valuing hands-on learning activities for African-American students,

Participant 3 (Marcus) also spoke of eradicating the perception that these students are

"unruly" when their suburban counterparts are perceived as "just exploring."   He

explained that the impulse to "slam" an urban student in a special education classroom

for a "precocious" nature that is inherent in African-American children "takes the fire

out" students and "takes the desire for learning away." Even though the instructional

management function is included in the bureaucratic-administrator role, Participant 3

(Marcus)'s responses also reveal strong ethno-humanist inclinations in his impassioned

commitment to the education of African-American children. His compassion for African-

American students and his confidence in their potential are exemplified by his

statement that "every student is educable in something" and his desire to "prick their

hearts" and inspire students to believe in themselves.

Finally, Participant 1 (James) referenced the dualism of bureaucratic-administrator and ethno-humanist roles in his individual interview as well as the focus group session. In the group discussion, he described his approach to two-way communication by explaining that if relocated to another district, he would learn about the students in his community through the issues their parents faced (e.g., job loss, property tax increases). In addition to ensuring adequate counseling staff support, he stated an open-door policy to give students "a person to go to." This participant also described a strong ability to harness the energy of teachers, parents, and students so that "everybody ha[s] a part of this whole picture of education…together working with all those parts together we can be successful." Participant 1 (James) revealed ethno-humanist facets of his leadership role by discussing his understanding of the community in which most of his students live as well as the predominant single-parent family structure: "I was born in the inner city so I do relate to that aspect for a single-parent home and the problems their kids are having." Because of his upbringing, he expressed a particular sensitivity to the academic issues African-American urban students might face in preparing for aptitude tests and college entrance exams: "Growing up in an urban society, I knew that my parents were not able to help me with ACT scores and they were not helping me with any kind of entrance exam. I can relate to where these kids are coming from." Despite these challenges, he emphatically stated in his individual interview, "I believe all students can learn."

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to summarize data from the participants and present the thematic findings that answered the research questions. In response to the first research question, "What are the systemic perceptions and myths that you influence as an African-American male principal?" Findings revealed participants' views of their influence on two areas of perception: (a) practices and abilities of African-American male school leaders and (b) the inherent motivation of African-American male principals.

In response to the second research question, "What are some of the belief systems held by African-American male principals in school leadership positions that impact the success of the educational environment in urban schools?" the participants revealed belief systems containing central themes of commitment and involvement, student capability, and authenticity.

The third research question, "What are some of the practices exhibited by African-American male principals in school leadership positions that foster an effective educational environment in an urban school?" brought forth responses that disclosed the participants' insight into emotionally intelligent behaviors associated with their images and identities as African-American male urban school leaders.

Responses to the final research question, "How do African-American male principals in school leadership positions influence the deep-rooted beliefs of leadership in the urban educational setting?" synthesized interview responses and comments shared throughout the study and offered data congruent with the literature review

while calling attention to the all-encompassing capacity of the African-American male

principal's function and mission in the urban school environment.

The subsequent chapter will present conclusions derived from the research,

offer recommendations for application of the findings and suggest opportunities for

further research.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss findings that originated from the research study. Recommendations for practice and suggestions for accurate research will be made.

It appears that a successful African-American male urban school principals influence systemic perceptions of the urban educational environment through their practices and motivation. Interview and focus group discussions revealed that a large number of African-American male students, particularly those coming from broken homes and those with behavioral challenges, are placed in schools with African-American male principals simply based on the perception that ethnically congruent leadership will best serve these students. Data from the participants suggests that African-American urban male school leaders relate to these students not necessarily because they share a common race, but because they have a lived experience of the plights and struggles consistent with the students' upbringing and environment.

The study also determined that African-American male urban principals influence the perception of their aspirations to the principalship. It is often assumed that African-American male principals pursue school leadership positions primarily for financial gain. However, participants' responses consistently reflected the passion and desire to improve students' quality of life; they remarked that witnessing the progress of students in an urban environment was the consummate reward to which no monetary value could be attributed.

With respect to belief systems that impact the success of an urban educational environment, the participants discussed the importance of beliefs centered on community involvement and commitment, student capability, and the authenticity of their leadership approach. Research participants indicated that involvement of staff and parents as well as churches and community organizations offer resources that help to establish a more inclusive school setting, particularly because the entrenchment of urban schools in neighborhoods results in the reflection of the beliefs and values of the entire community.

Commitment, another belief strongly supported by the participants, was also described as inclusive and mandatory for success in building a culture that is community-centered, school-centered, and education-centered. Discussion in individual interviews and the focus group session reiterated the need for a shared commitment by everyone invested in student success, whether they were immediate or extended family members, church leaders, or other community stakeholders.

Participants' belief systems also incorporated caring and genuineness as essential to establishing an effective rapport with students. These attributes inspire trust from students, parents, staff, and even employers because once they determine the principal's sincerity; they become more willing to accept his leadership.

Finally, research findings also conveyed the participants' beliefs about student capability and potential. Emphatic responses on this topic were consistent that all students can learn.

Findings related to the practices of African-American male urban school leaders emphasized strength, paternalism, balance, consistency, and fairness. Participants linked these practices to their identities and images, particularly in their descriptions of firm decision making and mentoring students to develop purposeful and productive relationships. Associated with this practice is the paternalistic mien with which they interact with students and the responsibility they accept as a role model for students.

The participants' practices also encompass a broad range of responsibilities to balance, including their day-to-day operational routine, instructional management, behavioral dynamics, and political navigation. They were adamant that leadership practices in an urban environment must incorporate a fair approach to daily decision making and interactions with all constituents to ensure that all decisions are made for the best interest of the students. They described a strong focus on consistency in their practices to maintain a positive school climate by creating a routine that establishes stability and a shared understanding of expectations.

In recognizing the deep-rooted beliefs of urban educational leadership, three fundamental influences were established from the participants' responses. First, urban school leaders address broader social and systemic issues that affect student education and performance. Urban students come to school with a myriad of issues and distinct challenges that may be unlike their suburban counterparts' and must be addressed daily. These challenges demand that the principal be sympathetic, creative, and confident as they provide guidance to these students. The participants alluded to meeting the needs of the students through a more holistic approach by acknowledging issues such as health risks, fragmented family structures, and safety concerns that ultimately impact educational performance.

Aligned with addressing broader, systemic issues affecting student performance, participants' responses described a second fundamental influence on the deep-rooted belief that leadership in the urban setting must include a contingency approach that acknowledges students' social, economic, and behavioral risk factors. African-American male school leaders in this study communicated incidents in which they addressed hunger, lack of sleep, and substance abuse issues that, although external to the specific educational function of the school, were integral to the students' ability to function academically.

Findings supporting the need for African-American male principals to address broader systemic issues with a contingency approach to urban school leadership culminated in the discovery that these leaders embrace a dualism of bureaucrat-administrator and ethno-humanist roles. Participants described strong goal orientation

in preparing students for life after high school as well as bureaucratic-administrative practices involving energy harnessing, two-way communication, and instructional management. To balance these practices, participants also described beliefs and practices consistent with an ethno-humanist role: they emphatically communicated their belief in the educability of all students, they described an understanding of and compassion for African-American students and their communities by relating to their family structure and urban lifestyle, and they discussed an unwavering commitment to the education of African-American students despite the systemic inequities they face.

Implications

This study's implications highlight three areas of consideration:

1. Apparently, Social and systemic issues severely distract African-American male urban school leaders from a singular educational focus.

2. Although only indirectly addressed in the interviews, African-American male urban school leaders may be "dying breed." A focus needs to be directed toward recruiting and developing more African – American male principals.

3. It appears that self identity of African-American male principals in an urban environment significantly contradicts the historical perception that they are "lesser leaders."

4. Attention needs to be directed to the critical dual role of an African – American male principal. He must both manage the school while also serving as a role model for African – American youth.

Study participants provided a wealth of data that support their experience in helping students overcome social, behavioral and emotional obstacles that are, essentially, distractions from the educational purpose. These are clearly important concerns that students need to address before they are able to truly focus on academic achievement. However, the urban educational system has increased its reliance on African-American male school leaders to remedy these issues, mainly because of the gender and racial connection they have to troubled African-American male students. Despite the fact that the primary focus of education will always be on academics, very few details about academic development or specific educational leadership approaches were provided by participants in response to questions related to belief systems and practices that they influence as urban school leaders.

African-American male urban school leaders would be better served by an increase in staff dedicated to social services, counseling support, behavioral health, and parental outreach. These resources would allow the principal to concentrate more time on the primary mission of being an instructional leader.

Regardless of the solutions that are implemented to increase opportunities for African-American male urban school leaders to focus on academics, the shrinking number of African-American males aspiring to the principalship is creating a void that will sharply reduce exposure to strong African-American male role models. Study participants acknowledged that African-American urban male principals are a dying breed and suggested that considerable attention be given to recruiting and hiring African-American male candidates who are truly qualified to lead urban schools.

To increase the number of qualified African-American male candidates, districts need to forge stronger partnerships with college and university administrative leadership programs, including those at historically Black learning institutions. A key component for preparing aspiring African-American male principals is a thorough immersion in both bureaucrat-administrator and ethno-humanist roles. Preparation should consist of fully understanding the role of an instructional leader as well as learning approaches to harnessing energy of staff, parents, and community members, facilitating two-way communication, and setting educational goals. In addition, administrative leadership programs should also include guidance and mentoring to cultivate attributes of an ethno-humanist role, including a commitment to the education of all children, compassion for and understanding of a diverse population of students and their communities, and confidence in the educability of all students.

Contrary to research stating that African-American males have been considered "lesser leaders" and lack the capacity to be as effective as their European American counterparts, findings from this study actually reveal that African-American male urban school leaders have adapted to responsibilities that are much more comprehensive and range far beyond the traditional functions of a school administrator. In fact, they have embraced the call to be strong decision makers, role models, big brothers, and even father figures to ensure that urban students receive the support they need to be successful. This study's participants cited numerous times the need to "wear many hats" and balance many school and community-related matters to meet students' needs (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Recommendations

1.   This study concentrated on African-American male urban principals. A
     similar study should be done to address the African-American female
     urban principal and the impact her values, beliefs and practices have on
     her leadership.

2.   This study concentrated on African-American male principals and the
     impact their beliefs, values, and practices have on their leadership in one
     state. A comparative study should be done from a multitude of states to
     get broader understanding from this research.

3.   A similar study should be used to understand how beliefs, values and
     practices affect the European principal in the urban school. This study
     should be combined with those of the African-American principal to
     better understand the impact of leadership from both perspectives.

4.   A researcher should initiate a study that determines how principals of
     rural and suburban districts view their leadership approach and compare
     the findings to the findings of that from urban districts.

5.   In-depth portraits of successful urban principals should be developed.
     These could include a psychological profile expositing reasons that
     explain the longevity in positions by many of these urban educators, a
     circumstance that, given the assumptions of serving urban students,
     seems counterintuitive.

6.   A researcher should initiate a study that captures the perspectives of

       African-American students on African-American male and/or female

       urban school leadership.

7.   A longitudinal study that captures the assimilation process of African-

       American males who are new to the principalship may provide insight

       into the development of leadership skills in an urban school environment

       that would be of value to college and university school leadership

       preparation programs.

8.   Research on African-American male urban principals in single-gender

       schools may uncover additional findings related to students' academic,

       social, and behavioral development.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss conclusions derived from the research

findings of this study, present recommendations for practice, and to suggest avenues for

further research. These conclusions and recommendations represent an appropriate

culmination of this research endeavor, which was to examine the leadership practices of

African-American male principals.

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