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Distinguished, Endowed, and Underrepresented: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education

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**DISTINGUISHED, ENDOWED, AND UNDERREPRESENTED:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT
AMONG EXPERT BLACK SCHOLARS IN EDUCATION**

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Keisha Marie Baylor

December 2017

DISTINGUISHED, ENDOWED, AND UNDERREPRESENTED:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT
AMONG EXPERT BLACK SCHOLARS IN EDUCATION

This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Keisha Marie Baylor

Approved by the Committee, December 2017

Committee Chair

Dr. Jennifer Riedl Cross, The College of William and Mary

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Dr. James L. Moore III, The Ohio State University

Dedication

This dissertation is offered as the first-fruits of my academic scholarship. I intend to continue to use the gifts and talents God has given me to fulfill His plan and purpose for my life. I dedicate the content of this book to my maternal grandmother, who left this life before seeing my goal come to fruition. Your love, support, and indelible influence on my life is evidence that a beautiful life lends a beautiful legacy. I miss you, and I aim to continue to make you proud.

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professionally and learn everything I can about gifted and talented education ever since. I sincerely want to thank each and every educator throughout my K-12 matriculation. Each one inspired me to be more, do more, and work tirelessly to realize my academic goals to assume the title of lifelong learner. I am forever grateful to those who demonstrated excellence in teaching and moral character to motivate me to pursue a career in education and be the same kind of example for my students.

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Abstract

This purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of talent development toward successful outcomes among 10 expert Black scholars in the field of education. A transcendental phenomenological approach was employed to gather data through open-ended phone interviews. Research questions included: What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education? How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes? Five themes emerged from the interviews: (a) Background Influences and Preparation, (b) Connections, Mentoring, and Support, (c) Self-Preservation and Protection, (d) Purpose and Direction for Research, and (e) Navigation and Optimization for Success. The expert scholars utilized causal agency and social networking during their talent development process, and engaged in deliberate decision-making. They valued the influence and support of family and community, as well as teachers, mentors, and other role models in various capacities and contexts as they matriculated toward successful outcomes. Although participants received assistance from their families and mentors for dealing with challenges, each would have benefitted from formal psychosocial skills development training. School districts should emphasize the merits of developing interpersonal skills, as well as help-seeking and self-advocacy strategies for success. Colleges and universities should establish and maintain welcoming department climates centered on supportive and professional collegiality for productivity. Respect for research interests and the dissemination of implicit yet pertinent information to faculty of color may also help them to prepare for successful careers in academia.

Keywords: distinguished and endowed Black faculty, phenomenology, talent development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

All students regardless of race, religion, or creed should be provided with “a high-quality education that includes resources such as academic and extracurricular programs, strong teaching, technology and instructional materials, and safe school facilities”

(United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014, para. 1).

However, the effects of persistent achievement gaps in the nation have been apparent for some time, highlighting the inequities of education for children of diverse cultures, limited English proficiency, and low socio-economic status (SES; Ford, 2010; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2011; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014; Worrell, 2014).

Questions of why minority children underperform compared to nonminority children of varied SES and level of matriculation persist, as well as why opportunities for the advancement of certain student populations are not an increasing concern of schools (Subotnik et al., 2011). The lack of a federal mandate for gifted education programs and services further exacerbates the concern, as gifted students of color may not receive the educational services they need to be successful (Ford, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012).

Educational agencies on the federal, state, and local level have made an effort to ensure services for students ranging from those academically challenged to those academically advanced; however well-intended their efforts, many feel the needs of some students are regarded more highly than others (Plucker, Giancola, Healey, Arndt, & Wang, 2015; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). In particular, gifted education has

been criticized for identifying and serving the nation's best and brightest students of the dominant culture while overlooking capable and talented students of diverse backgrounds for gifted program services (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008). Historically and currently, the most controversial and significant issues plaguing the establishment of gifted education programs and services within public education are inequities of race and class (Grantham, 2012). More specifically, the issues of underrepresentation and underachievement pertaining to students of color in gifted education are major areas of concern (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012; Ford et al., 2008; Ford, Moore, & Scott, 2011; Frye & Vogt, 2010; Grantham, 2012; Mayes & Moore, 2016; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2012; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014; Worrell, 2014). The underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic student populations, in particular, affects not only the lives of the students; it ultimately affects school districts, communities, states and the nation as a whole (Ford, 2010).

The concerns extend beyond K-12 and the field of gifted education into higher education as the number of stories of high-ability, talented students of color who reach the highest levels of success in post-secondary education and adulthood are limited. Even more limited are investigations of how these individuals achieved high levels of success in their chosen career fields. Furthermore, studies regarding how highly accomplished individuals participate in their own talent development process are extremely limited and qualitative investigations of the talent development phenomenon among Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education are nonexistent. The present study contributes to the conversation on these topics with a description of the

phenomenon of talent development among endowed and distinguished Black faculty members in education.

Statement of the Problem

Talent development, or the systematic arrangement of resources and services to convert natural ability into talent for contribution to the betterment of society (Gagné, 2008), is an understudied topic in education and very few empirical studies have been dedicated to understanding this phenomenon. However, in the field of education, the term talent development is often associated with gifted and talented education and programming. Black students are among the underrepresented groups in gifted education for whom prolonged progress is not apparent (Ford et al., 2011). As recognized by Henfield, Moore, and Wood (2008):

The topic of African American students' experiences and perceptions of gifted education programming represents a critical area for research and discussion within the field of education as a whole and gifted education in particular. It constitutes a nascent subject that has received little attention in the research literature. (p. 435)

Little peer-reviewed, published research is focused on perspectives of talent development beyond K-12 gifted education or enrichment programs (Gagné, 2008), particularly among Black students. As a result, little research is available on perspectives of talent development among Black adults, and more information is needed to understand this phenomenon. More specifically, the first-person perspectives of Black individuals who have achieved successful outcomes as adults (e.g., women and professors of color) are needed (Hartlep, 2016; Hartlep, Ball, Theodosopoulos, Wells, & Morgan, 2016). An

investigation of the lived experiences of expert Black scholars serving as distinguished and endowed faculty members in education, a field that has focused on the development of talent, may help to illuminate paths toward success and encourage successful adult outcomes among Black students and scholars in the future (Kaba, 2016).

Psychosocial factors that contribute to talent development have been identified (Subotnik et al., 2011), but research that looks into the deliberate actions of students during their own process of talent development is also needed. A more specific concern is the existing gap in the literature pertaining to individuals' perceptions of their own talent development process, as well as self-determined decision-making and deliberate action during the process toward achieving successful outcomes. Socialization has also been identified as an important indicator of career success (Hartlep et al., 2016). More information concerning instances of socialization throughout the process of talent development may provide additional understanding about successful achievement in particular career fields. Such information may be helpful to teachers, school counselors, mentors, parents, and other stakeholders invested in helping gifted and high-ability students reach their potential and achieve successful career outcomes as adults.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore lived experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in education to describe their process of talent development toward successful career outcomes. The impetus that ignited their passion for the field of education, details concerning their role in their own talent development process, as well as the factors that influenced their academic talent development and success are also of interest to the researcher. The intent of the study was to provide preK-

12 and college educators with a better understanding of the educational experiences of students of color, particularly those who identify as African American or Black, and their experiences throughout the process of developing their talent. Black individuals were chosen for the study as they represent an underrepresented population in gifted and talented education (Allen, 2017) and academia (Kaba, 2016). Despite underrepresentation, some Black faculty members have attained the most highly recognized appointments of success as distinguished and endowed professors. Understanding their process of talent development may help to inform the overall talent development process of Black high-ability and gifted students.

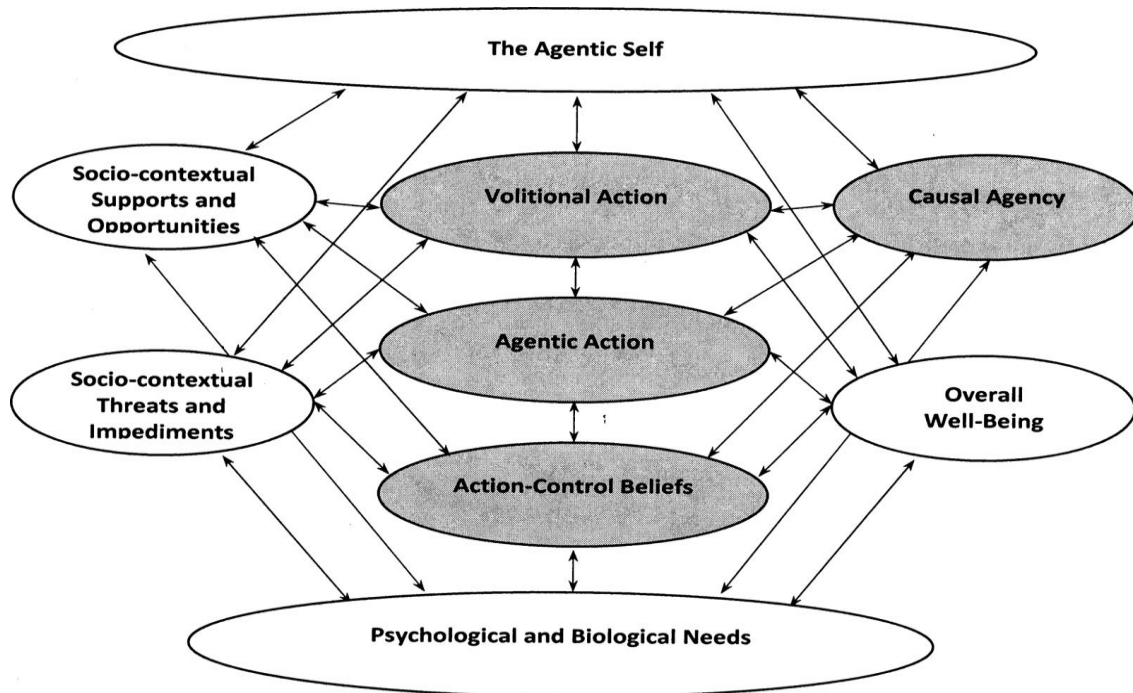
To explore and answer the research questions of the study, a phenomenological qualitative methodology was employed and interview data collected. The interviews explored participants' lived experiences, as well as how these individuals reached high levels of achievement in the field of education. The term *Black* was used throughout the study (Allen, 2017) when referring to individuals who identify as African, African American, Caribbean, or Hispanic/Latino of African descent who live in and have been educated in schools, colleges, and universities throughout the United States of America. The researcher sought to understand the process that moves students of color, particularly Black students, from potential to high achievement and successful adult outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The influence of psychosocial skills is evident throughout the different stages of the talent development process, with prominent attention given to motivation and persistence (Gagné, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik, & Worrell, 2015; Subotnik et al., 2012). Motivation, a smaller construct within the larger dimension of *goal*

management, is also placed with the sub-components of self-awareness and volition. Perceptiveness concerning “one’s abilities and personal traits is crucial for an appropriate selection of one’s talent goal(s), as well as the precise assessment of one’s strengths to pursue any goals, especially challenging ones, to their successful completion” (Gagné, 2010, p. 87). Motivation paired with volition is crucial in initiating and sustaining the process of talent development (Gagné, 2008), as volition guides and controls the activities of the mind, emotions, and behavior for successful goal attainment (Gagné, 2010). Motivation and volition are important aspects of goal attainment in addition to other psychosocial skills (e.g., self-determination), and contribute to the conceptual foundation of the study.

Causal agency theory was the conceptual framework chosen to undergird the study. Grounded in the socio-ecological tenets of positive psychology, causal agency theory serves as an extension of Wehmeyer’s (1992) functional model of self-determination. In the model, self-determination is conceptualized within a person-environment interaction framework recognizing that individuals “influence and are influenced by the context in which they live and develop” (Shogren et al., 2015, p. 256). The functional model’s definition of self-determination also includes the concept of causal agency as integral to the self-determination of individuals. Central to causal agency is a focus on people who make or initiate things to happen in their lives. Consequently, causal agency theory focuses on the action-orientation of individuals as a key characteristic of self-determination capacity (Shogren et al., 2015).



*Figure 1. Multiple layers of human agency. This figure illustrates layers within the individual that contribute to causal agency. Adapted from “Casual Agency Theory: Reconceptualizing a Functional Model of Self-Determination,” by Shogren et al., 2015, *Education and Training in Autism and Development Disabilities*, 50(3), p. 257.*

An essential component of self-determination missing from the functional model is intentional, conscious choice in the form of volitional action (Shogren et al., 2015; Wehmeyer, 2005). Therefore, causal agency theory recognizes the importance of volitional action, along with agentic action (self-initiated and directed means by which something is done or achieved) and action-control beliefs (an individual’s sense of empowerment related to his or her own ability to achieve his or her goals). As self-determined capacity of individuals is a predictor of positive adult and career outcomes, causal agency theory provides a framework to aid in the development and enhancement of supports to enable youth to engage in agentic action, to influence self-determination, causal agency, and overall well-being across diverse social environments (Shogren et al.,

2015). Any instances of self-determined deliberate action during the process of talent development, as reported by the participants, were framed using causal agency theory.

Theoretical Framework

In addition to the conceptual framework used to address the psychosocial skills related to talent development, a complementary theoretical framework was needed to address the socialization experiences related to talent development among the participant sample chosen for the study. Causal agency theory serves as an extension of Wehmeyer's (1992) functional model of self-determination, which recognizes context as an important influencer of individual self-determined capacity (Shogren et al., 2015). Moreover, social network theory recognizes the context of workplace socialization as an important influencer of successful adult outcomes (Hartlep et al., 2016). One of the tenets of social network theory is that an individual's social circle can have a measurable impact on the life of an individual (Hartlep et al., 2016).

Another aspect of social network theory is that it allows for better understanding of the personal characteristics of individuals within the social network (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009; Hartlep et al., 2016). The intersectionality of characteristics coupled with social interactions has the potential to limit or create opportunities within the context (Hartlep et al., 2016).

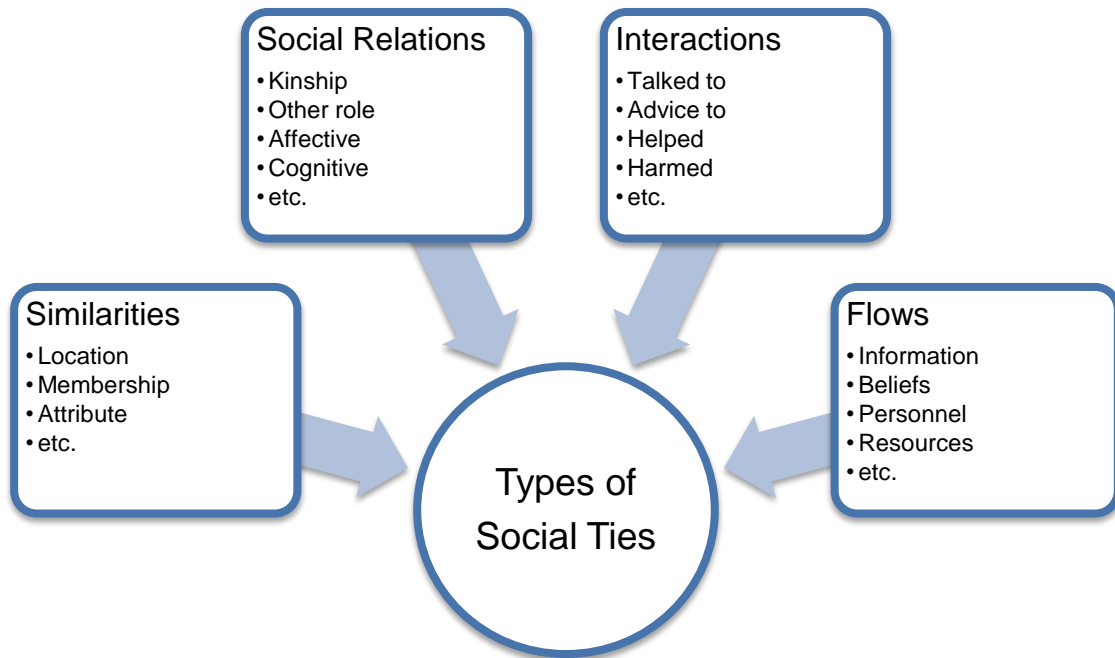


Figure 2. Types of ties. This figure illustrates the division of dyadic links and examples of connections between individuals. Adapted from “Network Analysis in the Social Sciences,” by S. P. Borgatti, A. Mehra, D. J. Brass, and G. Labianca, 2009, *Science*, 323, p. 894.

Negative interactions experienced by individuals within a social context may be the result of homophily, the attraction of like organisms to one another, which affects attitudes and the dispersion of information as individuals are divided by gender, race and social status (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Homophily structures various types of social network ties: “marriage, friendship, work, advice, support, information transfer, exchange, comembership, and other types of relationship” (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 415). The extreme social nature of educational institutions encourages children and adults to challenge their comfort zones. However, educator access to information and experiences may affect the attitudes, outlooks, and professional outcomes of their students (McPherson et al., 2001). The implication of the theory for students and faculty

in higher education is also recognized, as “social relationships can be an essential component of doctoral education and academe” (Hartlep et al., 2016, p. 123).

The utilization of a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework was effective for the study as the constructs outlined in each framework pertain to the talent development process. The frameworks also recognize the role of the individual in developing their talent, as well as the influence of social environments and interactions throughout the process of talent development toward successful outcomes. Although many talent development models exist to address various stages throughout the life of an individual (Subotnik et al., 2011), little research exists regarding talent development for high-ability students of color beyond K-12. Social network theory was utilized to frame expert Black scholar lived experiences related to the phenomenon of talent development for adult successful outcomes. As education is a social process, examining the lived experiences of individuals who have achieved high levels of success as adults provides information as to the role of socialization throughout their process of talent development. The framework also recognizes the role of the individual regarding their path towards success as well as the influence of social environments and interactions along a person’s development. More specifically, social network theory was used to frame any instances of workplace socialization and interaction during the process of talent development for successful outcomes, as reported by the participants. The overlap of concepts related to talent development between causal agency theory and social network theory warranted the necessity of both a conceptual and theoretical framework for this study.

Significance of the Study

Along with socialization and environment, other psychosocial factors also affect the development of talent. The extant research in the field of gifted education regarding the development of psychosocial skills includes elements related to self-determination and causal agency (Subotnik et al., 2011). However, no literature exists pertaining to the self-determined, deliberate action or causal agency of Black high-ability, or highly accomplished individuals. As the intent of the study was to explore the personal lived experiences of expert Black scholars to understand their talent development process, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks provided a way to frame participant experiences related to the process of talent development and how the participants navigated the process for successful outcomes. Helping to vocalize the experiences of this understudied group may aid in closing the current gap in the literature regarding talent development among high-ability, high-achieving Black faculty.

Impetus for the Study

Culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse (CLED) student populations, mainly from Black, American Indian, and Hispanic/Latino groups, have been persistently underrepresented in gifted education programs across the nation (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012; Ford et al., 2008; Ford et al., 2011; Frye & Vogt, 2010; Grantham, 2012; Mayes & Moore, 2016; Subotnik et al., 2012; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). However, students of color who are not identified for gifted services may still have the opportunity to develop their talents beyond K-12 education experiences (Gagné, 2008). Nurturing talent involves helping students to understand their own abilities and look for opportunities to develop those exceptional abilities, especially in the later stages of the

talent development process (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). As purported by Subotnik et al. (2011), talent development requires the provision of opportunities in the form of lessons, school programs, and outside-of-school programs and “is driven by expert teachers, mentors, and coaches” (p. 33).

It takes more than ability to achieve successful outcomes as students and adults regardless of whether or not an individual is identified as gifted (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). According to Plucker et al. (2015), “Low-income students, recently estimated to be roughly half of our public school population, are much less likely to achieve academic excellence or, when identified as high-ability, more likely to backslide as they progress through school” (p. 1). Although failure is a deterrent to most gifted and highly able students, there are serious consequences for students of color who do not acquire skills to move forward in their talent development process.

Expert Black scholars in academia have overcome obstacles and found opportunities to develop their abilities, as evidenced by their accomplishments, but little is known about the process of their talent development. Additionally, there is little focus and even less documentation concerning the personal or professional lives of expert Black scholars in general who have reached outstanding levels of success. Gaining insight into the personal and professional lives of these individuals, as well as their own role in their successful development may help to identify the supports needed to facilitate the successful talent development of Black high-ability, gifted and talented students beyond the stage of *Potential* (Subotnik et al., 2011). Therefore, this study explored the lived experiences of Black distinguished professors and endowed chairs in education

(hereafter referred to as expert Black scholars) to understand their process of talent development for successful outcomes.

The expert Black scholars in this study represent a wide range of research interests within the field of education. These contexts provide a framework for their experiences. Many of the domains found in talent development literature are situated within academic disciplines and other interdisciplinary areas in education. Therefore, the field of education represents an appropriate and important context that serves as a parameter for this study. The social aspect of the field of education is also important, as individuals make connections throughout their education matriculation within the context of schools and institutions of learning. The expert scholars' experiences were situated within this context that informed their talent development process.

Research Questions

The preceding discussion about the educational situation for high-ability students of color in America, as well as the background and impetus for the study, inform the research questions for this phenomenological study. The overall research questions for the study were:

1. What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education?
2. How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes?

Assumptions

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher assumed that study participants would answer interview questions honestly and to the best of their ability. The researcher

assumed that results will not be generalizable to the target population, but will provide insight into the lived experiences and talent development of the sample of expert Black scholar participants in the study. The researcher also assumed that (1) socialization and opportunity influenced the talent development of these individuals and (2) the realization of causal agency came into play at some point during the talent development process for these individuals.

Delimitations

The research questions, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, and target population framed the study. The talent domain of interest in this study was academic talent as it includes many different content areas and fields of study. To explore the phenomenon of talent development, the options for the target population were gifted and/or high-ability adolescents, college undergraduates, graduate students, and post-graduates. Distinguished and endowed faculty members in education were chosen for the following reasons: (a) they have had a longer matriculation in the educational process than adolescents, undergraduates, and graduate students; (b) they have earned a terminal doctoral degree in a particular field of study; (c) they completed extensive amounts of research relevant to the field of education; (d) they have achieved the *Expertise* stage of the talent development process as successful high-achievers in academia: “experts are those who perform at high levels in their fields or occupations” (Subotnik et al., 2012, p. 178); (e) they work in an academic environment regarded as rigorous and have attained the most exemplary professorships awarded to accomplished faculty members; and (f) most endowed and distinguished faculty appointments are awarded at elite universities (Hartlep et al., 2016). These scholars have also received public recognition for their

work and impact on society, as “either the governor of the state or his or her representatives have to approve or sign the documents for the recognition to become official” (Kaba, 2016, p. 5).

Black individuals were chosen because they represent a historically underrepresented group in gifted and talent education (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2012; Ford et al., 2008) and higher education (Hartlep, 2016; Kaba, 2016). The requirement to be born and educated in the United States of America is also an important delimiter, as Black individuals born and educated outside of the country may possess a different narrative (Lopez & Johnson, 2014). It is the belief of the researcher that the Black experience in the United States is much different from the Black experience in more homogeneous countries (e.g., Haiti, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, etc.). Overall, the intent of the researcher was to know more about the lived experiences of expert Black scholars regarding their process of talent development towards achievement of the highest levels of success in their field and academia.

Definition of Key Terms

ACADEMIA: the academic community of higher education (i.e., faculty and institutions).

EXPERT BLACK SCHOLAR: Black faculty having earned a terminal doctoral degree in an academic field, recognition for significant peer-reviewed research contributions to the body of knowledge in their field, and attainment of distinguished and/or endowed professorships in academia.

CAUSAL AGENCY: capacity central to the self-determination of individuals, comprised of volitional action, agentic action, and action-control beliefs, to initiate things to happen

in their lives for positive adult and career outcomes in diverse social environments (Shogren et al., 2015).

EPOCHE: bracketing or setting aside personal experiences and prejudices of the researcher pertaining to the phenomenon that may influence descriptions of participant lived experiences in the study (Moustakas, 1994).

GIFTS: natural abilities across domains that have the potential to be developed into talents (Gagné, 2008).

HOMOPHILY: An individual's preference to link themselves to people of similar status: race, ethnicity, age, level of educational attainment, occupation, as well as social class in societal, educational, and career environments (Hartlep et al., 2016).

HORIZONTALIZATION: a process of qualitative data analysis suggested by Moustakas (1994) that involves the identification of significant utterances that provide an understanding of participant experiences related to the phenomenon of interest.

LIVED EXPERIENCE: first-hand recollections and perceptions of academic, professional, and personal experience.

RESEARCH INTENSIVE (RI) INSTITUTION: an institution of higher education that engages in extensive research activity.

TALENT: abilities that have been systematically developed in at least one domain through the mastery of knowledge (Gagné, 2004, p. 120); a continuum of abilities ranging from potential to eminent talent that can be developed at different stages to move further along the continuum (Subotnik et al., 2011).

TALENT DEVELOPMENT: the systematic arrangement of resources and services to convert natural ability into talent for contribution to the betterment of society (Gagné, 2008).

THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: the active use of resources and services to convert natural ability into usable talent to contribute to the betterment of society (Gagné, 2008).

TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY: a psychological approach to phenomenology focused on first-hand participant perceptions and lived experiences, without the interference of related personal experiences of the researcher, for a fresh look at the phenomenon of interest (Moustakas, 1994).

Summary

Chapter 1 served to familiarize the reader with the background and impetus for the study. The educational climate in the United States of America regarding students of color, the achievement gap, and underrepresentation in gifted and talented education programs are among the academic and personal challenges they may face with regard to developing their talent. The chapter also provided information regarding the conceptual and theoretical frameworks chosen to frame participant lived experiences and the meaning of the phenomenon. The talent development and lived experiences of expert Black scholars were of interest to the researcher for the study as these individuals have reached the highest levels of success in their career field. The problem statement, purpose, significance of the study, as well as the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and research questions guided the study.

Chapter 2 presents relevant literature related to the education of high-ability and gifted students of color, talent development, the concepts of self-determination, causal agency, social interaction, endowed and distinguished faculty, and the lived experiences of Black faculty in academia. Chapter 3 presents the research design chosen for the study, including the participant sample, the research approach for the study, and the methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 provides the findings as related to the research questions. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and implications for current practice and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a discussion of the relevant literature related to the study. Following the introduction, the goals of public education and gifted and talented education are presented. Next, the education of students of color and barriers toward their academic success and participation in gifted education programming are provided, including cultural underrepresentation on the K-12 and higher education levels. Afterward, an overview of the talent development perspective in gifted education is provided, including models and merits of the perspective for successful adult outcomes. A discussion of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in relation to talent development is provided, including the discussion of psychosocial skills, causal agency, and social interaction. A discussion of Black expert scholars and success in academia is also presented, to include experiences of challenge and success. Finally, a discussion of additional gaps in the literature is presented to support the need for the current study.

Introduction

In the field of education, the concept of talent development is situated within gifted and talented education programming. Although mention has been made of the merits of a talent development-centered program, very few studies have been dedicated to understanding this phenomenon among all age groups and ability levels. Stories of the profoundly gifted, as well as individuals from the mainstream culture achieving success, are in abundance in the literature. However, similar information focused on high-ability,

gifted and talented, or eminent individuals of color are extremely limited (Simonton, 2008). More specifically, research concerning the process of talent development for successful adult outcomes among these individuals is currently nonexistent.

Numerous educational challenges, including underrepresentation in gifted education and underachievement for CLED students, are major concerns (Ford et al., 2008) and threaten the successful talent development of students of color. As low gifted and talented identification and retention rates of CLED students remain a topic of discussion and concern, the first-hand perspectives of highly successful individuals of color who did or did not participate in gifted and talented educational programs during their K-12 experience is needed. Although students of color may go on to achieve exceptional outcomes as adults, little is known about their path toward achievement of successful outcomes in their chosen career field. Overall, little inquiry in the form of published, peer-reviewed research has investigated the perspectives of these individuals to gain understanding related to their successful talent development process.

Gifted Student Goals and Matriculation

The Marland Report (1972) to Congress provided the first formalized definition for gifted students, and has been revised several times since its inception. The current federal definition of gifted and talented, as stated in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ([ESEA],1965), reads:

Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by

the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22]

Therefore, the design of programs for gifted students should incorporate means to move them from potential as children to creative productivity as adults (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015a; Renzulli, 2012; Subotnik et al., 2012). Various types of support are required throughout a student's educational matriculation to develop academic expertise and knowledge (Wai, Lubinski, Benbow, & Steiger, 2010). On the K-12 level, students may have access to resources provided within the educational environment to help develop their gifts into talents in specific academic areas. Acceleration, combined with enrichment opportunities provided in specific content areas is among the most common strategy of research-supported considerations (Gagné, 2008; Wai et al., 2010). However, many intellectually gifted students in K-12 programs demonstrate high levels of achievement without exposure to any form of enrichment (Gagné, 2008).

On the post-secondary level, students have access to even more resources and opportunities to develop their gifts and talents in specific domains, but they are responsible for taking advantage of these opportunities. Gifted students are tasked with reaching beyond their comfort zones to socialize and network with those who can assist them to become successful academically and personally (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). However, students face challenges in nurturing and developing their talent successfully beyond high school and into adulthood. These complications undoubtedly begin at some point during the students' K-12 educational experience. Furthermore, these difficulties are magnified for CLED students, as obstacles may negatively impact a

minority student's ability to develop self-empowerment skills and opportunities to advocate for themselves (Walker & Test, 2011).

Academic Matriculation of Students of Color

As suggested by Peters and Engerrand (2016), "the purpose of gifted education programming that follows some version of the Federal definition is to support the development of excellence in students from all cultural and income groups" (p. 164). Traditionally, underrepresented gifted student populations (CLED students and students with disabilities) have been labeled as the "most at risk due to a lack of sufficient and appropriate educational services" and have been the population targeted to receive prioritized attention since 1988, according to the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act (Allen, 2017, pp. 78-79).

However, policies sanctioned to equalize the playing field for these students do not always provide them with what they need to be successful (Allen, 2017). In particular, educational policies and practices, including tracking, retention, standardized testing, curriculum, teaching practices, inadequate building structures, disciplinary consequences, as well as the restricted roles of students, teachers, parents, extended family, and community, have been identified as potentially oppressive for students of color (Astramovich & Harris, 2007). In addition to harmful educational practices and policies, students of color are challenged with overcoming myriad obstacles and barriers to developing their potential and talent, as well as their academic and personal success, throughout their educational matriculation. Notably, the achievement gap and the underrepresentation of minority gifted students are related concerns and operate within a

system in which the prospects for development of talent among these students are inhibited by many interconnected factors (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

Cultural bias. Persistent gaps in achievement in the United States between racial and ethnic groups are among the most important problems facing the field of education (Worrell, 2014). The cultural ignorance and biases of other students, and even the deficit thinking of their own classroom teachers perpetuates the problem for students of diverse cultural backgrounds. According to Ford et al. (2008), deficit thinking is conceptualized as “negative, stereotypical, and prejudicial beliefs about CLED groups that result in discriminatory policies and behaviors or actions” (p. 292). Consequently, this type of thinking affects behavior and is manifested through a substantial dependence on tests inconsiderate of known biases, low referral rates of diverse students for gifted education services, and implementation of policies and procedures that have an unequal effect on these students (Allen, 2017; Ford et al., 2008). Deficit thinking among some educators may cause them to overlook the gifts and talents of CLED students, creating a barrier to opportunity for these students who desperately need adequate programming to develop their potential (Allen, 2017; Mayes & Moore, 2016). For example, when the behavior of Black students is viewed as immature or less pleasant in some way, they may be overlooked by teachers for gifted identification (Ford et al., 2011). The problems of deficit thinking and misunderstandings about behaviors of diverse student populations are prevalent in many schools and classrooms across America, and continue to obstruct many students of diverse backgrounds from reaching their full academic potential.

Academic underachievement. The influence of teacher perceptions on instructional practice has the ability to affect the schooling experiences of CLED students

negatively (Szymanski & Shaff, 2013). As a result of low teacher expectations, students may also adopt and develop low expectations of their own academic performance (Ford et al., 2011; Walker & Test, 2011). Achievement gaps between advantaged children and children of low socio-economic status (SES), as well as racial and ethnic minority groups, continue to be a problem in education (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2010; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). Underachievement, in the form of low test scores, is a result of the above disparities, along with factors in the environment and deficit thinking (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Worrell, 2014). Teachers may also contribute to low levels of academic achievement when they fail to recognize and comprehend cultural nuances, behaviors, and values of the students that they teach (Ford et al., 2011; Szymanski & Shaff, 2013).

Post-secondary challenges. In addition to the aforementioned challenges related to cultural barriers, deficit thinking, and academic underachievement that perpetuate the achievement gap, minority students may face obstacles to their development regarding postsecondary education and career choices. Limited career counseling and job skills training remain an issue as significant limitations to career development planning and strategies for coping with such challenges have been reported by minority students (Astramovich & Harris, 2007). Additionally, concerns for minority students resulting from oppression may include “low self-esteem, relationship difficulties, high levels of stress, and a sense of powerlessness” (Astramovich & Harris, 2007, p. 270). Students of color may be able to combat these negative psychological effects by employing more positive psychological strategies. As suggested by Ford et al. (2011), “When one is African American (or a group of any other racially and culturally different group), it is vitally important that racial identity, as much as self-concept and self-esteem, be

validated within the notion of self-perception” (p. 245). However, the challenges are further exacerbated as students of color are less likely to receive educational services related to self-determination, independence, and social empowerment instruction afforded to mainstream students (Astramovich & Harris, 2007; Dowden, 2009).

Threats to Black student achievement. Several factors, challenges, and barriers impact the academic and personal development of Black students. Black student performance in school was the primary focus of early literature on educational disparities, and their lower achievement was explained by cultural differences influenced by racism, low expectations from teachers, and limited cultural understanding (Worrell, 2014). Furthermore, as suggested by Frye and Vogt (2010) “Without a supportive environment with teachers, counselors, and administrators who understand the importance of helping gifted African American students with identity development, the likelihood that a gifted African American will succeed is greatly diminished” (pp. 11-12). However, mainstream educators often categorize students of color based on perceptions of their deficiencies, which limits opportunities for these students (Allen, 2017; Mayes & Moore, 2016).

Theories such as Ogbu’s cultural ecological theory of minority school performance (1998) and Steele’s notion of stereotype threat (1997) suggest cultural identities are related to academic performance, although Black students were not expected to perform well academically as a result of stereotypes and notions of low intellectual ability (Worrell, 2014). Three threats that complicate academic identification and the school success of Black students are (a) structural, (b) cultural (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), and (c) stereotype threat (Steele, 1997). Structural and cultural threats, such as low socioeconomic status, leading to a lack of resources and access to adequate schools,

also contribute to academic underachievement and limit successful outcomes for Black students (Allen, 2017). Ogbu's cultural ecological theory relates cultural identity to minority student academic achievement (Worrell, 2014). Environmental and cultural factors in the community, as well as negative treatment within the system of education affect the academic achievement of minority students (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Cultural ecological theory of minority school performance also highlights voluntary (immigrant) and involuntary (non-immigrant) minority groups. Voluntary minorities interpret barriers as temporary problems that they will overcome with resources such as time, effort, and education, creating a more positive view of future possibilities; however, involuntary minorities interpret the same barriers as permanent problems (Gilbert, 2009). These groups differ in reaction to social situations in five ways: (1) frame of reference for comparing present status and future possibilities, (2) a folk theory of getting ahead, (3) a sense of collective identity, (4) a cultural frame of reference for judging appropriate behavior and affirming group solidarity, and (5) an assessment of the extent to which one may trust members of the dominant group (Gilbert, 2009; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). As suggested by Gilbert (2009), "Both voluntary and involuntary groups are subject to discriminatory treatment by the dominant group in the form of restricted access to desirable jobs and quality education" (p. 72). The theory, based on the presence of structural barriers and discrimination, claims that "African Americans [as involuntary minorities] withdraw from the educational process because they do not believe that their participation will remove the structural barriers that their group faces" (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2012, p. 216). Many Black Americans who are not immigrants do not feel that hard work and education will work for them

against societal barriers, and as a result develop negative attitudes toward schooling and the imposition of the dominant culture, known as “oppositional identity” (Gilbert, 2009).

Stereotype threat, or the possibility of students ascribing to negative labels of their own ethnic group, is even more dangerous for Black students, and explains their underperformance through cultural interaction (Worrell, 2014). Stereotype threat is defined as “the social-psychological threat that arises when one is in a situation or doing something for which a negative stereotype about one’s group applies” and carries the threat of being viewed negatively, judged, or treated unfairly, or conforming to the actual stereotype (Steele, 1997, p. 614). As suggested by Worrell (2014):

When individuals perform in a domain in which their personal identity is invested and about which there exists a negative societal stereotype, ST [Stereotype Threat] can develop if the individuals believe that their performance is being judged by others who have the stereotype in mind. This result is an emotional reaction that interferes with the performance. (p. 339)

As a result of stereotype threat, these individuals may choose to withdraw their investment from the domain altogether, and hence any opportunity for success (Worrell, 2014). Consequently, there is a critical need to prepare Black students, especially students with special abilities, with the necessary skills to combat stereotype threat and the academic, personal, and social challenges they may face using concepts related to self-determination and self-advocacy (Walker & Test, 2011).

Cultural Underrepresentation in Gifted Education

Since the Jacob Javits Act of 1988 was enacted, little progress has been made with regard to gifted programming access for students of color (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2012,

Ford et al., 2008). Although the nature of gifted education is to identify and offer programs and services to meet the needs of gifted and talented students (Ambrose, Van Tassel-Baska, Coleman, & Cross, 2010; Gentry, 2009), talent in specific domains remains largely unidentified (Hong & Milgram, 2008; National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC], 2011). Ultimately, the lack of focus and development of procedures regarding the identification of specific forms of talent has resulted in an under-identified and underserved population of talented students across the country (Gentry, 2009; Hong & Milgram, 2008). Roughly over 1 million students are underserved, and “families, educators, decision makers, and peers contribute to the underrepresentation” (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2010, p. 33). In addition, as the nation grows more and more diverse, disproportionate attention is given to students of diverse backgrounds for potential placement in gifted and talented programs (Allen, 2017; Hong & Milgram, 2008; Ford, Coleman, & Davis, 2014). Identification rates are higher than ever for gifted children of CLED backgrounds due to underserved and underrepresented population outreach efforts (Grubb, 2011). However, in terms of actual practice, a very small percentage of CLED students is in gifted and talented programs across the nation (Ford, 2014). Biased definitions of giftedness and identification strategies based on achievement, as well as the inconsistent recognition of giftedness across demographic groups, may explain the racial imbalance of the gifted students receiving specialized education services.

Causes of underrepresentation. The underrepresentation of students of color in gifted education programs has in some ways increased as the result of three major factors. First, when there is an overuse and overreliance on biased standardized tests and students of color perform below average, “he or she is significantly less likely to be referred for

gifted education, even if the classroom performance is noteworthy or of teachers notice potential gifted traits” (Allen, 2017, p. 82). Second, the problem of underrepresentation is further aggravated by the achievement gap and gifted education recruitment and identification efforts influenced by the dominant culture, which convey expectations and standards related to middle class English (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011; Ford et al., 2008). However, students of color often use code-switching, or using more than one language or dialect in conversation, which may serve as an indicator of giftedness (Allen, 2017; Abellam-Pagnani & Hébert, 2013). These and other cultural misunderstandings negatively affect the recruitment and retention of students of color who underachieve (Ford et al., 2011). Finally, when conceptions of giftedness are only directed toward academic achievement, and the focus of recruitment efforts is based on culturally-biased instruments (e.g., tests and checklists) or procedures (e.g., teacher referral), those students with high levels of potential who underachieve will remain underrepresented in gifted education programs across the nation (Ford, 2010).

Parent and teacher perspectives. For many researchers, teacher nomination and recommendation become a primary concern related to CLED students, due to cultural bias and lack of multicultural training (Allen, 2017; Ford, 2011; Grantham, 2012; Mayes & Moore, 2016). Michael-Chadwell (2011) examined possible causes for the underrepresentation of African-American students in gifted education through parent and teacher perceptions. Four themes surfaced as a result of the qualitative study: (1) misconceptions regarding student ability and racial background, (2) lack of awareness of gifted program information and options as revealed by parents, (3) the lack of development and training of gifted students of color, and (4) testing, assessment, and

identification issues. All of these were identified as contributors to the underrepresentation of students of color in gifted education. Additionally, teachers identified cultural bias related to student behavior, as well as social and home dynamics, teacher bias in interpreting student behavior, and parental unawareness as major factors contributing to underrepresentation. Parents also identified the inability of teachers to recognize student potential, the lack of culturally representative teachers of the population they serve, and teacher misconceptions about student ability, race, and testing to be the most prominent factors contributing to the underrepresentation of African-American students in gifted education.

Black student perspectives. A gap remains in the literature pertaining to the voice of gifted Black students regarding their experiences and perceptions in gifted and talented programs and possible reasons for underrepresentation, recruitment, and retention issues. Henfield et al. (2008) used biographical questionnaire, interview, and document data to examine student perceptions of experiences in their gifted education programs. Results reveal three themes: “(a) critical issues facing gifted Black students, (b) ways that students navigate the perils of gifted education, and (c) the benefits of gifted education” (p. 439). The students provided insight as to how they feel about participation in gifted programming and ways they are able to cope with the less than pleasant side-effects of participation. The students also provided what they feel are benefits of participation, but emphasized the importance of being informed prior to participation about all of these elements. The authors suggest their findings and recommendations may assist educators with improving the problem of Black student underrepresentation in gifted education programs.

Other perspectives. Overall, efforts to meet the needs of gifted CLED students must stretch beyond the conversation surrounding underachievement, the inadequacies of known identification assessments, and underrepresentation. NAGC (2011) suggests CLED gifted students need programs that provide both academic and developmental assistance, such as psychological, social, and emotional support, as well as strategies to develop “strong academic identities” to support their learning (p. 3). These supports help students cope with the thoughts, behaviors, and actions that may result from the cultural biases of others, and to build resiliency of students as they respond to life events that may affect their academic performance and potential (NAGC, 2011).

Cultural Underrepresentation in Higher Education

In addition to the problem of cultural underrepresentation in K-12 gifted education programs, cultural underrepresentation also exists on the higher education level, as people of color are severely underrepresented in professional positions (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017) and tenure-track positions (Siegel, Barrett, & Smith, 2015) in colleges and universities across the United States. Furthermore, Black faculty account for only 4.9% of tenured faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009; Pittman, 2012; Siegel et al., 2015). Moreover, 13.4% of Black faculty members hold doctoral degrees in the field of education; however, 11.4% of these faculty members in education are awarded endowed chair positions (Hartlep, 2016). A well-known practice in higher education is the appointment of distinguished and endowed professorships to the best and brightest faculty. Distinguished and endowed professorships are most often awarded to faculty members who have made significant contributions to their academic field and have achieved full professor status through the process of tenure (Hartlep et al., 2016).

These positions often come with various benefits, including funding. Although research is available about these well-recognized positions in academia, it is highly concentrated in fields other than education and mostly focused on mainstream rather than minority faculty (Hartlep et al., 2016). As there are few Black faculty who have been appointed to such positions, Kaba (2016) explains the importance of recognizing the positive in this conundrum for further encouragement:

First, in a very racially, ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse society as the United States, Black Americans are among the groups with the least opportunities and in many important walks of life, including among faculty in colleges and universities in the United States. Therefore, knowing about the number of Black endowed and distinguished professors in academia, including in the field of education can help us to gauge how much the society has evolved in accepting Blacks not just as professors, but also recognized as endowed and distinguished professors. It illustrates the increase of tolerance in the society. (p. 2)

By 2011, over 41,000 Black faculty members were employed in institutions across the United States; however, few have since been appointed to endowed and distinguished professorships (Kaba, 2016). In their national study on endowed chairs (ECs) and distinguished professors (DPs) in education, Hartlep et al. (2016) provide several statistical findings. Significantly more men held endowed and distinguished positions than women: 58% of ECs and 60.7% of DPs are male, compared to 42.0% of ECs and 39.5% of DP being female. Of the 394 professors recognized as endowed faculty members in education, 322 or 81.7% of endowed positions belong to White

faculty members compared to 45 of 11.4% of endowed positions that belong to Black faculty. Similarly, of the 229 professors recognized as distinguished faculty members in education, 100 (85.5%) distinguished positions belong to White faculty members compared to 9 (7.7%) distinguished positions that belong to Black faculty. As noted, substantially fewer faculty members of color are awarded recognition as endowed chairs and distinguished professors. The hypothesis was confirmed that White faculty members are more likely to hold endowed or distinguished professorships in education.

As Black faculty are underrepresented in these prestigious positions, very little research is available on expert Black scholars who have achieved recognition as endowed or distinguished faculty. Although not field of study specific, Stone's (2001) study found the total number of Black faculty awarded distinguished and endowed professorships increased from 102 in 1993 to 122 in 1997 and 129 in 2001; of those in 2001, 12 or 9.3% were in education (p. 121-125). In addition, Hartlep and Theodosopoulos (2014) published a list of 42 endowed (22 men; 20 women) and nine distinguished (eight men; one woman) Black faculty members in education (51 total). The report includes "names, pictures, institution of employment, names of the endowed or distinguished professorship, type of terminal/highest degree, and institution where terminal/highest degree was earned" (Kaba, 2016, p. 3). Thompson, Bonner, and Lewis (2015) have also written a book to include personal narratives from Black distinguished and endowed faculty, which may inspire more qualitative research inquiry.

Kaba (2016) also looked at statistical data regarding Black distinguished and endowed professors of education across the US. Findings reveal a gradual increase in Black faculty appointments to these positions. Of the 41 institutions named, five are

ranked among the top five elite institutions in the US; others rank in the top 25-48. Also, the expert Black scholars listed are employed across 21 states located in the South and Midwest. They also earned terminal degrees (majority Ph.Ds.) in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, in nine different academic fields from 36 institutions in 21 different states in the Midwest/West, many of which are classified as elite institutions. However, an achievement gap in the data remains regarding gender and region as well as the underrepresentation of Ivy League institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

In terms of the gender gap, the data reveal that Black men seem to be recognized more than their female counterparts; reflective of the overall professional gender gap in the US, but age may be a factor in Kaba's (2016) study. The South has historically been the home of Black American culture in the US. Although Black students may leave home to attend college, they most often return home afterward to be closer to friends and family and enjoy low cost of living and the climate. Nevertheless, throughout history, "many of the most prominent, wealthy and influential or powerful Black Americans from all walks of life moved to the Midwest [especially the state of Illinois] to build their careers or were born there" (Kaba, 2016, p. 23). Underrepresentation of the 52 in Ivy League institutions further identified the lack of Black student and faculty presence among predominantly White institutions (PWIs). In reference to HBCUs, Black distinguished and endowed faculty underrepresentation, lack of money, questions of prestige, and instability of accreditation are concerns among well-established scholars who wish to have their talent recognized elsewhere (Kaba, 2016).

The Talent Development Perspective

Overall, an apparent limitation in available research is the absence of qualitative inquiry regarding Black distinguished and endowed professors. The lived experiences and path toward success for expert Black faculty in education is an important topic, yet under-researched by scholars. As previously stated, talent development for successful outcomes among expert Black scholars in the field of education was the phenomenon of interest in this study. In the field of gifted education, a progressive orientation towards talent development shifts focus from traditional and narrow conceptions of giftedness centered on academic achievement and IQ scores (Olsewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). According to Subotnik et al. (2011), the study of talent development encompasses how talent manifests over time within specific domains. It must also be recognized that talent domains are developed across and within “different developmental trajectories and the transitions from one stage to another are influenced by effort; opportunity; and instruction in content, technical, and psycho-social skills” (Subotnik et al., 2011, p. 6).

Talent development programs help to reduce the underrepresentation of CLED students (Ford, 2010). Moreover, the talent development orientation provides a way in which more support can be provided for gifted, talented, and high-ability students of color, as there is a greater focus on the development of potential through opportunity and guidance (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). Undoubtedly, environment and experiences play a substantial role in whether or not a child’s innate abilities develop and flourish (Chessor, 2012). Additionally, there is an intricate relationship between individual characteristics and environmental factors that is associated with the talent development of students of color and students of low SES backgrounds (Tomlinson &

Jarvis, 2014). Gifted programs that choose to move beyond the traditional confines of the cognitive/intelligence orientation of gifted education have begun to open the narrow or closed path to gifted and accelerated education for students of color and low SES across the nation (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2014). If a goal of gifted education though the talent development perspective is “to move students move from potential to competency to expertise to creative productivity” (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015a), the needs of CLED students must also be considered (Grantham, 2012).

Beyond traditional conceptions of giftedness, Subotnik et al. (2011) contend that an approach toward talent development focusing on malleable factors related to achievement that:

Emphasizes the contribution of and interplay between multiple contexts (e.g., home, school, community) and multiple variables (e.g., aptitude, interest, motivation, mind-set, stage of development) can help us understand why a factor such as low SES can either be an obstacle to success or the impetus for high achievement. (p. 12)

In other words, it is important to recognize the factors related to achievement that can be molded, nurtured, and cultivated at home, in schools, or in the community. These factors may help to uncover how being from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may motivate students toward success or hinder their academic and talent development.

For development of potential talent to occur, students should be exposed to talent domain areas aligned to their interests, with opportunities for connection and expression, as well as the provision of appropriate resources and encouragement (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). These elements are related to themes of enrichment, socialization,

self-determination, and opportunity for future success. Understanding the process of talent development may help to increase gifted identification efforts and support the development of student abilities across developmental levels and cultures (Ford, 2010; Subotnik, et al., 2011). Nonetheless, many students enrolled in K-12 gifted education programs do not go on to make significant contributions to society as eminent adults (Subotnik et al., 2011).

Talent Development Models

Today, there is a great deal of knowledge available in reference to nurturing intellectual giftedness and talent in highly able, gifted, and talented students. Researching and understanding model programs for talent development can help to inform the field on best practices to follow (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015; Subotnik et al., 2011). More specifically, the work of researchers and theorists can be summarized into three categories: (1) identification of key components of talent development, (2) models that identify variables at different stages of the process of talent development, and (3) models that identify key players or psychosocial variables at different stages of the talent development process (Gagné, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015; Subotnik et al., 2012). Each model of talent development denotes specific factors and characteristics that must be present in order for talent development to lead to significant adult contribution. However, researchers question the effectiveness of K-12 gifted programs due to the lack of noteworthy contributions from adult creative producers (Subotnik et al., 2011; Noble, 2011), as well as limited opportunities in post-secondary or higher education for advanced development (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b; Renzulli, 2012; Subotnik et al., 2011). The additional focus on a lens

that reaches beyond the identification of precocious giftedness in primary school, or exceptional achievement in secondary school, articulates eminence in adulthood as a new purpose of gifted education (Grantham, 2012; Subotnik et al., 2011).

However, critical open discussion on the meaning of the educational goal of excellence in relation to underrepresented students is limited (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015). Further, Szymanski and Shaff (2013) offer the following plea for inclusion of students of color in gifted education: “Diverse students with the potential to excel in academics deserve the opportunity to develop their potential and bring unique perspectives to classes that are dominated by Caucasian students” (p. 2). Although the talent development perspective offers more opportunity to address the needs of CLED students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b), and many talent development models exist to address various stages through the lifespan, little research exists on talent development models designed specifically for students of color in gifted education. The work of Joseph Renzulli, Robert Sternberg, and Howard Gardner has influenced gifted education, and their theories serve as models that recognize culture (Ford, 2010). In addition, Subotnik et al. (2011) suggest a comprehensive or “mega-model” of talent development across the lifespan that incorporates ideas from several well-known models (p. 29). Hong and Milgram (2008) also offer a Comprehensive Model of Giftedness and Talent (CMGT) that encompasses a wide-range of considerations regarding the development of talent and focuses on creative and expert talent that can be developed with specific cognitive abilities, personal attributes, and influential school factors. Each of these models serves as a promising talent development option for students of color. By focusing attention on

talent development perspectives, the achievement of all student groups can be raised, especially those underserved (Subotnik et al., 2011).

The model (see Figure 3) chosen to represent the process of talent development in this study is Gagné's differentiated model of giftedness and talent (DMGT).

Furthermore, the model covers the process of talent development for most professional fields (Gagné, 2009). According to Gagné (2004; 2008), children may inherit or be born with gifts, but the cultivation of these gifts brings about the manifestation of fully developed talents. Overall, the model emphasizes individual needs that must be fully engaged to transform natural aptitude or ability into talent or skill. A distinct feature of the model lies in the conceptualization of giftedness and talent as different entities, and specific definitions are provided for each concept. The definitions reveal that both concepts have three distinct characteristics: (1) references to human ability, (2) ability targeted as different from the norm, and (3) referring to these individuals as "non-normal" because of outstanding behaviors (Gagné, 2004, p. 120).

The model designates six components related to giftedness and talent into two groups of three components. The first group describes the talent development process, in particular, the transformation of gifts into talent. Components that serve as catalysts that have the ability to encourage or hinder the process are designated for the second group. Intrapersonal catalysts are identified as specific physical and psychological elements. Catalysts in the psychological category include motivation, volition, self-management, and heredity, all of which play important roles in the talent development process. Environmental factors manifest in four different ways: (1) milieu, to include geography, demographics, family size, and SES, (2) people who influence the process of talent

development for individuals, (3) provisions in the form of programs and interventions, and (4) events within the control or outside of the control of the individual that may impact the process of talent development (Gagné, 2008).

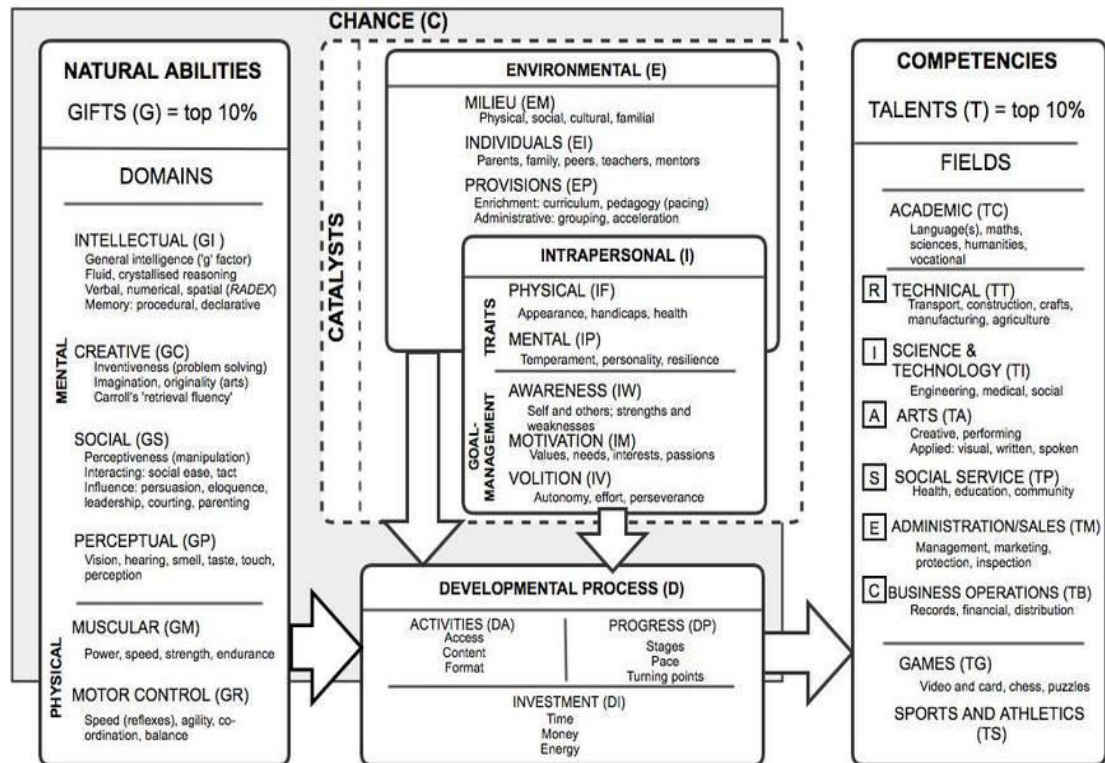


Figure 3. Gagné's DMGT 2.0. This figure illustrates Gagné's differentiated model of giftedness and talent. Adapted from "Motivation within the DMGT 2.0 Framework," by F. Gagné, 2010, *High-ability Studies*, 21(2), p. 83.

Gagné's DMGT emphasizes the need for cultivation of gifts into talents, suggesting that help, time, and effort encompass support from the environment (e.g., people and programs), as well as time (e.g., practice) and effort (e.g., volition) on the part of the individual must be invested in the process of talent development (Gagné, 2009; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). This assistance can come in many different forms outside of and within the home and school environment, but is more effective when it

involves student participation. Student ability to advise and direct their own talent development process relies largely on the responsibility and initiative of the student involved (Gagné, 2010). In order to navigate the talent development process, students must become aware of the role they play and engage in actions that promote that awareness (Subotnik et al., 2011). Numerous educational challenges threaten the successful talent development of students of color. However, the talent development perspective offers several considerations to assist students to become successful.

Merits of the Talent Development Perspective

Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach (2012) emphasize the idea that, through formalized processes of identification, many gifted education programs across the nation tend to recognize already-developed talent as high-achievement. However, the early views on the topic of talent development included the recognition of intelligence, ability, and traits unrestrained by IQ, as well as traits that serve a larger population of gifted students, to include those from diverse cultural and disadvantaged backgrounds (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). According to Olszewski-Kubilius et al. (2015) and Subotnik et al. (2011), research has moved beyond the study of human exceptionality to explore how talent development occurs within specific domains over time (the arts, sciences, technology, sports, etc.). The information discovered can facilitate discussion and possibly generate solutions for persistent educational issues in society. Three questions guide this exploration: (1) why minority students underperform compared to mainstream students at all education and SES levels, (2) why school opportunities are not increased for the upward mobility of certain sectors of society, and (3) why women and other minority groups are significantly underrepresented in some academic arenas,

especially the sciences. The authors view talent development as a way to enhance the educational experiences of these students (Subotnik et al., 2011).

In addition, Subotnik et al. (2011) argue that, although opportunities provided and promoted by society are integral at every level of the process of talent development, talented individuals must assume “some responsibility for their own growth and development...both cognitive and psychosocial variables are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated...effort and appropriate educational programming, training, and support are required to develop a student’s talents and abilities” (p. 3). In other words, as students assume responsibility for their talent development, their talent may be further developed to achieve successful gifted education outcomes as adults (Gagné, 2010). A philosophical shift towards talent development, though somewhat controversial, may assist in increasing the diversity of student populations in gifted education programs across the nation (Ford, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilus & Thomson, 2015b). A better understanding of the process to develop different domains of talent can improve identification of more students (gifted, learning disabled, minority, and low income) and successful nurturing of their abilities (Subotnik et al., 2011) to develop potential and increase successful adult outcomes.

Talent Development and Successful Adult Outcomes

Another important consideration about the talent development perspective is the number and combination of opportunities and support for the development of abilities in different talent domains. Acceleration and enrichment are prominent methods in gifted education to increase depth and complexity in learning (Gagné, 2008). However, another interesting component is that of *educational dose*, or frequency of exposure to different

educational opportunities (Wai et al., 2010). Although differences in exposure and opportunity vary widely for different student populations, the appropriate mix of opportunity can meet student needs. Wai et al.'s study (2010) sought to investigate how individual opportunity and experiences in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), such as AP courses, math and science fairs, and tutoring, relate to real-world accomplishments, such as PhDs, publications, tenure-track positions, patents, and occupations in the STEM content areas (Wai et al., 2010).

Wai et al. (2010) conducted two studies: one regarding mathematically talented adolescents and one regarding top-ranked STEM graduate students. The researchers hypothesized that adolescents and top-ranked STEM graduate students with a greater frequency of STEM educational opportunities would achieve more STEM accomplishments later on in life than those who did not. Findings suggest rich opportunities for depth and complexity are indeed associated with noteworthy contributions and accomplishments later in life for adolescents (Wai et al., 2010). Another finding from the study was the self-selection of motivated students into enrichment opportunities as a possible reason for their successful adult outcomes. However, motivation for STEM was not an explanation for graduate student success. The high concentration of early and advanced learning experiences cultivated their successful accomplishments (Wai et al., 2010).

In another study, Lubinski, Benbow, and Kell (2014) examined the life paths and overall accomplishments 40 years later of two cohorts of mathematically talented 13-year-olds to better understand their talent-development process. Numerous accomplishments of the participants were identified: terminal degrees, published books

and articles, secured patents, and tenure at research intensive institutions, all of which far exceed base-rate expectations, although they differed by sex. Findings suggest a discernible picture of how participants' lives evolved and how mathematical precocity early in life predicts creative contributions and leadership in critical occupational roles for both males and females. In a similar study that examined 12-year-old Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) scholars, Makel, Kell, Lubinski, Putallaz, and Benbow (2016) identified numerous extraordinary life accomplishments among the participants 40 years later. Findings suggest different abilities, just like varied interests, predict and guide trajectories of development. However, "ability level, along with commitment, determines whether and the extent to which noteworthy accomplishments are reached if the opportunity presents itself" (Makel et al., 2016, p. 1004). Although similar in intent, neither study examined Black precocious youth and their extraordinary accomplishments as talented adults.

Currently, there is no research available to address the talent development process for Black expert scholars in the field of education, who have been appointed to endowed and distinguished professorships. Hartlep et al. (2016) suggest that distinguished and endowed positions are regarded as the highest honor an institution can award to faculty, and reserved for eminent scholars whose work is believed to substantially advance a discipline or field of study. Stone (2001) describes appointment as an endowed chair as "unique because it is the one criterion that depends almost exclusively on one or a combination of five qualities—superiority of intellect, excellence of scholarship, productivity of research, inspirational teaching, and in some instances, the charisma of

leadership” (p. 121). Appointment as a distinguished professor is also unique as it usually includes an endowed professorship (Kaba, 2016).

Social Network Theory

As previously discussed, the talent development perspective is situated within the field of gifted education and focused on students. However, understanding the talent development process of expert Black scholars described as endowed and distinguished faculty in academia is the intent of this study. To frame the meaning attributed to participant lived experiences of the phenomenon, a framework was needed for adults related to the concepts found within the talent development perspective and intersectionality of experience. Social network theory is the theoretical framework chosen for the study (Figure 2). Social network theory is a viable framework to use because social interaction is important for successful adult outcomes, especially related to educational matriculation, doctoral study, and academia (Hartlep et al., 2016). The same concepts are emphasized throughout the talent development perspective. Further, the concept of homophily is also an important factor in social network theory and related to several concepts (Hartlep et al., 2016; McPherson et al., 2001): status, race and ethnicity, gender, education level, career, and social standing. Homophily, the preference to be with similar people, structures relationships and social network connections in the lives of individuals. McPherson et al. (2001) elaborate as follows:

Homophily limits people’s social worlds in a way that has powerful implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience. Homophily in race and ethnicity creates the strongest divides in our personal environments, with age, religion, education, occupation, and gender

following in roughly that order. Geographic propinquity, families, organizations, and isomorphic positions in social systems all create context in which homophilous relations form. (p. 415)

Another important consideration of homophily is its prevalence in the field of education through the ecological processes that link its components together.

Educational institutions are social places of interaction for children and adults where individuals are encouraged to challenge their comfort zones. However, educator access to information and experiences affects attitudes, outlooks, and professional outcomes (McPherson et al., 2001). “Evidence of homophily is regularly found in the multiclassed realm of education,” especially in specialized programs like gifted education and among distinguished faculty and endowed chairs in higher education, and suggests significant consequences (Hartlep et al., 2016, p. 125).

The principle of homophily also emphasizes the notion that there is more contact between similar people than those who are not, and gives credence to the adage “birds of a feather flock together” (McPherson et al., 2001). Two types of racial/ethnic homophily, baseline and inbreeding, further demonstrate this notion. “Baseline patterns strongly shape networks by influencing the opportunity structure for contacts, both within large populations and within smaller social settings” (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 429). Often complementing the baseline, inbreeding homophily (participation prompted by voluntary means and personal preference) is concentrated on smaller categories of individuals, usually considered minorities who have associates much more similar to them than expected, given social networks and opportunities they participate in are usually dominated by the majority group (McPherson et al., 2001). Intersectionality is also an

important consideration of racial homophily as intersections of identity and status compound social experiences (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; McPherson et al., 2001).

Expert Black scholars experience intersectionality of status and encounter themes and experiences related to the principle of homophily as they move up the ranks from junior faculty to serve as endowed and distinguished faculty at their respective institutions. These scholars have been awarded the most coveted recognition of success in academia, yet they work in academic spaces that reflect their underrepresentation (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Older, White males occupy most distinguished and endowed positions in elite institutions of higher education, and these institutions perpetuate the stereotype in the hiring process (Hartlep et al. 2016). The situation is further compounded by status homophily (e.g., race, gender, age) that penetrate the academic spaces of higher education and pose a serious threat to the diversification of distinguished and endowed faculty positions (Hartlep et al., 2016; McPherson et al., 2001). It is well documented in research that individuals of color face numerous challenges throughout their educational matriculation and in the workplace (Agosto & Karanxha, 2011; Berry, 2010; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Daniel, 2010; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow, 2011; Frazier, 2011; Sulé 2011; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). However, expert Black scholars who have achieved recognition as distinguished and endowed faculty are among the highest achievers in academia.

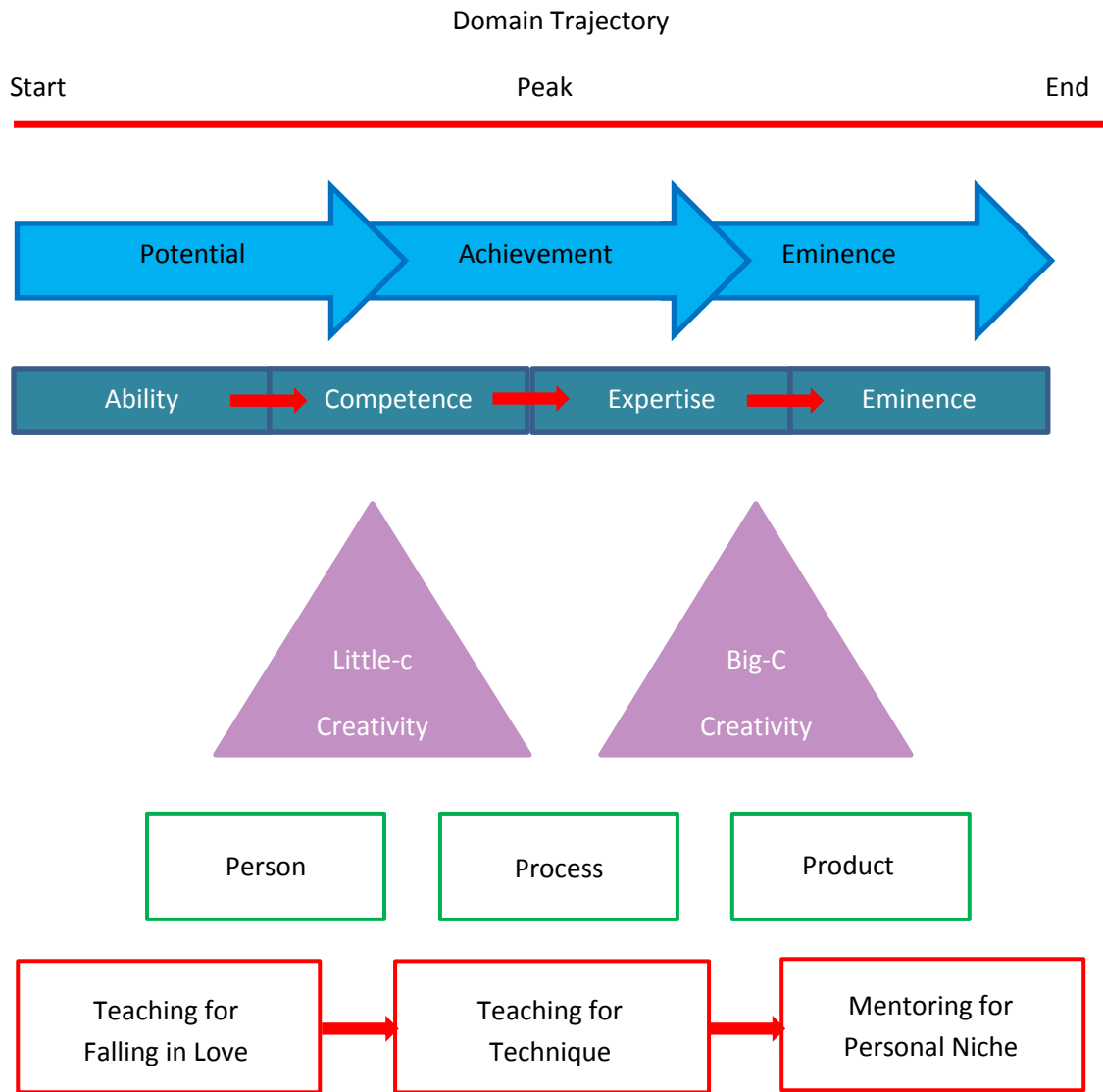
The Psychosocial Aspect of Talent Development

In addition to factors related to social interaction, notably, a sizeable portion of the psychosocial component of talent development is related to student responsibility.

Subotnik et al. (2011) outline the development of giftedness and talent into four stages: childhood *potential*, *competence*, *expertise*, and adult *eminence* (Figure 4). Psychosocial skills, which can be taught and developed (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015a; Subotnik, 2015), change in importance throughout these talent development stages. Throughout the Potential stage of talent development, opportunities cultivate interest, curiosity, and confidence to try new things. Students should be encouraged to investigate these interests independently and with the assistance of others who can help them build specific knowledge early on. During the Competency stage, students develop psychosocial skills related to commitment, purposeful learning, and practice, such as willingness to learn and time management. Students in this stage begin to find their niche and role in their process of talent development as they identify personal characteristics (strengths, weaknesses, and mindsets) that may impact future success positively or negatively. Students also learn to deal with undesirable aspects of the talent development process, such as letdowns and frustration, using coping skills that encourage persistence in the face of challenge (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b).

Next, in the stage of Expertise, specialized interests begin to surface as students navigate the talent domain. Skills such as commitment, initiative, and stress-management surface as students take on the personal responsibility of directing their talent development, and acquire the assistance needed to do so. Problem-solving skills also come into play as students consider advice offered from mentors, connect with individuals having similar interest in the field, and produce original creative work. Finally, Eminence is recognized when individuals become socialized in their respective talent domain or field as influential contributors. Psychosocial skills related to

productivity, creativity, and resilience, as well as diligence in promoting one’s self, are especially important at this stage (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b).



*Figure 4. From Ability to Eminence. This figure shows movement through Subotnik et al.’s (2011) Mega Model of Talent Development. Adapted from “Rethinking Giftedness and Gifted Education: A Proposed Direction Forward Based on Psychological Science,” by R. F. Subotnik, P. Olszewski-Kubilius, and F. C. Worrell, 2011, *Association for Psychological Science*, 12(1), p. 34.*

The current study was situated within the Expertise stage of the talent development process and explored the lived experiences of expert Black scholars in

academia. The process of achieving success for these highly able individuals is worthy of investigation as these individuals may or may not have been formally identified to receive gifted education services in school. The fine-tuning of specific psychosocial skills also has merit as psychosocial skills are related to different stages of the talent development process. In order for individuals to engage successfully in their personal talent development process, recognition must be given to the role of responsibility in their own process, particularly that of self-determination.

Self-Determination

Psychosocial factors that affect talent development include concepts related to self-determination, and ways that students can get involved in their own talent development process, communicate their interests, and get the support they need to be successful (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). According to Wehmeyer et al. (2012), self-determined students embody the following characteristics:

Students who self-determine learning set educational goals based upon their own interests, abilities, and needs; meaningfully participate in decisions pertaining to the design of interventions to achieve this goal; implement strategies that enable them to modify and regulate their own behavior; and utilize strategies that support them to track their progress toward the goal and to modify either the goal or the action plan, as needed. (p. 136)

Wehmeyer's (2005) Functional Theory of Self-Determination defines self-determined behavior as "volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and to maintain or improve one's quality of life" (p. 117). These actions can be summarized into four notable characteristics of self-determined behavior on the part of

the individual: (1) autonomous action, (2) self-regulated behaviors, (3) taking empowered initiative to respond to the event, and (4) self-realized mannerisms (Shogren, Kennedy, Dowsett, Villareal, & Little, 2013; Wehmeyer, 2005; Wehmeyer & Abery, 2013).

In relation to autonomy, a person who acts on his or her own beliefs, values, and self-regulation encourages behaviors toward goal achievement, making choices, making decisions, as well as solving problems. Empowered individuals possess a locus of control that assists them in dealing with problems along the way to achieving desired outcomes. Finally, self-realization enables goal-setting and allows individuals to make choices and decisions that utilize self-knowledge (Ohtake & Wehmeyer, 2004). Also central to the theory is the causal agency and volitional action aspect of self-determination capacity that increases over the life of an individual (Shogren et al., 2013; Wehmeyer, 2005). This theory provides an understanding of the personal characteristics that lead people to act in a self-determined manner, as well as capacities and opportunities for self-determined action, as opposed to the actual process of becoming a self-determined individual (Shogren et al., 2013). By learning to advocate for themselves through self-determined behaviors and deliberate action, students of color can develop academically and personally, obtaining assistance, resources, and opportunities to ensure the successful outcomes of their talent development process.

Causal Agency Theory

As a reconceptualization and extension of Wehmeyer's functional model of self-determination, causal agency theory explains how people develop self-determination capacity and how they explain the actions and beliefs essential to engagement in self-initiated, self-directed action (Shogren et al., 2015). Embedded within the theory is the

conceptualization of self-determination as a psychological construct generally found in theories of “human agentic behavior” (Shogren et al., 2015, p. 256). The theory provides an outline of the layers of human agency and presents causal agency as the most influential component in the development of the agentic self (see Figure 1). People are characterized as causal agents when they make or cause things to happen in their lives, without the direction or prompting of other stimuli (Shogren et al., 2015). Three essential characteristics lead to causal agency: volitional action, agentic action, and action-control beliefs. Volitional action involves intentional, conscious choice-making; agentic action is the self-initiated and directed method by which something is done or achieved; action-control beliefs are comprised of an individual’s sense of empowerment related to ability to achieve their own goals (Shogren et al., 2015).

According to Shogren et al. (2015), the promotion of self-determination enhances the capacity to achieve success beyond educational matriculation as an adult. Academic and environmental provisions can be made to support the development of causal agency and eventually the agentic self. Undeniably, interventions to promote self-determination are appropriate and beneficial for students of all ability levels. Through this person-environment interaction, people are influenced by the context in which they live and develop to become causal agents that influence their own pathways, notably, the socio-contextual—“supports and opportunities and threats and impediments” that have the ability to influence or be influenced by the strata of human agency (Shogren et al., 2015).

Causal agency theory served as an appropriate theoretical foundation for the study as it emphasizes how people develop self-determination capacity to become causal agents. Additionally, the theory explains the essential components of self-initiated and

directed action that lead to successful attainment of personal goals (Shogren et al., 2015). As the purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and lived experiences of expert Black scholars pertaining to their process of talent development, it is also worthwhile to know what moves these individuals toward successful adult and career outcomes.

Self-Determination and Talent Development

One important, yet unexamined, connection can be made between self-determination and the psychosocial perspective of talent development. Remarkably, the development of self-determination capacity is similar to the lifespan perspective of talent development as it is an extended process from childhood to adulthood. According to Gómez-Vela, Alonso, Gil, Corbella, and Wehmeyer (2012), individual traits that influence self-determination capacity start in infancy and continue into adulthood. However, few studies have highlighted the importance of considering individual characteristics and environmental factors in the development of self-determination capacity. Wehmeyer and Garner (2003) studied the influence of individual characteristics and factors (including intelligence level) on adults with disabilities and their self-determination capacity. Findings suggest self-determination capacity is not predetermined by IQ, and perception of choice opportunity was identified as the most powerful predictor of high self-determination. Study results indicate self-determination represents how much individuals take on the role of a causal agent in their own lives to encourage desired outcomes. Therefore, people of all levels of intellectual capacity can be enabled to assume this role in their own lives.

Generally, residential, learning, career, and entertainment environments may promote self-determination more than individual characteristics, including IQ (Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003, p. 255). As suggested by Wehmeyer and Garner (2003), two contributing issues should receive attention when assessing the degree to which someone is self-determined. First, does the person possess skills of problem-solving, goal setting, and decision making, as well as self-advocacy to be a causal agent and realize intended behavior and performance outcomes in their own lives? Second, to what degree do the life, learning, work, and social environments provide opportunities for people to make appropriate choices and decisions? The consideration of self-determination being impacted positively or negatively by environmental factors, personal characteristics, and level of intelligence is addressed by the researchers. These factors align with the environmental and intrapersonal catalysts found in Gagné's (2010) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), as an emphasis is placed on the role of motivation and volition.

Self-Determination and Students of Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

Few studies have investigated self-determination as related to students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Zhang, Wehmeyer, and Chen (2005) investigated the similarities and differences concerning teachers' and parents' engagement in fostering self-determination in students in the US and the Republic of China (Taiwan). The authors suggest that teachers and parents play an important role in helping students develop self-determination skills, especially students of minority status. In addition, because families play an important role in the development of self-determined capacity in their children, families should work with teachers, especially early on in the educational process, to

foster that development. Study findings indicate efforts to foster self-determination by both groups (parents and teachers) seemed to be more apparent at the secondary level than at the primary level for both countries (the US and Taiwan). However, efforts on the part of the teacher were reportedly higher on average than efforts on the part of the parents for both levels (primary and secondary). Notably, although teachers' efforts were similar in both countries, parents in the US were more engaged in fostering self-determination than Taiwanese parents at both the elementary and secondary levels, a reflection of differing cultural values. Consequently, the major difference between the countries was in reference to helping students in planning activities to progress toward goal achievement.

There is limited knowledge of how culturally and linguistically diverse (CLED) students perceive the construct of self-determination (Leake & Boone, 2007; Shogren, 2011). Shogren et al. (2013) explored the influence of race/ethnicity of disabled students on autonomy, self-realization, and psychological empowerment, three critical factors of self-determination. Findings suggest complicated patterns of differences within varied disability groups based on race/ethnicity. Trainor (2002, 2005) suggests cultural identity may influence self-determination strategies used by youth of various racial and ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Black and Latino American male youth). The perceptions of European, African, and Hispanic American male students regarding self-determination were explored. Findings suggest students identified themselves and family as key players in planning as school thwarted self-determination efforts.

Self-Advocacy and Students of Color

In addition to self-determination, available research in the field of gifted education concerning talent development and the development of psychosocial skills includes elements related to self-advocacy (Subotnik et al., 2011). The majority of existing research on self-advocacy emphasizes equipping students who have disabilities and special needs with the skills needed to acquire appropriate educational accommodations throughout their secondary and post-secondary educational process for academic success (Astramovich & Harris, 2007). However, one article emphasizes the need for Black students with disabilities to develop self-advocacy skills for successful transition into post-secondary education and success. Walker and Test (2011) provide an overview of a program developed to help Black students advocate for themselves, as well as determine their own educational outcomes on the post-secondary level.

Self-advocacy, built on the principles of self-determination, empowerment, and social justice, may prove powerful in challenging the achievement gap and other social obstacles to promote the educational success of students of color (Astramovich & Harris, 2007; Dowden, 2009). Self-advocacy competencies, such as awareness, knowledge, and skills can be taught to minority students to assist them throughout the schooling process. Awareness and appreciation of cultural background, as well as identifying those who may offer assistance in the educational system can help students become strong self-advocates. Additionally, assembling knowledge and information about the oppression perpetuated through practice and procedures within the educational system is key to understanding what action(s) to take for educational success, as well as what may inhibit those actions. Finally, skills such as assertiveness and the ability to negotiate and work

with individuals within and outside of the school community as partners for success are essential to developing plans of action to realize self-advocacy potential. Educators and school counselors are in positions of authority to assist students of color with navigating these challenges and help them to develop academically, personally, and for specific talent domains or career fields (Astramovich & Harris, 2007; Subotnik, 2015; Subotnik et al., 2012).

Psychosocial Skills Training for Successful Outcomes

All students of all backgrounds and ability levels can benefit from opportunities, instruction, and psychosocial skills training related to achieving successful educational outcomes. Self-advocacy has been identified as an essential element of self-determination (Hart & Brehm, 2013; Poehls, 2009). Concerning adolescents, Gil (2007) examined the connection between self-determination and self-advocacy for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college. Suggestions for a smooth transition to post-secondary education include an awareness of available services, an understanding of student rights and responsibilities, self-disclosure of disabilities with accompanied documentation, and collaboration among professionals in contact with these students. Having specific skills related to self-determination and self-advocacy are also emphasized. Findings suggest self-determination can be developed as an important skill to assist students with disabilities in striving to become strong self-advocates throughout their educational matriculation.

As noted, self-advocacy concerning children with special needs or disabilities has been emphasized in the literature (Astramovich & Harris, 2007, p. 271). However, Walker and Test (2011) provide evidence for the need for self-advocacy in other levels of

education. In order for students to self-advocate, learned self-determination capacity such as knowledge of oneself, including personal interests and needs, must serve as a prerequisite (Gil, 2007; Poehls, 2009; Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005).

Successful adult outcomes and students of color. Simonton (2008) replicated a previous historiometric study by examining the lives of 291 Eminent (high-achieving) Black individuals. Findings suggest early giftedness is positively correlated to eminence and creative achievement in adulthood. Investment in programs designed for this population is needed regardless of racial and ethnic background. His results challenge some of the most common approaches to the identification of gifted children (Simonton, 2008, p. 252). Additionally, Grantham's (2012) response to Subotnik et al.'s (2011) perspective urges authors to view talent development through the lens of equity to consider the degree of appropriateness for underrepresented gifted student populations (e.g. Black, Hispanic, and low-income) and provides discussion through appropriate scholarship.

Undoubtedly, interpersonal skills, opportunity, environment, and social interaction are critical in advocating for self as a causal agent in one's talent development process for successful outcomes. Much like self-determined ability, social skills develop throughout the lifespan, from childhood and into adulthood. One's social circle is an important tool that has the power to create or limit opportunity for development and advancement in life. For this reason, social network theory as a theoretical framework and the conceptual framework of casual agency theory will complement each other to help frame participant lived experiences and the phenomenon of talent development for successful outcomes among expert Black scholars in education. Examining the talent

development process of highly successful individuals, especially students of color in K-12, is important. Moreover, as the major goal of the talent development perspective is successful adult outcomes, more information on Black faculty in academia and the talent development of expert Black scholars appointed as distinguished and endowed faculty in academia is needed.

Expert Black Scholars in Academia

Expert Black scholars in academia are an example of a group of individuals that represent the attainment of successful adult outcomes. However, the Black faculty member experience in higher education is replete with well-documented challenges: discrimination, identity, isolation, and broader legal structures outside of academia. The majority of research on faculty of color highlights the underrepresentation of these individuals in higher education (Diggs et al., 2009); barriers to recruitment and retention during the tenure process as well as faculty mentoring and support (Daniel, 2010; Diggs et al., 2009; Frazier, 2011; Turner et al., 2008); multifaceted life experiences and stories of women faculty of color, especially Black and Latino women in academia (Agosto & Karanxha, 2011; Daniel, 2010; Edwards et al., 2011; Sulé, 2011); discrimination and isolation experiences at predominantly White institutions (Daniel, 2010); implications of intersectionality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; McPherson et al., 2001; Sulé, 2011) and critical race theory (Berry, 2010; Sulé, 2011).

Black faculty at research-intensive institutions. The Black faculty experience at research intensive PWIs presents another level of challenge. Griffin and Reddick (2011) presented a powerful view of service commitments and other compulsory obligations faced by Black faculty at research intensive (RI) colleges and universities. The narratives

of 37 Black faculty members were examined pertaining to participant experiences of mentoring. Results concluded intersectional themes of race and gender that affect mentoring and experiences. Challenges within academic spaces for Black men as well as Black women were considered. Overall, Black faculty who participated in the study recognized the high demand for their mentorship and formed closer relationships with students than their White counterparts.

Additionally, Louis et al. (2016) used the scholarly personal narrative (SPN) approach to explore the lived experience of four Black tenure-track and tenured faculty at three predominantly White public research universities. Using SPN, participants were asked to write personal reflections of their experiences with microaggressions, in conjunction with the researcher's participation (Louis et al., 2016). Four themes emerged from the study: the common occurrence of microaggressions, unsuccessful attempts to address the microaggressors, stress throughout the journey, and resiliency while navigating a White-dominated field. The authors also included ways Black faculty and superiors can address these concerns.

Black faculty success. Although an exhaustive amount of research is available pertaining to the challenges Black faculty face in academia, there is limited research pertaining to the paths of success of Black scholars. In the post 1960s era, Black scholars have made gradual progress toward entry as faculty in academia. Recognized notions of success in higher education include achieving the status of tenure as a full professor. Black faculty have made significant progress in earning tenure and promotion to associate and full professor status in academia, and some progress has been made in their appointment to endowed and distinguished professorships education (Kaba, 2016).

Daniel (2010) suggests academia consists of teaching content, service to the academic community, and research; faculty who learn to master these three demands will achieve success. Edwards et al. (2011) explore factors impacting the success of Black women faculty at public research institutions through participant career paths and personal background. Findings were that the women viewed success through publishing, giving back through service, and recognizing it is a journey. Another merit of Black faculty success recognizes the vital role they play in the field of education, especially with regard to teacher preparation. “Certainly African American faculty can serve as a resource and counterbalance to prevailing notions of African American communities, for both adults and children” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 212).

Psychosocial skills and faculty success. Research on faculty member success highlights the importance of calculated development to overcome challenges, time management, the establishment of various means of support, and negotiation for promotion, all of which are related to self-determination and causal agency (Gregory, 2001). Distinguished professor and endowed chair appointments are two of the highest honors and prestigious positions recognized in higher education. Although statistical data are available, qualitative research on expert Black scholars who reach this level of success in academia despite the aforementioned challenges is almost non-existent.

Additional Gaps in the Literature

The search for research that supports the development of psychosocial skills in education is not difficult to find pertaining to special and gifted education. In special education, there is an abundance of articles and books written that report the findings of studies that address the topic of self-determination and self-advocacy among students

with intellectual and other disabilities (Gil, 2007). Although there is a direct connection between self-determination and self-advocacy in the field of special education, as demonstrated in the literature regarding students with disabilities, high-ability, gifted, and talented students could also benefit from such instruction and special services. Although the importance of psychosocial skill development has been addressed in the field of gifted education, there is little research addressing the connection between psychosocial skills important to the talent development of minority high-ability, gifted, and/or talented students. Furthermore, there is no research available that addresses the perceptions of these students concerning the talent development process or self-determined, deliberate action during the process. This is a notable gap in the research, because, as discussed previously, the development and use of psychosocial skills play an important role in the talent development process. Adding to the lack of research on eminent individuals and high-ability students of color in the field of gifted education, no research is available on Black high achievers or expert scholars and perceptions of their own talent development.

Causal agency, talent development, and gifted students of color. The psychosocial concerns associated with talent development are experienced by the majority of gifted individuals (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). However, cultural background, gender, and the environment influence individual trajectories of talent development (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). Subotnik et al. (2011) offer several concerns for future research with regard to this population:

1. “What are the person-environment interactions that are significant in developing psychological traits conducive to high levels of talent development?” (p. 36)

2. “How might existing psychological constructs such as stereotype threat, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, attributions, mind-sets, achievement-goal orientation, and academic self-concept and related theoretical models be useful in providing explanations for failure of talented students to engage in talent development activities?” (p. 38)
3. “What additional social and psychological supports are most crucial for students who have had little opportunity to develop or demonstrate interests and abilities?” (p. 38)

These questions lend additional support to the idea that psychosocial skills are needed to help gifted CLED students deal with challenges associated with talent development. The lack of research on the thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of gifted and talented high achieving students of color lends credence to the need for further research on the topic.

To address the current gap in the literature concerning experiences of talent development among successful Black adults, the researcher explored the perceptions and experiences of Black high-ability individuals related to their personal and academic talent development. Of particular importance to the study are findings highlighting what participants experienced and how context influenced their perceptions of their experiences. This additional evidence provided more insight and a different view of the talent development process for CLED students. Therefore, the intent of the study was to understand the lived experiences of expert Black scholars and their perceptions of their own talent development process. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education?
2. How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes?

Summary

There is no question that students of color and students of low SES remain underrepresented in gifted and talented programs across the nation and face a large number of school, psychological, social, and family challenges that affect their talent development (Grubb, 2011; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). The environment and communities in which gifted students live can provide resources to assist with these issues and encourage talent development (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2010). Black students are among the nationally underrepresented student groups in gifted education (Ford, 2014; Ford et al., 2011; Mayes & Moore, 2016). However, Black students that are not identified to receive gifted education services may still be able to participate in their own process of talent development to achieve successful adult outcomes. While the research does provide a detailed overview of the challenges to achievement and needs of this group, and the concept of talent development, it is evident that investigation into the topics of talent development and psychosocial skill development is needed, as related to CLED students, and more specifically, high-achieving Black students. An investigation to find out what encourages or inhibits high-achieving Black students decision-making toward successful outcomes during their own talent development process is also needed.

This summary of the relevant literature provides a foundation for the study, as there is no research available pertaining to the self-determined deliberate action of Black

gifted and talented individuals for successful adult outcomes. Does self-determined deliberate action play an important role in the talent development of Black high-ability students? If so, how might that change their post-secondary academic and career trajectories? How does this information apply to the talent development process of gifted and talent students in general? The aim of the study was to understand the lived experiences of expert Black scholars (endowed chairs and distinguished professors) regarding their process of talent development. Of particular interest to the researcher was what the participants experience regarding talent development and how context influenced the process. By examining the educational experiences of expert Black scholars, the investigation contributed to the current knowledge base regarding Black high-ability students, causal agency, and the talent development process.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This chapter includes a description of the research design, including the methods chosen and the research questions that guided the collection and analysis of study data. The participants and procedure for choosing the sample are also described, as well as the role of the researcher. The method of data collection and analysis utilized for the study, and safeguards addressing accuracy and ethical considerations pertaining to the study, are provided. The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of expert Black scholars pertaining to their personal and academic talent development. The intent of the researcher was to understand the lived experience of expert Black scholars along their journey toward becoming highly successful individuals in their field. Of special interest to the researcher was how these individuals developed their talent for successful life and career outcomes.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research allows for the exploration of certain problems and phenomena as experienced by individuals and enables the researcher to interact with participants in a natural setting to collect data using multiple, research-based methods for complex understanding of their perceptions (Creswell, 2013). As the researcher intended to understand the lived experiences of expert Black scholars, phenomenology is the approach of best fit for this qualitative research study.

Methodological Approach: Phenomenology

The characteristics of qualitative research include rigorous data collection and analysis procedures, the presentation of multiple realities among participant experiences, the researcher as instrument, and ethical considerations (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows for the exploration of the lived experiences of a group of individuals and what they have in common, to obtain a description of the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In phenomenology, questions of *what* and *how* related to participant experiences are of interest to the researcher. Additionally, the approach is utilized frequently in the field of education and first-hand accounts of participant lived experiences pertaining to a phenomenon are important to discover commonalities in experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

Philosophical assumptions of phenomenology point to the need to explore lived experience rather than theoretical explanations, and the need for the researcher to identify (in writing) and set aside personal experiences related to the phenomenon in question that may influence the interpretation of study findings (Creswell, 2013). Outlining the role of the researcher also helps to separate researcher experiences from those of the participants. Other tenets of phenomenology include protocols for data collection and specific procedures for analysis of the data to formulate a description of the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). As the researcher intended to take a look at the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants, transcendental phenomenology was the specific approach chosen for this qualitative investigation (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Transcendental phenomenology is a psychological approach to

phenomenology focused on the first-hand perceptions and lived experiences of participants, without the interference of related personal experiences of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). Other tenets of the approach explore the evolution of participant lived-experiences related to the phenomenon from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, volition, to action, structured as conscious representations of what participants experienced first-hand (Moustakas, 1994).

The lived experiences (i.e., academic, personal, and professional experiences) of a sample of expert Black scholars in the field of education were examined. Meaning-making was initiated by the individuals of focus and facilitated by the researcher. Within the phenomenological approach, the significant role of writing in research is emphasized through the richness of description and interpretation. The researcher analyzed participant interviews for deeper understanding, using their perceptions and experiences to describe the phenomenon. Interviews were recorded and transcripts prepared for analysis, including the movement from specific details, to themes and larger constructs of the essence of meaning, as suggested by the phenomenological approach.

Research Questions

The research questions at the center of research design inform, directly affect, and are impacted by all other components of the study (Allen, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). Two general questions guided the study, as recommended by Moustakas (1994):

Research Question 1: What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education?

Examining the lived experiences of expert Black scholars provided insight regarding their process of talent development. Learning about the lived experiences and

talent development of expert Black scholars may help to inform the talent development of highly able, and gifted and talented students of color. Areas of focus that encouraged the occurrence of successful outcomes within and beyond preK-12 education for the participants were also identified.

Research Question 2: How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes?

As suggested by Hartlep et al. (2016): “Future studies might follow the lead of Thompson et al. (2015) and capture the first-person experiences of Endowed Chair and Distinguished Professor faculty via qualitative research, to determine the impact of these positions on students, lines of inquiry, and the field” (p. 135). It is important to understand what Black, high-ability individuals perceive as influential to developing their talent. Likewise, it is also important to understand which factors influence Black high-ability students to develop personally and academically in the domains in which they have the most talent and aptitude. Research must be conducted to explore the phenomenon of talent development to determine where effort needs to be concentrated to help students reach their full potential and work towards successful adult outcomes.

Each interview began with one open-ended question: Tell me about your experiences along the journey of becoming a highly accomplished faculty member in the field of education. Seven sub-questions were also provided as a flexible guide for the researcher as recommended by Creswell (2013):

1. What, if any, challenges have you encountered along your journey? How did you get through them for successful outcomes?

2. How and at what point did you decide to pursue your current career and research area?
3. What was it like growing up in your home, neighborhood, and school environments? What role did these and other contexts play in your talent development process?
4. What personal strengths separate you from your colleagues and peers?
5. Who has been the most influential in your education? What qualities do they possess? How do they differ from the person most influential along your career trajectory?
6. What resources were most valuable to the development of your talent? How did you advocate for yourself and those resources along your career path?
7. What, if anything, happened by chance along the journey?

Participant Sample

Expert Black scholars were the individuals of focus for the study due to the unique characteristics of the group. These scholars have experienced the phenomenon of achieving the highest professional honors in academia and have exercised vast amounts of time, effort, and dedication to become an expert in a particular field or domain. A criterion sample was utilized to ensure participants met the qualifications of experience with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013), and participants had to satisfy the following requirements to be included in the sample for investigation. First, participants had to identify as African, African-American, or Black (Caribbean or Latino of African descent). Second, participants must have been awarded either endowed chair or distinguished professor status in the field of education. Information on Black scholars in

the field of education is limited, compared to other academic fields (i.e., the humanities). The scholar criterion exemplifies the amount of dedication and education required to move towards expertise in a particular field (Kiewra, 2008). Appointment as an endowed chair or distinguished professorship exemplified a publically recognized level of academic expertise. By identifying and using specific criteria for selecting participants, the perceptions and experiences of these individuals was obtained to “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 156).

A sample of 10 expert Black scholars who have experienced the phenomenon of talent development for successful outcomes volunteered to participate in the study. The participant sample came from the list of more than 52 endowed chairs and distinguished professors in education as identified by the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (Hartlep & Theodosopoulos, 2014) and distributed by the American Educational Research Association (AERA). A directory was created using Microsoft Word for pictures, contact phone numbers, email addresses, and biographical websites of the 52 distinguished and/or endowed scholars. Of the 43 endowed scholars listed, all but eight contact numbers, five emails, and three websites were accessible via the Internet. Of the nine distinguished scholars listed, all but one phone number was accessible via the Internet. Later during the study, the email of one endowed scholar listed was provided by a participant, as well as the contact information for another endowed scholar not listed.

As the researcher intended to have a representation of expert Black scholars as study participants, this accessible list of highly accomplished Black scholars in the field of education proved to be a source from which to obtain a robust sample. To contact

potential participants, the researcher utilized electronic communication. An invitation to participate was sent via email to each scholar. Subsequent follow-up emails were sent to those who had not yet responded until 10 participants were secured for the study.

Procedure

As human subjects are involved, the researcher obtained permission (Appendix A) to conduct the study from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval, initial communication was established by email with potential participants (Appendix B), followed by subsequent emails to secure participants (Appendix C). The study explanation was made available electronically to potential participants as well. The acknowledgement of voluntary participation, any risk involved in participation, benefits, confidentiality, and other information was outlined in the consent form (Appendix D) to allow potential participants to make an informed decision (Creswell, 2013). Each participant was asked to indicate written consent. Participants followed the link to the consent form via email. Acknowledgement of written consent from each participant who agreed to participate in the study directed participants to complete a biographical survey online via the Qualtrics online survey platform prior to their individual interviews. The survey provided information to aid in the creation of a biographical sketch for each expert scholar. The biographical sketches highlight academic, personal, and professional accomplishments of each participant, as well as general demographic information.

The biographical questionnaire (Appendix E) collected data about gender, age range, ethnicity, highest education level of parents, home environment, type of K-12 institution, type of K-12 educational program, extracurricular activities, type of undergraduate institution, type of graduate institution, academic area of expertise, and

degree type to present a biographical sketch of each participant. A summary of participant responses is provided in Appendix F.

Participants also received the option to have their interview conducted by phone or by videoconference via Google Hangout or SKYPE software. All participants selected to be interviewed by telephone. One overall question guided the interview. Sub-questions were used for the additional discussion of details and subsequent follow-up questions were asked as needed for clarification. All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for ease of data analysis. Each transcription represented a verbatim account of the interview content in document form, which allowed for reflection and accountability on the part of the researcher. After each interview, the researcher prepared handwritten notes to highlight tentative ideas that informed subsequent data analysis (Allen, 2017). All interviews were member-checked with each participant by email to ensure accuracy. The member-checking process also allowed participants to correct, elaborate on and/or add anything they may have omitted from their original interview response. Participants revised any information from the interview transcript that they determined to be incomplete or inaccurate (Creswell, 2013).

Interviews were conducted in one telephone conversation. The researcher began the interview with a brief introduction of the title and purpose of the study. An interview protocol with one central question and seven sub questions was developed for the study (Appendix G). Initially, each participant was asked to describe his or her developmental journey toward becoming a highly accomplished faculty member and expert scholar in the field of education. The semi-structured, open-ended phone interview with each participant was approximately 45 to 60 minutes in duration. One participant requested

the central question in preparation for the interview. The sub-questions flowed from participant responses pertaining to their lived experiences, perceptions of what their own process of talent development was like, how they were able to develop their academic talent for highly successful outcomes in their career field, and how they obtained distinguished and endowed professorships. Follow-up questions were asked as needed for a more detailed clarification during and after the interview. The use of open-ended questions allowed participants to openly share their experiences freely (Creswell, 2013). Interviews were audiotaped on a digital recorder and transcribed verbatim. Transcribed interviews were sent via email to each participant for review and member checking purposes. Five participants responded with comments, questions, or corrections; the original transcripts were revised accordingly.

Overall, the researcher encouraged participants to think retrospectively about their academic, personal, and professional experiences throughout their talent development process and the meanings they constructed from those experiences to describe the essence of the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

Interview data in the form of verbatim transcripts were prepared using word processing software and organized in computer files for ease of analysis. The thorough analysis of the data began after all individual interviews were transcribed and member-checked for accuracy. As indicated in chapters one and two, a conceptual framework (causal agency theory) and theoretical framework (social network theory) were utilized to help the researcher frame and interpret participant responses related to the phenomenon of interest: talent development toward successful outcomes.

Initially, the researcher read each transcript one time completely. As the transcripts were read several times, preliminary jottings (Saldana, 2009) and notes were prepared for preliminary coding using the selective reading and line-by-line approach. Within the selective reading approach, the researcher listened to or read the text several times to determine and isolate essential phrases and/or statements from participant interviews. Within the line-by-line approach, the researcher reviewed and transcribed every sentence of the participant interviews to determine what was revealed regarding the phenomenon of interest (Van Manen, 1990). To assist in the analysis of the qualitative data (participant interview responses), a team of two to three researchers was utilized as a form of peer debriefing to enhance accuracy by asking questions about the study data and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). As doctoral students, both team members previously completed CITI trainings and coursework, and previously designed and/or conducted quantitative and qualitative research. One team member was also in the final stages of the dissertation process and preparing for the oral defense. Each member of the team provided written consent (Appendix H) to voluntarily assist with the study analysis to help the researcher to identify initial code patterns and organize code categories from previously coded transcripts. A coded transcript sample is provided Appendix I.

The analysis of the data began after the member-checking phase. Transcripts were read several times for deeper understanding (Saldana, 2009). Transcripts were printed and read one time completely before any notes were made to develop a sense of the overall participant voice. Transcripts were read three more times while writing preliminary jottings (Saldana, 2009) and highlighting significant words or statements in the right and left margins of the transcript. These jottings were the first ideas that came

to mind as each transcript was read several times and provided “ideas for analytic consideration while the study processes” (Saldana, 2009 p. 17). Tables in Microsoft Word were created to organize participant responses to the interview questions. Participant responses to each question were copied from the transcribed interviews and inserted into the table created for each question. The tables organized by question provided accessibility to participant responses.

The researcher then examined and compared quotes for similarities between participant experiences. In subsequent readings of each transcript, using the line by line method, significant statements and recurring words were underlined or highlighted and notes were written in each margin of the document. As suggested by Padilla-Díaz (2015), “The categorization of the significant statements and meaning units [relevant topics] which were verbalized by the participants are key within the data analysis process” (p. 108). Using the selective reading method, responses for each question were examined as a whole to identify connections between participant responses. Notes were made for each interview question to record similarities and differences between participant responses and experiences. Another table was created in Microsoft Word to record the marginal jottings and codes. A code is defined as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). Hundreds of similar codes were combined into smaller code categories. The codes originated from participant statements in the interview responses (Appendix J) and patterns of codes were identified by frequency (Appendix K).

After the researcher read the participant responses to each of the questions a final time, another Microsoft Word table was created consisting of three columns for further data organization. The first column contained participant quotes and raw data typed directly from the transcribed interviews (Saldana, 2009). The second column contained the summary of codes based on margin notes from preliminary jottings (Creswell, 2013). Repeated ideas in common among the participants emerged into themes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The third column contained the themes that developed from a combination of initial jottings, actual participant quotes (raw data), and codes. A reflexive journal was maintained (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2009) throughout the study to reflect on participants' experiences.

Themes emerged from preliminary notes, significant participants' statements (raw data) and codes. A theme is defined as "an outcome of coding categorization and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" (Saldana, 2009, p. 13). A theme is also defined as the "implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 38). In terms of qualitative data analysis, "there is a search for themes, which are the dominant features or characteristics of a phenomenon under study, across all types of qualitative data analysis" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 252). To be able to describe and develop themes from the interview data, the answering of the research questions must occur to have an "in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon through description and thematic development" (Creswell, 2008, p. 254). Themes that emerge from the study may be used to compare participants' "personal experiences or with existing literature on the topic" (Creswell, 2009, p. 64).

Structural and textual descriptions of the participants' lived experiences were formulated thereafter. Textual descriptions represent *what* the participants experienced related to the phenomenon of interest. Structural descriptions represent *how* the participants experienced the phenomenon of interest. Finally, the commonalities in participant experiences were synthesized in a description that constitutes the overall essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Additional documents were also created to organize the significant statements, coded meanings, emergent themes, and descriptions created by the researcher.

Textural descriptions were typed using direct participant quotes from transcribed interviews to provide an overall account of what constituted participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). Thick, rich descriptions were utilized, as qualitative research provides a mechanism to voice participant stories and experiences (Creswell, 2013), and aid in the establishment of credibility and trustworthiness. Through these descriptions, readers are able to visualize participants' experiences of what happened from the participants' view. Although textural and structural analysis is integral to the interpretation of the findings, it is the structural analysis portion that reflects the intentionality of consciousness. It also provides direction toward meanings and common essences of the phenomenon of interest (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Structural descriptions that depict how participants experienced the phenomenon of interest in terms of settings, circumstances, or environments (Creswell, 2013) were utilized to further demonstrate accounts of participant experiences. Department meetings, interactions with colleagues on site and at conferences, informal conversations with mentors, and family discussions at home serve as examples of structural

descriptions. As a result, an overall essence of the experience is conveyed by means of combining the textural (what) and structural (how) descriptions (Creswell, 2013). In the next step of analysis, the themes and descriptions were examined for the emergence of theoretical constructs. This information supported the how and what related to the essence of the phenomenon, and answers to the research questions. In the report of the results, the researcher remained cognizant of the possibility of multiple perspectives and realities of the participants, unexpected outliers, or findings contrary to the conceptual or theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2013).

In the study, the researcher wanted to understand participant lived experiences and how these individuals progressed through their process of talent development toward successful outcomes. The collection and analysis of qualitative interview data concerning the lived experiences of expert Black scholars provided a more complete understanding of the phenomenon, as well as information that may facilitate the successful talent development of Black gifted and talented students for successful adult and career outcomes in the future.

Protection of Participants and Ethical Considerations

The data were collected voluntarily from participants who chose to participate in the study after being fully informed of the details of the study and their rights as subjects. To protect participant identity and sensitive details, all documents pertaining to the study were password protected on the researcher's home computer. To ensure the privacy of all participants who consented to participate, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants and used in notes and documents related to the study, as well as in the transcriptions of the interviews. All document hard copies were locked in a safety box in

the researcher's home. Each participant was invited to review his/her final interview transcript to member-check the content for accuracy. The role of the researcher was outlined prior to the study to bracket or set aside personal experiences pertaining to the phenomenon of interest that could affect interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2013; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Summary

The research questions support the purpose of the study and the methods (Creswell, 2013). As research on the successful talent development of Black high-ability individuals is limited in general, it is important to understand participant lived experiences related to this phenomenon. Interviewing expert Black scholars who have reached the highest levels of success in the field of education may help to describe the talent development process for these individuals and understand how they have achieved successful outcomes. The study utilized a qualitative research design and phenomenological approach to collect data to address the research questions of the study. The study results will be presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion of the study results and implications for research in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

As indicated in the previous chapter, the purpose of this research study was to explore the talent development experiences of 10 expert Black scholars in education. As lived experiences were the focus of the study, phenomenology was the chosen methodology. Lund (2007) states, “Qualitative phenomenological research evidence is believed to be representative of reality as perceived, not removed from the participants’ experience by several layers of theoretical interpretations offered by the researcher” (p. 384). The phenomenological methodology describes the meaning of lived experiences among several individuals (Creswell, 2013). In particular, the transcendental phenomenological approach frames the personal and professional lives of each expert Black scholar. This study gives voice to the experiences of each expert Black scholar participant for better understanding of their path of talent development for successful outcomes.

This phenomenological study was guided by two research questions: (1) What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education? (2) How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes?

Expert Scholar Participants

Ten individuals who identified as Black expert scholars having served or currently serving in distinguished or endowed faculty positions in education participated

in the study. The participant group was comprised of five male and five female participants employed in various colleges and universities across the United States. Most of these institutions are known as Ivy League and/or Research I institutions (recognized as the highest level of research activity) with predominantly White campuses. Kaba's (2016) study brought attention to the relative underrepresentation of Black distinguished and endowed faculty at Ivy League institutions. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect his or her identity and to ensure confidentiality. Although each participant was given the option to choose his or her pseudonym, only one participant chose her own pseudonym. The researcher assigned pseudonyms to the remainder of the participants. In Table 1, a summary of participants is presented with regard to assigned pseudonym, gender, age, degree type, and doctoral area of expertise. Participant childhood and K-12 school environments, as well as parental status and post-secondary institutions are also provided.

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Participant pseudonym	Participant gender	Participant age-range	Terminal highest degree	Doctoral area of expertise	Childhood Environment	K-12 School Environment	Parental Status	Undergraduate Institution	Graduate Institution
Dr. Lennore Alfred	Female	60+	Ph.D.	Education	Small Town	Private	Single mother	Both	Private
Dr. Ava Clament	Female	60+	Ph.D.	Education	City (mid)	Public	Two-parent	Private	Private
Dr. Candice Eldridge	Female	40-49	Ph.D.	Social Sciences	Suburban	Public	Two-parent	Private	Private
Dr. Keaton Hembrook	Male	40-49	Ed.D.	Education	Urban	Private	Two-parent	HBCU	Public
Dr. Elizabeth Lacey	Female	50-59	Ed.D.	Education	Rural	Public	Two-parent	Public	Private
Dr. Gerald Nelson	Male	50-59	Ph.D.	Education	Urban	Public	Two-parent	Private	Public
Dr. Lance Oliver	Male	40-49	Ph.D.	Education	Suburban	Both	Two-parent	HBCU	Both
Dr. Avner Sutton	Male	60+	Ph.D.	Education	Urban	Public	Single mother	Private	Both
Dr. Felice Townsend	Female	50-59	Ph.D.	Education	Urban	Public	One Relative	HBCU	Public
Dr. Ellison Whitmore	Male	50-59	Ph.D.	Education	Urban	Private	Two-parent	Public	Both

Note. Doctoral area of expertise indicates the discipline in which each participant achieved a terminal degree. “Both” indicates a combination of public and private institutions.

The diversity and complexity of experience for the group of expert Black scholars was revealed through the biographic surveys and interview conversations. The participant sample included a diverse range of research agendas and accomplishments. The participants also came from a variety of geographical locations, family statuses, fields of study, and background experiences, yet shared the common bond of having experienced the phenomenon of becoming distinguished and endowed professors in the field of education. Their journeys to these positions and becoming expert scholars were described in detail as each participant shared their experiences and stories of development towards successful outcomes in each individual interview. The informative conversations with participants occurred over a three-month period during the fall 2016 and winter 2017 timeframe. Participants were given the option to have their interviews over the phone or via Skype. All participants preferred to have their interviews conducted over the phone during weekday mornings and afternoons. Participants welcomed discussion and remained candid as they shared their experiences. A profile summary is provided in the next section based on the biographical survey results and conversations with each participant. A summary of participant responses to the biographical survey with regard to status and activities are provided. Direct quotes are included as representative of participants' voices and personalities.

Expert Scholar Dr. Lennore Alfred

Dr. Alfred was raised by her single mother, along with her grandparents. Her father completed some college and her mother holds a bachelor's degree. She attended a private, religious all girls' academy growing up in a small, predominantly White town. Dr. Alfred attended a private undergraduate institution and private graduate institutions.

Throughout her educational matriculation, she participated in academic honor societies and student government. Outside of school, she participated in athletic leagues and/or sports teams and the arts (music, drama, and/or visual).

After graduation, Dr. Alfred became a teacher and later attended graduate school. She continued to teach at the college level while pursuing her doctoral degree. It was in graduate school that Dr. Alfred began the pursuit to become a faculty member in academia. Dr. Alfred's research interests are driven by her personal experiences as a child and her experiences as an educator in K-12 and higher education. She considered herself a very stubborn person, but held the adage of her grandfather that stubbornness and determination are the same. "Stubbornness is when you resist someone else's agenda and determination is when you pursue your own." She believed strongly in herself, and is determined to learn whatever she must to be successful.

Expert Scholar Dr. Ava Clament

Dr. Clament grew up in a two-parent household, with the awareness of being "consciously Black." Her father completed some high school and her mother completed elementary school and some work-related classes. She attended public schools growing up in a mid-sized city in the agricultural heartland. Aside from her public school K-12 experience, she attended a private undergraduate institution and private graduate institutions. As a student, Dr. Clament participated in academic clubs and honor societies, as well as yearbook club. Outside of school, she participated in the church choir, served as an usher at her church, and remained active in her Girl Scout troop.

Dr. Clament was the first person in her family to graduate from high school and also attend college. As an undergraduate and graduate student, she was involved in

activism and community engagement. Later, she obtained a tenure-track position while working on her doctorate and continued to teach thereafter. Dr. Clament admitted that she did not aspire to be a distinguished or endowed faculty member in education, but she did have the desire to make a difference in her community. She believed that she was “shaped philosophically and ideologically by the social realities” she found herself in, but her advancement was made possible because she was chosen for opportunities throughout her development as a student and a scholar.

Expert Scholar Dr. Candice Eldridge

Dr. Eldridge also grew up in a two-parent household. Her father and mother both attended college and hold bachelor degrees. Her parents exposed her to different environments growing up, even sending her to spend the summer with extended family to challenge her comfort zone. Although Dr. Eldridge attended public schools growing up in suburban America, she attended a private undergraduate institution and private graduate institutions. Throughout her experience as a student, she participated in gifted and talented and/or enrichment opportunities, advanced placement (AP) and/or honors classes, peer mentoring, community service opportunities, and was involved in a policy program. Outside of school, she participated in community activism and/or volunteering opportunities, leadership opportunities, athletic leagues and/or sports teams, extracurricular science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities, as well as mentoring and/or career shadowing programs. She also became a member of a Greek letter organization (sorority).

Dr. Eldridge became interested in the field of education as an undergraduate student majoring in the humanities. She pondered burning questions shaped by the social

realities around her and knew that she wanted to make a difference. She accepted a junior faculty position after graduate school, but kept her career options open. During that first year, she realized “how much of a luxury it is to do research” and to be able to have self-directed projects and questions. Although she did not anticipate becoming a researcher in education, she realized how much she liked the idea of being a faculty member. Despite challenges along her development as a faculty member, she learned to navigate effectively for successful outcomes.

Expert Scholar Dr. Keaton Hembrook

Dr. Hembrook grew up in a household with two parents. His father completed high school and his mother holds a bachelor’s degree. Although he attended private schools growing up in urban America, he decided to attend an HBCU as an undergraduate student, and public institutions for graduate school. As a Black child attending school in a predominantly White environment, he learned to adapt to the situations he faced and embraced his own identity. Throughout his educational experiences as a student, he participated in junior varsity and/or varsity sports and academic clubs. Outside of school, he participated in leadership, community activism, and/or volunteering opportunities. He also became a member of a Greek letter organization (fraternity).

Dr. Hembrook grew up in a supportive household with parents who believed in hard work and education. He started taking his academics and schooling seriously in high school to develop habits to maintain focus. As an undergraduate student, Dr. Hembrook developed his interests with a major in education. After graduation, he became a teacher and obtained a master’s degree. His teaching experience and emphasis

on research as a doctoral student would later prepare him for academia. “I didn’t realize it at the time, but it [teaching and research] would prepare me for the professoriate in the roles of teacher, research, and service.” He has continued to view education as a tool of liberation used throughout his work as a researcher and educator.

Expert Scholar Dr. Elizabeth Lacey

Dr. Lacey grew up in a household with both parents. Her father completed high school and has a seminary degree. Her mother holds a master’s degree. She attended public schools growing up in rural America, half of the time in segregated schools. As a student in the K-12 public school system, she participated in advanced placement (AP) and/or honors classes, junior varsity and/or varsity sports, academic honor societies, served as the campus newspaper editor in college, and played piano. Outside of school, she participated in community activism and/or volunteering opportunities, leadership opportunities, the arts (music, drama, and/or visual), mentoring and/or career shadowing programs, entrepreneurship opportunities (authorship and/or business), joined summer camps, studied abroad in college, and also ran a community newspaper. After high school graduation, she attended a public undergraduate institution.

Dr. Lacey graduated from college and became a teacher. It was during this time that she discovered her life passion for teaching students. She went to a private graduate school but loved teaching in K-12 and was unsure about pursuing a position in higher education prior to becoming a professor. Dr. Lacey revealed that she never aspired to become a distinguished or endowed faculty member in academia; she stayed the course and did her job to produce research true to her passion:

If you buy in to what you're doing, if you love your research, which I did, and you love your students, and I did, then doing the things that make you get high ratings at your institution, well, that comes next, right? I mean it comes very *naturally*.

She also added that her faith played a major role in the process. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

Expert Scholar Dr. Gerald Nelson

Dr. Nelson grew up in a two-parent household, and both of his parents have bachelor's degrees. He was inspired by the solid work ethic of his parents as he attended public schools growing up in urban America. After high school graduation, he decided to attend a private undergraduate institution and public graduate institutions thereafter.

Throughout his educational matriculation, he participated in gifted and talented classes and/or enrichment opportunities, advanced placement (AP) and/or honors classes, junior varsity and/or varsity sports, academic clubs and honor societies, and served as a resident assistant in college. In the community, he participated in activism and/or volunteering opportunities, leadership opportunities, athletic leagues and/or sports teams, the arts (music, drama, and/or visual), extracurricular science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities, mentoring and/or career shadowing programs, and became a member of a Greek letter organization (fraternity).

After graduating from college, Dr. Nelson became a teacher. It was then that he realized "I had more questions than answers and wanted to pursue the doctorate to learn more about what I could do extra in the classroom or in education in general." Dr.

Nelson did not anticipate going into higher education. He intended to return to the K-12 classroom after receiving his doctoral degree, but began to see higher education as a

viable career option. He believes it was the “perfect venue” to continue his passion for research as he continues to pose questions, think deeply, read widely, and enjoy his love for writing.

Expert Scholar Dr. Lance Oliver

Dr. Oliver grew up in a household where both of his parents obtained doctoral degrees. Growing up in suburban American, he attended private schools from kindergarten to eighth grade and public schools from 10th to 12th grade. He attended an HBCU as an undergraduate student, as well as private and public graduate institutions. Dr. Oliver participated in junior varsity and/or varsity sports, academic clubs, and student government as a student. Outside of school, he participated in community activism and/or volunteering opportunities and athletic leagues and/or sports teams. He also became a member of a Greek letter organization (fraternity).

Dr. Oliver became interested in attending college as a youth visiting college campuses and watching his parents complete their doctoral degrees. As an undergraduate, he majored in the humanities but was unsure of what he wanted to do with his degree. He later pursued a master’s degree in the humanities and after that a Ph.D. in the field of education. He did not have a desire to work in the K-12 arena, but he had been interested in finding the answers to profound questions as a youth. The same questions inform his research today as an expert scholar. He expressed that he has been able to maintain his sense of identity and purpose by “not taking himself too seriously” and staying connected to the social aspects of the community to have an impact on those around him.

Expert Scholar Dr. Avner Sutton

Dr. Sutton grew up in a single-parent household (mother). Both his father and mother completed high school. As a child growing up in urban America, he attended public schools. He attended a private undergraduate institution, as well as public and private graduate institutions. Throughout his time as a student, he participated in junior varsity and/or varsity sports, student government, and peer mentoring opportunities. His extracurricular activities consisted of participation in community activism and/or volunteering opportunities.

Dr. Sutton grew up in the inner city as the eldest child of a single mother. As his mother worked long hours to keep the family afloat, Dr. Sutton knew that he would have to take responsibility for his own education. Although Dr. Sutton aspired to become a professional athlete after high school, he was encouraged by his mother to attend college. Dr. Sutton became interested in the education of Black students as an undergraduate student and decided to pursue a graduate degree in education. At that point, Dr. Sutton's intent was to become a professor and educational leader. He has held various positions in the field of education from K-12 to higher education. Throughout his career, Dr. Sutton has continued his interests "both on a practical level and on the academic level with Black education."

Expert Scholar Dr. Felice Townsend

Dr. Townsend was raised by her aunt, but her father was very involved in her life. Her father held a doctoral degree and her mother, who passed away when she was young, held a bachelor's degree. As a child, she attended public schools in urban America. She attended an HBCU to complete her undergraduate studies and public graduate

institutions. Throughout her educational matriculation, she participated in gifted and talented classes and/or enrichment opportunities, and junior varsity and/or varsity sports, as well as academic clubs and honor societies. Dr. Townsend participated in community activism and/or volunteering opportunities, leadership opportunities, athletic leagues and/or sports teams, the arts (music, drama, and/or visual), mentoring and/or career shadowing programs, and cheerleading outside of school. She also became a member of a Greek letter organization (sorority).

Dr. Townsend grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, and recalled the influence of many educators in her family and community. She knew from the time she was a little girl that she wanted to be a teacher. “And so, throughout these years and contacts with these teachers, it really gave me the understanding that I really could be whatever I wanted to be within the field of education.” After graduation, she became a teacher and later pursued a degree in educational leadership, serving as a school administrator in various capacities. When she found herself teaching at the college level, she rediscovered her passion, and decided to go to back to graduate school to train teachers.

Expert Scholar Dr. Ellison Whitmore

Like several of the participants, Dr. Whitmore grew up with both of his parents in the household. His father holds a master’s degree and his mother holds a master’s degree. As a child, he attended private schools in urban America. He attended a public undergraduate institution and both public and private graduate institutions. As a student, Dr. Whitmore participated in gifted and talented classes and/or enrichment opportunities, advanced placement (AP) and/or honors classes, junior varsity and/or varsity sports, and

student government. Other than participation in school activities, Dr. Whitmore participated in leadership opportunities and athletic leagues and/or sports teams. He also became a member of a Greek letter organization (fraternity).

Dr. Whitmore grew up in an encouraging intellectual environment with positive role models that prepared him for higher education. He knew that he wanted a Ph.D. when he was an undergraduate student in the humanities. Although he did not pursue a major in education, he decided he would become a teacher, complete some graduate school coursework, and then pursue a doctoral degree. As a faculty member, Dr. Whitmore has excelled at collaborating with colleagues and navigating the challenges presented by the academic environment. He attributes his success largely to his upbringing and the village that helped to propel him toward success.

Theme Identification

As stated by Mogadime, Mentz, Armstrong, and Holtam (2010), “The goal of qualitative research that has emancipatory ends is to be able to understand particular experiences and how such lived experiences might contextualize social conditions that would otherwise remain silenced” (p. 816). The analysis of interview data revealed similarities and connections between the participants. After the disaggregation of the data, the following five themes (Creswell, 2013) emerged from the study: (a) Background Influences and Preparation, (b) Connections, Mentoring, and Support, (c) Self-Preservation and Protection, (d) Purpose and Direction for Research, and (e) Navigation and Optimization for Success, as presented with related codes in Table 3. The themes served as a reminder of what the expert scholars of the study encountered as they experienced the phenomenon of talent development toward successful outcomes. Key

words from participant quotes are italicized for emphasis in the description of each theme.

Table 2

Summary of Codes and Themes

Codes	Themes
High expectations in childhood Education as a family value Strong role models in family and community Family assistance with overcoming conflict High expectations for self	Background Influences and Preparation
Relationship building / networking Mobility and progress through others Candid advice, guided assistance and feedback Supportive department climate Indirect and informal mentors or role models Strategic mentorship / multiple mentors	Connections, Mentoring, and Support
Methods for difficulty and conflict Continuous self- reflection/improvement Authentic self and identity maintenance Adaptation to the academic world Balance in personal life / use time wisely	Self-Preservation and Protection
Work that is shaped by social realities Research reflects passion and interests Experiences drive research interests Decisions to pursue academia Accountability to God and community Pave the way for others / give back	Purpose and Direction for Research
Recognition of prestige / system validation Outstanding work go above and beyond Observation to figure things out Strategic, deliberate approach Formula for success Help-seeking and self-promotion Consistent productivity / maximize potential	Navigation and Optimization for Success

Background Influences and Preparation

The first emergent theme was Background Influences and Preparation. Study participants reflected on the impact of their families and communities, especially parents and grandparents, and the influence they had on their preparation for eventual careers and high levels of success in academia. The great accomplishments of individuals from one's own race and ethnic background often inspire and motivate young people toward achievement (Kaba, 2009). Dr. Nelson commented on the influence his parents and teachers had on his decision to pursue a career in academia:

I admired the fact that they [his parents] *worked hard*, that they had *integrity*. They kept it *real*... My dad taught me very specifically about race and racism and my mom just made sure that I had what I needed to be successful. I know my parents having very, very strong expectations of me influenced my persistence. And two teachers that I would focus on are my senior high school English teacher and then my advisor when I was an undergraduate. They were also very influential in my development. I also had a favorite English teacher at six who told me that I was a great writer, and that made a difference in terms of my decision to go into a profession that requires some writing. (personal communication, January 31, 2017)

Dr. Oliver also valued his parent's commitment and hard work. As a child, Dr. Oliver remembers watching his parents matriculate through their degree programs and how their example influenced his desire to pursue higher education:

Both of my parents have terminal degrees. So, growing up, I was always part of the kind of the scene when they were working on, school work. We would

always go out to a park. But they were actually libraries. And so my mom would go in and work on her stuff while my dad and my brother and I were outside playing. Then my mom would come out and my daddy would go in. So I literally have been on college campuses my entire life. Growing up, you always understood that you were going to go to college. (personal communication, January 5, 2017)

Similarly, Dr. Whitmore shared the impact his environment had on his development toward successful outcomes. Dr. Whitmore commented on the influence of his family, school and community as a student that helped to prepare him for an eventual career in academia:

It was really an amazing environment where we were encouraged to be politically, socially, and physically active and to apply what we were learning in school in real time. It was amazing. I'm very thankful, that I had that environment, particularly with those kinds of leaders in place. My grandmother, who was the elementary school teacher, provided tremendous cultural and educational content. Books that were assigned later in graduate school I had already read when I was in elementary and high school, because he [his father] provided all that. So, I had a great intellectual upbringing that prepared me very well for what I'm dealing with now. (personal communication, December 21, 2016)

Similarly, Dr. Eldridge shared the beliefs, traits, and skills she developed as a youth that have helped her as a faculty member. She commented on the influence of her

parents and background experiences in helping her recognize the value of education and learn to adapt to different environments:

From as long as I can remember, they [her parents] emphasized the importance of education; education was the key to having control over your life and having choice. I grew up where I was constantly having to adapt, whether I was in my predominantly White school, or during the summers, in the rural south with family, where it was all Black or, being at an Ivy League school. I'm just used to being able to talk to lots of different kinds of people and be comfortable wherever I am. And that's pretty valuable in this profession. The skill of just being able to talk to people, of being genuine with people. That's just immensely, immensely, immensely helpful. (personal communication, November 16, 2016)

Like Dr. Eldridge's comments about the significance of her home environment, Dr. Alfred reflected on her unique upbringing as the only Black family in her town. She valued the investment her family, especially her grandparents, made into her self-worth. She also appreciated candid advice from her grandfather about taking advantage of opportunity:

I was in a family that was very consciously Black but in a White town. So, I was living in a unique situation for most Black kids. How I had to act *outside* of my house was very different. So that kind of made me aware of the differences in those two places. From the time I was a little girl, they [her grandparents] told me I was wonderful, smart, accomplished, fabulous. And my family practiced kind of a form of *racial socialization* which kept reminding me of the sacrifices that people that I didn't know had made for my education and suggesting that I didn't

have a *choice*. I couldn't squander those opportunities because they were not about me; they were about the *group* of people. (personal communication, February 28, 2017)

Dr. Townsend also shared the significance her home and school environments as a child had in her development. She commented on learned valuable lessons learned that would later help her in her career as a professor:

I was always enrolled in schools that were predominantly White rather than the neighborhood schools. I was able through the guidance of my parents to be able to navigate through that. But I realized very, very early on that because of the difference in just merely my skin color and not anything else. My intellect and not anything else. That there were going to be roadblocks and challenges that I was going to have to overcome. I realized that I did have the inherent talent and intellect to be able to move forward and do what's needed to be done. And then to not let those roadblocks be stumbling blocks. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Study participants were also taught the value of education at an early age. The environments they grew up in impacted their trajectory and development as expert Black scholars. They viewed advice and encouragement from family and community as one of the factors that influenced them to go to college. It was in college that their interests and passions were developed, encouraging them to obtain doctoral degrees. This was a crucial point in their trajectory that elevated them to eventual successful outcomes in the form of prominent appointments as distinguished and endowed faculty members in academia.

Connections, Mentoring, and Support

The second theme that emerged from this study was related to the support participants received through connections with other people, especially in the form of family and mentoring relationships. Socialization has also been identified as an important indicator of career success (Hartlep et al., 2016). Additionally, one's social circle is an important tool that has the power to create or limit opportunity for development and advancement in life (Hartlep et al., 2016). Participants acknowledged the people in various capacities who supported their development as expert scholars in education. These relationships often led to other helpful resources. As demonstrated throughout the literature on educational practice and research, a combination of support is required throughout a student's educational matriculation to develop academic expertise and knowledge (Wai et al., 2010). Dr. Hembrook commented on the support his family provided throughout his educational matriculation as well as other resources he utilized in connection with various groups on campus and in academia.

When I was in my doctorate program, I was within driving distance from my home. Family resources provide you with stability, love and a home cooked meal. Some of those kinds of things, just the simplest things at the right time will help to sustain you because these doctoral programs can be very stressful. I also found university resources in groups like the Black Graduate Student Union. As a professor, the resources are more collegial with groups such as Brothers of the Academy and Sisters of the Academy, that provide various kinds of support and resources and understanding for what it is you're going through as an African American scholar of color. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Similar to Dr. Hembrook, Dr. Whitmore also recognized people and resources of support that were integral to each stage of his talent development and propelled his career advancement and mobility:

In elementary school, clearly the teachers were the most important resource. In undergrad, the most important resource was access to be able to actually apply what I was learning with other people. As a master's [and Ph.D.] student, the most important resource I had as a scholar was revenue that really freed me up to take seriously the work. I had a post-doctoral fellowship before I started my assistant professorship, HUGE deal, and it bought me a lot of time to think, write, and shift directions. Generally, people took an interest in me and they were very helpful. I would call this responsive mobility. It's for sure responsive mobility because each one of them, they just see something in you and then they reach out. (personal communication, December 21, 2016)

Like, Dr. Whitmore's reference to responsive mobility, Dr. Clament also acknowledged the people took an interest in her and helped her along her developmental journey. She reflected on connections that propelled her career and stepped in to help her make sense of her trajectory despite her family's unfamiliarity with higher education:

I would say that people in my *life* made the biggest difference of *anything*. And I started out by talking about sponsored vs. contest mobility. It [sponsored mobility] refers to how some people achieve mobility and progress because they've been sponsored or *helped*. So White teachers sponsored me, Black teachers sponsored me, my church sponsored me. There were many places along my journey where being *connected* with

people was *sustaining*, but being the first person to graduate from high school and go to college, my family could not *negotiate* those environments or *tell* me how to navigate it. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

In addition to sponsored assistance from many individuals, participants acknowledged mentoring as a powerful tool that connected them to resources and other people who helped them develop their careers. Mentors provided transparency and honesty that participants appreciated as significant contributions to their development toward becoming successful faculty and expert scholars in academia. Dr. Oliver commented on the candid honesty of his major professor and mentors as his greatest resource and tool:

I really wasn't reading as deeply as I needed to. And I was just getting by on being quick-witted. And at one point my major professor tells me, "Don't you get that you need to have some time where the *only thing* that you focus on is your *academics*? This is the time where you get the tools of the *trade*. You can't cheat it. When you walk into a conference and you start talking about issues of epistemology and ontology and you can't tell the difference you're telling on yourself. You're not going to be prepared if you don't take this time." It's those kind of engagements with so many people that just gave freely of their time.

That's the greatest resource and tool. (personal communication, January 5, 2017)

Dr. Nelson's advisor made a significant impact on his decision to obtain a doctoral degree. Similar to the experience of Dr. Oliver, his advisor offered advice that served as an extension of what he received from his own parents. Dr. Nelson reflected on

the expectations of the reciprocal nature of his mentor relationships that were formed out of friendship:

I had mentors along the way who took me under their wings as an undergraduate. My advisor actually encouraged me to get my doctorate. I've developed a *really* good mentoring relationship with my colleagues across the country, mentoring and also friendship. I just developed a relationship with them and, I think at times, I mentor them. There has been this *reciprocal* kind of interaction that I've had with the folks I'm closest to. I think what's gotten me through many of those [challenging] times has been people who are more *seasoned* in the field. They have taken me under their wings and given me insights about how to navigate and negotiate challenging situations. (personal communication, January 31, 2017)

Participants expressed gratitude for mentors who gave them honest feedback.

Like Dr. Nelson, they too appreciated the guidance mentors provided to help them navigate challenges, especially those related to being a Black faculty member in academia. Dr. Eldridge appreciated the open honesty of her mentors, especially related to the challenges presented as a female, Black faculty member:

They [her mentors] were candid. If you're going to be a Black woman going through all of this, if you're going to be a Black person going through all of this, often times mentors will acknowledge the fact that look, this is hard, that this is different. There are complexities that you may have to deal with that others don't. But they had some key pieces of information, or they shared what they did themselves, or, they're just candid and willing, willing to be open. And

sometimes, they were just honest with hard feedback—like, you need to do this.
(personal communication, November 16, 2016)

In addition to the open transparency she received during her mentorship experience, Dr. Lacey described the supportive environment of sponsored help that her department provided:

I had great direct, up-close mentorship from a senior Black scholar, who said "Do this, don't do this, this is how you think about it, what are you doing?" She didn't just take what I wrote and said, "Oh, this is wonderful." She would look at it and say, "I don't know what you're talking about." And because she *mentored* like that, she pulled the best out of me. I was in a department that mirrored my values, and anybody in the department would help me. They nominated me for things, and they were there to clap when I *got* them. So, it was just an *extraordinarily* supportive departmental climate and great mentorship, individually, but then, the sense that I can get help from anybody. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

Similar to the mentorship experience Dr. Lacey shared, Dr. Townsend talked about a very influential mentor in her life. The significant mentorship experience she received from a female, Black faculty member in her department also played a role in supporting Dr. Townsend's success:

I'll say that one of the things that really assisted me was the mentorship of another African American faculty member who was in our same department. Before I came, she was the only African American on campus, male or female, in any department. She's a person who's always been a mentor to me who actually told

me about the position. When I got there, she took the initiative to mentor me by meeting with me and posing questions, having me to think a lot about what it is that I was doing. [Even now] She continually looks at that trajectory and makes sure that I am thinking critically about ways to position myself as I continue to advance in the field of education. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Participants shared significant experiences of mentorship and connections they made with colleagues and other people along their trajectory toward successful outcomes. Many times these mentoring relationships were a reflection of their parental relationships and friendships, and connected them to significant resources to support their growth. Participants acknowledge the connections they have made over the years in the form of relationships with family, colleagues, and senior scholars helped to shape them into the expert scholars they are today.

Self-Preservation and Protection

The third theme that emerged from this study was the participants' need to preserve and protect their psyche and remain true to themselves as they progressed past challenges toward success in academia. Study participants acknowledged the challenges they faced as distinguished and endowed expert scholars. Part of their experience was also characterized by the strategies they used to persevere toward productivity and success. Dr. Clament acknowledged the challenges she has faced as a Black woman in academia. She shared strategies she used to stay connected to her community, protect her well-being, grow from her experiences and remain productive as a faculty member:

Life is challenging, and the challenges that I experienced include racism, sexism, and classism. Another thing I did was to write about this stuff. So, to save my

sanity and my health, I put some of these issues into publication. The Black experience was a factor in my life and how I continued to live. I was always sustained and connected to my community, and that made a big difference in surviving, as we say, *clothed* in my right mind. I am a spiritual directed person, so I try to *learn* from my experiences and keep growing all the time. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

Dr. Alfred describes herself as “expressively African American” and like Dr. Clament, has maintained her authentic identity. She attributes part of her success to being unapologetically who she is as a person. Dr. Alfred also shared strategies she used to protect herself and advance in academia:

I think that it's important when you are dealing with everybody to be authentically who you are. I'm kind of a *wacky* person and very expressively African American. I *refused* to be someone other than I am to be successful. I've also been able to *move*. Sometimes you have to move because you can be in a situation which is bad for you, psychologically and career-wise. I'm always willing to move rather than let the racism get to me. I don't care who you are, the racism in the academy is there and you have to learn to protect yourself from it. You have to be able to maintain your self-efficacy and sense of confidence no matter what's going on because the academic business is one that thrives on security. (personal communication, February 28, 2017)

Dr. Alfred acknowledged how she developed her sense of self-confidence in conversing with her grandfather growing up. Similarly, Dr. Oliver talked about the wisdom he learned from his father, who held similar positions in academia. Although Dr.

Oliver acknowledged challenges, especially related to interactions with his colleagues, he utilized relationship-building to push forward. He did not allow negativity permeate into his psyche or affect his job performance:

That kind of rationale that he [his father] always is like, you have to take pride in yourself; you don't let people get under your skin. I always have understood very clearly the way that race works in the environment that I'm in. I've always made it a point to build relationships with everybody. I don't allow negativity. I don't do that in my professional life. Because that's your job, and there's no reason that you wouldn't manage your professional engagement in a positive way. I refuse to let this place get me down. (personal communication, January 5, 2017)

Dr. Whitmore acknowledged the presence of racism in academia, but used microaggressions as motivation for improvement. He realized how playing sports as a child equipped him with protective strategies to use criticism and feedback positively as a faculty member.

I always use those [microaggressions] as motivating factors to do better, as opposed to just getting stuck in the depression of it all. There was always a protective factor there that allowed for me to feel like I should just keep pushing on. What I found is that people who play sports and athletics early in their life, especially starting at maybe 5, 6, 7 years old, which is what I did, are *constantly* being critiqued, and given feedback about how to get better. You have to take out the emotional part of it, write down what's been said, look at it, often times they're right, and, then fix it. And, keep it moving because—but you cannot

allow it to permeate into your psyche. (personal communication, December 21, 2016)

Dr. Eldridge had a similar view to that of Dr. Whitmore in associating academia with sports. She learned to protect herself by viewing academia as a marathon, not a sprint, commenting on her strategy to preserve her energy and sustain the race:

This [academia] is a marathon, it is not a sprint. You've got to think of a way to sustain. And that doesn't always mean speaking up first, sometimes it means holding back until, you have all your ducks in a row, you have all the facts, and then you can come out just swinging, but it is a long-term game, and there will be days that are great, and there will be days where you will just be pissed off and you need to go home, and you need to take a bath, and you need to just watch something on your DVR, because it is a marathon. This is a long-term game. (personal communication, November 16, 2016)

Participants commented on the desire to “produce good work” and the vast amounts of time spent for researching and writing. However, to be productive, they had to utilize strategies for success. Dr. Nelson acknowledged that taking breaks helped him to preserve a standard level of productivity.

I work *a lot*. I work every day. I work many, many, many hours a day. I probably work ten to 14 hours *every day*. On Sunday, I try to work fewer hours but I work every Saturday. I work about five or six hours every Sunday. I take breaks, I try to do that about every three months, where I go away for four or five days to just disconnect from the work and I come back stronger. I come back better. (personal communication, January 31, 2017)

Maintaining their authentic selves and using strategies for protection from the harm experienced by many Black faculty in academia were critical to the productivity of these expert scholars. Study participants knew that challenges would surface, but having strategies to use helped them to remain productive and on track for success.

Purpose and Direction for Research

The fourth theme to emerge from this study was a sense of purpose and direction in informing the work and research of the participants. Often, participants developed passions and interests as students in their academic communities as undergraduate and graduate students that led them to pursue doctoral degrees and later produce groundbreaking research. In addition to communicating their beliefs regarding the purpose for their research, participants also shared the role their background and identity played in their research interests. Dr. Sutton admits that his work has been informed by his own personal identity as a Black male living in the United States of America. Although he has worked in predominantly White contexts, he regards his identity as an important aspect of his research agenda:

Well, I think...I've always had a particular interest in working with Black students, even though, I've worked on predominantly White campuses in cities with students of all backgrounds. I think my own research has been flavored by my own identity as an African American or as an African living in the US. It's a very large and important part of who I am and what I've done over the years. (personal communication, November 9, 2016).

Related to background and personal experience, Dr. Oliver was driven by a greater sense of purpose to complete significant research and produce good work to

answer profound questions he began to think deeply about as a child. He recognized as an adult that he had significant purpose to fulfill through research:

I'm actually thinking about these kind of deep and profound ideas. So whether I was an endowed [professor] or a doctor, I'd still be having the same conversations. I'm passionate about this idea that we got to get this thing right because people's lives are impacted in meaningful ways. It just so happens that the way that it's funneled in my life has been *through* academic spaces and universities. When you pick up what I'm writing, it's philosophically sound. It's driven by passion and I'd argue that you can make the case that it's God inspired because that's why I'm doing the work. (personal communication, January 5, 2017)

Similar to Dr. Oliver, participants each felt a sense of purpose for producing significant work. Dr. Hembrook's production was driven by the knowledge that his achievement was also integral to lifting up his community:

Education was seen as a way to liberate oneself from meager circumstances. It was seen as a way to uplift one from slavery, segregation, and all *types* of social problems. Through my life, I have come to realize that education was the source of liberation. I have come to realize that it *never was for just my sake*, but, education is for *all of our sake*. The understanding was that, no matter what school you go off to, whether it's a White school across town or the HBCU, that the education that you *get* would also be a tool for you to help your community or any urban community or community of color, or any community that needs you. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Like Dr. Hembrook, Dr. Lacey held the conviction that the purpose for her productivity in research attributed to a higher calling. She commented on the directed purpose and accountability for her work:

I actually have a very deep sense that we are all sent here to do something. We have a *job* to do, that we are accountable to someone higher than ourselves, for what we do with our lives. And so, doing work that's *purposeful*, and trying to align myself with that sense of greater good, greater calling, that's the only place that I would say that I have had agency, and even there, is still accountable, it's in a mode of accountability to God. So, the agency comes from when I die, I don't want to be retold what I could've done with my life and I didn't. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

Dr. Townsend reflected on how her desire to become a teacher at a young age eventually propelled her career in education. Similar to Dr. Lacey, she attributed her predestined path to being led by God:

As a young child, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. I went on to teach and then become an assistant principal, a principal, and work in some other capacities related to education. Years later when saw that I was already at that point working at the university, I was actually surprised. So it was predestined, I guess, in the back of my mind to work at a university actually teaching teachers how to teach. But I really believe that people that have been placed in my life have been placed by God. I truly believe that God has set a path for me. And along that path has sent people my way. I really, truly believe that He has set that trajectory

for me. And has allowed me to excel. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Participants recognized a directed path for their research as work. Identity, background, and a sense of purpose to the responsibility God and others gave them were significant contributions to their research interests. These passions and interests informed the work that helped to propel them toward successful outcomes as distinguished and endowed faculty in academia.

Navigation and Optimization for Success

The fifth theme that emerged from the study was the participants' experience of navigating the profession and optimizing their path toward success using deliberate strategies. Although participants recognized the inadequacies of their knowledge concerning the hidden or unwritten rules of academia, they learned to navigate the system, remained productive, and optimized their strengths for successful outcomes. Dr. Lacey acknowledged the assumptions of her colleagues as well as her own naiveté regarding the inner-workings of academia:

Because I did well in [graduate] school, they assumed that this first-generation Black girl from the country actually was sophisticated in the ways of the academy. That was not true. I really *wasn't*. If you asked me what an endowed chair was, or meant at that time, I could not have answered. If you'd asked me if I had great plans to change the world, or what my important research agenda was, I could not have told you. I was just very naïve. So, I just kind of went for it, doing the best I knew. And, again, I think the part I'm trying to press, is that I was

very *naïve* in the *process*. Like, how *everything* worked. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

Once acclimated to academia, other participants used strategies to navigate the system for optimal success. Dr. Clament commented on the nonlinear nature of her trajectory and development as a faculty member and how she optimized opportunity for successful outcomes:

So it's a zig zag kind of story. It's not a *straight* line to, you know, *success*. It was not so directed. It was more like an evolving, organic process. They [faculty in academia] look for things that will make the university look good. So that's a formula that I think I have used that the work needs to be good. You can also take advantage of the system's own valuation of what is *prestigious*, whether that means a fellowship or something else that brings honor and attention to your institution, or using technology in a very progressive way. So, my profile is interdisciplinary, is not bounded by a single discipline, and I have several different ways of positioning myself. (personal communication, February 3, 2017)

As suggested by Walker and Test (2011), self-advocacy is a necessary aspect of higher education matriculation. In addition to positioning himself for success, Dr. Sutton commented on his strategies for optimal productivity and upward mobility in academia:

[Once offered a position], then, it's clear to me that I need to ask for everything that I *need*, and most of the things that I *want*. Because when you are in that type of a situation, they're not going to withdraw the offer, because you've asked for too much. But they're not going to give you *anything* once you get *on* the job, so, you've got to ask for it all upfront. And so, I've always done that with regard to

things that would make me comfortable: reduced teaching loads during the first semester or the first year, an early sabbatical...all of these are things that are usually on the table. I've not been *shy* in asking for them. (personal communication, November 9, 2016)

Participants also shared strategies they used to determine and work toward their own standards for productivity and success. Participants developed their own goals for success, often exceeding productivity requirements as established by their respective institutions. After Dr. Hembrook familiarized himself with the navigation of faculty expectations, he commented on strategies that he and other expert scholars utilized to maximize their productivity:

So by the time I got my first faculty position, I was *familiar* with the role of the professor and what I should be doing, but it took some extra effort to hopefully exceed the expectations of the institution. I never set my bar at their bar. I always set my bar a little bit *higher* than the institution. I had my own personal goals. Everybody is doing a similar kind of job, but what I find is for folks like myself and other distinguished professors or endowed professors, it's doing the expectations and more...It's not enough to do the minimum *minimum*. So, it's framing the situation in a way that works to really maximize your own potential. (personal communication, January 30, 2017)

Similar to Dr. Hembrook, other participants shared formulas they used for optimal success. Dr. Alfred commented on the essential elements that have helped her optimize her development toward successful outcomes:

I was always looking for opportunities that would propel my career to the next level. I had a sense of what's the trajectory of a *national* scholar. I knew you had to write *articles*. I knew you had to have, you know, to try and get *money*. I knew you had to have some national *leadership* positions. I could *see* that by just watching the people, I mean I could see that. You know, it took a while but eventually those two parts of being a good academic, which is the creative *drive*, which you *need*, and the technical part which is the writing well, good grammar, learning the textual forms, kind of merge, which I consider the *skillset* that won me to advance in the academy. (personal communication, February 28, 2017)

Dr. Eldridge acknowledged her naiveté while navigating the underlying rules of academia. Like Dr. Alfred, she recognized an optimal formula to propel her toward successful matriculation in academia. She commented on her journey and the reasoning strategies she used to navigate the profession and optimize her success as a faculty member:

I think I have approached this in a very strategic, deliberate way, where I knew there was an equation I was trying to optimize. I think being a faculty member is a very strange profession. I didn't quite understand the profession much, so, I found the early years of my career just trying to figure out what are the unwritten rules of academia. I would sit in meetings and just kind of watch the interplay between people. So, for the beginning, it was just a lot of exploration, a lot of conversations, and a lot of figuring out what I wanted to do, and then trying to identify where there was overlap of what I wanted to do and the things that were going to be rewarded. (personal communication, November 16, 2016)

Participants acknowledged that they had to familiarize themselves with the unwritten rules of academia along their development as faculty members. Participants were gripped with the task of navigating, in many cases, unknown territory to learn the inner-workings of academia. Once they did, they were able to carve a path optimized for productivity and success.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided a detailed summary of the lived experiences of talent development among 10 expert Black scholars in education. The conversations with each participant provide detailed accounts of the experiences along their path of development toward becoming expert scholars in colleges and universities across the United States. Five major themes emerged from the participant interviews: (a) Background Influences and Preparation, (b) Connections, Mentoring, and Support, (c) Self-Preservation and Protection, (d) Purpose and Direction for Research, (e) Navigation and Optimization for Success.

Participants shared a variety of experiences as they reflected on their path to becoming distinguished and endowed faculty in education. The conversations revealed similarities across participant experiences despite differences of family and geographical background. Participants acknowledged the important roles family and community played in their decisions to pursue higher education and advanced degrees. They shared the importance of connections to people as mentors and sources of support throughout their doctoral and faculty matriculation. They commented on strategies they used to preserve their well-being and productivity while staying grounded to their authentic identity. They recognized the direction and purpose for their research and committed to

pursuing their passions and interests through the production of significant research. Finally, participants acknowledged the complexities of the academic environment and strategies they used to navigate the system for optimal productivity and successful outcomes. The use of rich, thick description and direct quotes by study participants provided a way to describe the genuine experiences of participants, and maintain their individual voice and personalities as distinguished and endowed expert scholars. In Chapter 5, a discussion of the findings and implications for future research is presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to Shogren et al. (2015), research on self-determination explains the essential components of self-initiated and directed action that lead to successful attainment of personal goals. Research and literature on self-determination purports that individuals “influence and are influenced by the context in which they live and develop” (Shogren et al., 2015, p. 256). It is also documented in the literature that cultural background, gender, and the environment influence individual trajectories of talent development (Hong & Milgram, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015; Subotnik et al., 2011). Cultural background and environmental context influenced the talent development of the expert Black scholar participants in this study. These scholars were influenced by their own families and their communities, as well as individuals within the intellectual environment of academia. They used strategies related to self-determination, including self-initiated decisions and deliberate action, to attain their personal goals and success as distinguished and endowed faculty members in education. The remainder of this chapter will offer interpretations of the findings related to the research questions and extant theory, as well as implications for current practice and future research.

Research Questions and Answers

Ten “in-depth, open-ended” (Creswell, 2013) phone interviews were conducted individually with each study participant to collect data to answer each research question. Each conversation revealed candid information regarding the lived experiences of talent

development among the group of expert Black scholars. This information provided answers to the research questions for the study.

Research Question 1

The first research question for the study asked, “What are the talent development experiences of Black distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education?”

Much information pertaining to talent development among expert Black scholars serving as distinguished and endowed faculty in education was revealed throughout the participant interviews. Participants shared detailed accounts of what they experienced regarding talent development for successful outcomes as well as how they acquired their level of success in the field of education. The talent development process of this group of expert scholars included the significant influence of family and community role models throughout their childhood and educational matriculation, as well as other background influences that helped to prepare these scholars for success later on in their lives.

Participant family and community backgrounds, as well as school-based interactions with teachers and other role models in the educational environment, influenced participant research interests and their desire to pursue higher education. The prevalence of particular social realities, such as segregation, the civil rights movement and the overall societal condition for people of color also informed the purpose and direction for the eventual research agendas of these expert scholars. The academic environment of higher education provided opportunities for mentorship connections and other forms of support. Participants gained additional information and opportunities through fellowships and funding to cultivate the exploration of a wide-range of ideas and interests. These

opportunities encouraged participants to pursue careers in education and advanced degrees as graduate students.

Participants provided multiples responses with regard to what they experienced as they prepared for positions as expert scholars in education, as well as the sources of support and strategies for productivity they utilized along the way. Several of the participants experienced conflict and microaggressions in academia. However, they turned these negative experiences into positive motivation to excel in their chosen career field. They also employed various strategies for self-preservation and protection to combat the challenges they encountered. In addition, these scholars utilized connections with people and other resources to advance to high levels of success as professors in the field of education. Participants were able to pinpoint the purpose and direction for the work they completed as expert Black scholars in education and the research they produced. They regarded the work as important to the advancement of their communities and remained accountable to those who encouraged and helped them succeed. Participants gave in-depth accounts, at times chronological, of their matriculation from students to faculty members and the path toward achieving a significant level of recognition in academia as distinguished and endowed faculty members in education. Most of these scholars never aspired to become distinguished and endowed professors in education, yet they expended vast amounts of time and energy to set specific, attainable goals for their productivity as faculty members. Ultimately, these expert scholars were able to navigate academia and optimize their resources to obtain distinguished and endowed faculty positions in the field of education. Although these scholars came from a variety of backgrounds, geographic areas, and family compositions, they all shared similar experiences in achievement. They

were not satisfied with the status quo as a result of high expectations from their families, communities and themselves, and worked extremely hard to learn the inner workings of the academy to attain superior levels of success. The specific details and examples that participants provided in their accounts of their academic and personal development provided an accurate depiction of what the participants experienced as a group related to talent development for successful outcomes.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, “How did contexts or situations influence or affect their path toward successful career outcomes?” Participants shared detailed descriptions of their home and community environments and how each influenced their trajectories as students and expert scholars. All of the participants described the support and expectations of their home, community, and academic environments as strong influences in their talent development process. In addition, interactions with colleagues and mentors were reiterated by participants as important to their success and advancement. The connections these expert scholars made in the academic environment with colleagues and mentors helped to establish supportive relationships that propelled them toward opportunities and eventual success. Conversations participants had with their families as children that continued into adulthood prepared them to navigate challenges and assume responsibilities as leaders in the field of education. At times, these conversations also revealed the limitations of their families and the need they had for colleagues and mentors working within higher education to help them navigate specific aspects of the academic environment. Their paths continued to be shaped by conversations with mentors and colleagues who provided them with feedback concerning

areas that needed further development or assistance for optimal productivity as expert scholars.

Participants further described the context of the academic environment and how it hindered or propelled their progress. Supportive department climates that allowed for collaboration, time, and the opportunity to become acclimated to the higher education environment helped the participants matriculate toward and achieve successful outcomes in academia. Participants also shared contextual conditions such as academic environment and departmental climates that did not match their passions, values and research interests. These scholars desired to transition to an academic environment that encouraged them and facilitated their success. Therefore, mobility helped the participants obtain optimal levels of success in contexts that supported their development as faculty members. Participants also shared and described in great detail how connections with supports and resources inside and outside of academia helped to shape their path toward success. The trajectories of the participants were developed when they entered academia as faculty members and learned how to navigate challenges and the hidden rules of academia. They were sponsored and mentored by various colleagues and senior scholars invested in their success. As they familiarized themselves with the role of faculty members and moved toward production of research and significant work, they became expert scholars. Recognizing the need to produce “good work,” they discovered optimal ways to matriculate toward successful levels of productivity and recognition with appointments as distinguished and endowed faculty in education. Overall, this group of expert Black scholars acknowledged the nonlinear nature of their path toward talent development for successful outcomes as organic and ever-evolving.

Theoretical Implications of the Findings

The participants shared examples of how they directly impacted their talent development process. These expert scholars outlined detailed plans to accomplish their goals and utilized the assistance of others they connected with along their path toward successful outcomes in academia. Research suggests an individual's level of self-determination indicates how much individuals take on the role of a causal agent in their own lives to encourage desired outcomes (Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003). As suggested by Trainor (2002, 2005), cultural identity may influence self-determination strategies used by youth of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, notably Black and Latino American male youth. Black faculty "often work in isolation, are not privy to informal networks and sources of information, and have their work and ideas devalued" (Alexander & Moore, 2008, p. 2). The theme of Navigation and Optimization for Success, surfaced as several of the scholars shared the ways they navigated the higher educational environment and utilized resources to achieve successful outcomes. Dr. Eldridge used observation to learn about the inner-workings of academia. Dr. Clament and Dr. Sutton realized the importance of prestige and the system of validation within academia. They utilized this information to combine their research interests with what their respective institutions valued. Dr. Eldridge also learned that there was an equation that she was trying to maximize as a faculty member. Dr. Hembrook found a system that worked for his research and continuous productivity. Dr. Alfred and Dr. Lacey also discovered formulas they found conducive to their success.

Several of the scholars communicated the influence and impact of their families, teachers, and communities along their trajectories toward success. Teachers and parents

play an important role in assisting students, especially those from minority and marginalized groups, with the development of self-determination skills (Zhang et al., 2005). In addition, self-advocacy, constructed on the principles of self-determination, empowerment, and social justice, may prove powerful for promoting the educational success of students of color through assertiveness and negotiation to work with individuals within and outside of the academic community as partners in their success (Astramovich & Harris, 2007; Dowden, 2009). The theme of Background Influences and Preparation emerged as participants provided detailed accounts of the home and school environments. Dr. Townsend talked about the numerous educators in her family and teachers that influenced her to pursue a career in education. Dr. Alfred and Dr. Eldridge noted the influence of their family members. Although they were not educators, they modeled excellence and held high expectations for these scholars as children. Dr. Whitmore talked about the numerous role models in his school and community that propelled him towards success. His father, in particular, empowered him and helped him learn to navigate conflict, and his participation in athletics helped him learn to be resilient. Dr. Oliver shared that having high expectations in his home to attend college and exposure to the higher education environment influenced his outlook on education and his decision to pursue a career in academia. Dr. Clament shared the social realities she experienced as a student that gave her a sense of empowerment to address social justice issues through research. Dr. Sutton shared the supportive environment he had as an undergraduate student that influenced his educational and career decisions, as well as his research area and focus.

Each expert scholar named several individuals throughout their educational matriculation and career trajectory who served as role models and mentors. Mentoring plays an essential role in the promotion process for faculty of color, especially in predominantly White institutions (Frazier, 2011). The theme of Mentoring, Connections, and Support emerged as these expert scholars shared their experiences in interaction with individuals that helped them along their path. Mentoring relationships may primarily benefit the mentee, but also become reciprocal in nature over time, on a professional and personal level (Lund, 2011). Dr. Nelson shared the reciprocal nature of his mentoring relationships and how he and his mentors learned from each other by exchanging knowledge. Black faculty often have difficulty finding mentors who share similar interests within the institutions where they work and more specifically within their departments (Frazier, 2011). However, several of the expert scholars found mentorship from other Black scholars within their departments and institutions. As a new faculty member, Dr. Townsend was mentored by a senior Black female faculty member who continued to mentor her throughout her development as an expert scholar. Dr. Eldridge and Dr. Lacey shared the beneficial mentorships they received from senior scholars at their respective institutions of higher education. More specifically, Dr. Eldridge's mentors helped her to understand the challenges of being a female Black faculty mentor and how to view her trajectory with the realization of that knowledge. On the other hand, Dr. Oliver talked about the wisdom and direction he received from his mentor, a White senior scholar in his department. His mentor shared candid information with him and even had the insight to match Dr. Oliver with another mentor, a Black scholar at a different institution, who could fill the gaps in his mentorship. Dr. Alfred and Dr. Sutton

also shared accounts of the invaluable mentorship they received from non-Black scholars in various departments and institutions.

From an early age, participants were taught to believe in themselves and the value of education. These lessons manifested in participants' ability to reach significant levels of success as distinguished and endowed professors in the field of education. Throughout their process of talent development, they were willing and able to pinpoint the direction and purpose for their research and worked diligently to maintain self-directed goals and research agendas as expert Black scholars. Scholars are urged to pursue what they love, and choose positions that support what they love, as they use time wisely to work productively and meet their own goals (Kiewra, 2008). The Direction and Purpose for Research theme became apparent as these expert scholars shared how they determined their particular research agendas and the drive that helped them continue to produce great work. Participants recognized the influence of their own identities, passions, and interests as powerful motivators for success to produce significant research with the capacity to alleviate educational and social problems in their communities. Dr. Hembrook felt a responsibility to use his talents and abilities to help the larger community. Dr. Clament also desired to improve her community and felt accountable to the people that helped to guide her toward success. Dr. Lacey had a passion for children and education that translated into the work and research she continued to produce as an expert scholar in academia. Dr. Lacey also attributed her productivity to her accountability to God and community. Similarly, Dr. Oliver and Dr. Townsend recognized God's influence in their lives as to the reason for their chosen path, research, and success as expert Black scholars in the field of education. The questions Dr. Oliver

pondered as a child now translate into the research and God-inspired work that he continues to produce today.

Participants shared their experiences of naiveté, frustration, and difficulty, as well as the methods they utilized to overcome challenges successfully. Black faculty members encounter various challenges within institutions of higher education: academic bullying, lack of guidance, shortcomings of the institutional environment, lack of personal time due to professional commitments, racism in collegiality, and difficulty within the tenure / promotion process (Frazier, 2011). Ultimately, Black faculty members who are hired do not always achieve tenure due to lack of support (Simon, Perry, & Roff, 2008). However, scholars of all backgrounds are urged to create and protect time (through the establishment of functional routines), hone their technique (develop solid research and writing skills), and frame failure positively throughout their development process (Kiewra, 2008). The theme of Self-Protection and Preservation surfaced as these scholars shared their methods for overcoming conflict and frustration. Most of the scholars shared the instruction they received from their families to combat negativity and challenges. Dr. Alfred, Dr. Eldridge, Dr. Oliver, Dr. Townsend, and Dr. Whitmore shared how family members helped them to navigate challenges as children with regard to racism and situations that tried to attack their self-worth. The insight from their families helped them overcome similar challenges they faced as adults. To overcome challenges as faculty members, Dr. Clament, Dr. Lacey, and Dr. Sutton were willing to relocate to positions and institutions that better suited their needs, especially when faced with contradictions and frustration within their respective departments. In addition, Dr. Whitmore and Dr. Eldridge described the academic environment akin to the

sports environment, and shared strategies they used to remain resilient and productive in the midst of frustration and challenges with colleagues. Dr. Hembrook described the research rotation he used to preserve time and maintain productivity, even as he pursued other projects. Dr. Nelson expressed his need to take breaks to be refreshed and spend time with family, a strategy he utilized to maintain productivity.

Black faculty members face various emotional, psychological, and social challenges within predominantly White institutions (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Research on faculty member success points to the need to develop personal skills and strategies to overcome challenges. Examples include strategic professional and personal development to manage personal and professional life, the establishment of systems of support, and negotiation for promotion and tenure, all of which are related to self-determination and causal agency (Gregory, 2001). Central to causal agency is a focus on people who make or initiate things to happen in their lives (Shogren et al., 2015). Volitional action, along with agentic action (self-initiated and directed means by which something is done or achieved) and action-control beliefs (an individual's sense of empowerment related to his or her own ability to achieve his or her goals) are recognized as important aspects of causal agency theory (Shogren et al., 2015; Wehmeyer, 2005). From an early age, participants were taught to believe in themselves and the value of education. These lessons manifested themselves in participants' ability to reach significant levels of success as distinguished and endowed professors in the field of education. Throughout their process of talent development, they were able to pinpoint the direction and purpose for their research and worked diligently to maintain self-directed goals and research agendas as expert Black scholars.

As expert scholars, the participants played a significant role in their own process as they determined goals for their own work and research, sought the assistance of other scholars in the field who could help them reach those goals, followed the advice of their mentors, and negotiated for the time, money, and resources they needed to be successful. Undoubtedly, interpersonal skills, opportunity, environment, and social interaction are critical in advocating for self as a causal agent in one's talent development process for successful outcomes. Evidence of the components of social network theory was documented throughout participants' experience of talent development for successful outcomes in interactions with mentors and colleagues especially related to educational matriculation, doctoral study, and academia (Hartlep et al., 2016). Dr. Sutton shared the deliberate decisions he made to facilitate his success, the influence of various individuals throughout his experience as a faculty member in education, and the opportunities afforded to him to collaborate with others that continue today as a result of that influence. Through this person-environment interaction, people are influenced by the context in which they live and develop to become causal agents that influence their own pathways, notably, the socio-contextual –“supports and opportunities and threats and impediments” that have the ability to influence or be influenced by the strata of human agency (Shogren et al., 2015).

Social network theory was used to frame any instances of workplace socialization and interaction throughout the process of talent development, as reported by the participants (Hartlep et al., 2016). The expert scholars discussed the impact social interaction with colleagues and mentors in their departments and other academic spaces (e.g., conferences). As evidenced by their experiences, socialization in academia led

them to opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and interact with mentors who opened doors of opportunity for these scholars to walk through. These interactions influenced the participants to actively seek guidance and establish their own research agendas, goals and plans for successful matriculation in academia.

The talent development experiences of expert Black scholars in the study also revealed the pitfalls they experienced as an underrepresented group in academia. Instances of homophily surfaced as participants faced mainstream counterparts who did not value their contributions or resorted to deficit thinking regarding their ability to contribute. These expert scholars drew upon the psychosocial skills they acquired throughout their childhood to combat the challenges and remain productive. They used the negative interactions they experienced to motivate and propel them into success as distinguished and endowed faculty in education.

In relation to the concept of talent development, participants recognized components that had the ability to encourage or hinder their talent development process, including motivation to produce “good work,” volition or self-determined and directed action, strategies for self-management and regulation, as well as traits they admired in their own parental and family structures. All of these factors played an important role in the talent development process of these expert Black scholars. Dr. Lacey discussed how a previous departmental climate did not match her values and interests. The time she spent at the institution helped her to realize what she wanted to receive from a department that valued her passions and research. In turn, she was able to move to another institution that matched her needs, connected her with resources and opportunities, celebrated her accomplishments, and encouraged her to produce significant work in a department that

reflected her passion. In addition, all of the participants shared characteristics and traits of family members, role models, and mentors that they admired and at times emulated along their path toward the achievement of successful outcomes. Participants also recognized the impact of environmental factors manifested as geography, family demographics, SES, people who influenced the process of talent development, provisions in the form of programs and interventions, and circumstances within or outside of the control of the individual that impacted their process of talent development (Gagné, 2008).

Several components of Gagné's DMGT were evident throughout the participants' experiences. The need for assistance to cultivate gifts into talents was identified, as these scholars learned to hone their technique as faculty members. This assistance can be provided in different forms outside of and within the home and school environment, but is most effective when it involves the participation of the individual. The process of talent development also occurs over an extensive amount of time (Kiewra, 2008). The expert scholar participants shared experiences as children, college students, and faculty members. Also emphasized by participant experience was the significant amount of time and effort exerted by individuals throughout their process of talent development. Participants worked extremely hard to get to their level of success as distinguished and endowed professors, but they also recognized the importance of assistance from others who were invested in their success. In addition, the participant's ability to advise and direct their own talent development processes became evident as participants realized their roles in taking the initiative and the responsibility for their success. In order to navigate the talent development process, students must become aware of the role they play and engage in actions that promote that awareness (Gagné, 2008).

Study Limitations

The phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of talent development toward successful outcomes among a group of 10 expert Black scholars in the field of education. The study was conducted with Black distinguished and endowed faculty members in education to address a gap in the gifted and talented literature, as well as the higher education literature. The literature on successful Black adults is almost nonexistent, and the majority of the research on the talent development process in education addresses gifted children from the mainstream culture. This limitation clarifies the importance and necessity of the insight provided by this particular study.

The sample of the study was situated in the field of education; it did not take into account Black distinguished and endowed professors in the physical sciences or humanities. There were only 10 participants (five males and five females) from the field of education; the perspectives of other expert Black scholars outside of the field of education were not included. The study did not include the lived experiences of talent development among other expert Black scholars outside of the United States or perspectives from other minority distinguished and endowed faculty in education. The only data collected were generated from participant interviews. Participants were not actively observed in their positions as distinguished and endowed professors due to geographical, financial, and time constraints.

In the epoche, the researcher discovered a few preconceived notions of status concerning distinguished and endowed professors in general. First, the researcher held the prejudgment that the scholars were all-knowing and above reproach as academic royalty. Second, the researcher thought that distinguished and endowed faculty would be

standoffish and impatient in conversation. Finally, the researcher held the preconception that the participants did not have challenges to work through as expert Black Scholars who have reached this level of success. All of these preconceptions had the potential to affect the interpretation and analysis of the study findings. Each preconceived notion needed to be identified to allow the true essence of existence of the phenomenon to be revealed. The identification and separation of the researcher's prejudices from the analysis of the study data helped to reduce bias and allowed for genuine interpretation of the data on talent development as experienced by the participants. Researcher bias is a crucial component of methodology and cannot be completely omitted in qualitative research. However, member checking, reflexive journaling, and thick, rich descriptions (Creswell, 2013) were utilized. Although these strategies were beneficial in reducing researcher bias, qualitative research, by design, accounts for the researcher's experiences. As a result, conclusions drawn in this study may be subject to other interpretations and analyses.

Study Implications

Five themes emerged from the study: (a) Background Influences and Preparation, (b) Connections, Mentoring, and Support, (c) Self-Preservation and Protection, (d) Purpose and Direction for Research, (e) Navigation and Optimization for Success. These themes were situated within the literature to identify implications for practice and research.

Background Influences and Preparation

Participants communicated the significant influence family and their childhood environments had on propelling them towards becoming successful distinguished and endowed faculty in academia. Participants admired character traits in their parents, families, teachers, and other role models that they adopted for themselves as expert scholars in the field of education. These supports are well documented in the literature. In order for students to develop their talents, they should be exposed to appropriate learning contexts and environments, provided appropriate resources, enjoy opportunities for connection and expression of their ability, and receive encouragement from those invested in their success (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). The group of expert scholars also provided numerous accounts of teachers who served as role models, sources of encouragement, and had a large deal of influence on them during their educational matriculation. The influence of teacher perceptions on instructional practice has the ability to affect the schooling experiences of CLED students negatively (Szymanski & Shaff, 2013). However, teachers served as major role models that shaped the trajectories of the participants, whether the influence they had on the participants was negative or positive. This indicates a definite need for good teachers in the American educational system.

Early on, participants learned the value of education and important impact that their own education could have on their personal lives and surrounding communities. Although participants originated from various geographical locations and community settings, they recognized the impact and influence of context on their experience of talent development to get to the levels of success they have today. Participants also expressed

gratitude for the preparation they received as educators and graduate students. It was in these positions that they discovered their interest in and passion for the field of education.

Participants reiterated the influence of their family background, identity and the preparation they received as significant factors that helped them to develop into successful adults. The environment they grew up in, whether or not they were afforded opportunities to develop their interests, and exposure to successful individuals as well as intellectual environments made a difference in their talent development process. These scholars realized how their personal background, identity, early experiences, and choices impacted their overall process of talent development. In addition to background, preparation is also an important consideration. All of the participants were involved in numerous curricular and extra-curricular enrichment opportunities as children and undergraduate students related to STEM, the arts, leadership, and athletics. All of these experiences and interactions with individuals in the process impacted their trajectory toward successful outcomes as adults. All of the participants mentioned directly or indirectly how they were chosen or sponsored for opportunities throughout their educational matriculation by teachers and professors in K-12 and higher education. Participants also shared instances where they were provided assistance and help to navigate challenges and conflict within the academic environment. These expert scholars employed help-seeking behaviors to gain assistance, and were helped at times by others who noticed their situation without having asked for the assistance. Schools and education professionals should, where appropriate, provide opportunities along students' paths of talent development to help them navigate challenges and avoid pitfalls due to lack of preparation as adults. Subotnik et al. (2012) provide more clarification:

Outstanding performance is also dependent, in large part, on the opportunity to develop the talent that one has. Opportunity provides a context for talent to be nurtured, sometimes even before it is recognized...For talent to be fully developed, however, there must also be the opportunity for it to be *appropriately* cultivated. This argues for greater access by talented individuals to high-quality talent development programs. (p. 179)

Teachers and administrators charged with developing gifted education programs must consider the talent development of high-ability Black students, regardless of their background or socio-economic status (Ford et al., 2011). The development of talent for urban students using enrichment for exposure to deeper learning opportunities and basic-to-advanced skills and concepts training, student-developed products and services is also encouraged (Reis & Renzulli, 2011). Participants had an overwhelming amount of support, assistance, and opportunity throughout their talent development process. Overall, “Effort and appropriate educational programming, training and support are required to develop a student’s talents and abilities” (Subotnik et al., 2012, p. 176).

Surprisingly, no explicit reference was made to the merits of gifted education throughout the interviews, although four of the 10 scholars participated in gifted education programming opportunities throughout their K-12 experience. Although Dr. Alfred did not participate in gifted education as a student in her own educational matriculation, she mentioned her observations of gifted education as a former classroom teacher:

I see kids gifted in all kinds of ways: with language...with ideas...with insight....
I mean, I don’t know that much about gifted, but I’m sure they’re judging on

things other than actual, raw intelligence or creativity. I know that's the case. So, like I said, I didn't go to a school... everybody had the same curriculum; there was no gifted, you know, they didn't have that. (personal communication, February 28, 2017)

Dr. Alfred did not mention a connection to gifted education in her personal educational matriculation as a student. She talked about how creativity and technique are just as important in academia as music and the creative arts. The absence of discussion on the merits of gifted education throughout the talent development process of these scholars indicated that despite their participation or non-participation in gifted education, they were able to achieve successful adult outcomes. The participants attributed their success to the supports they received from family and other individuals, as well as their deliberate participation in their own talent development process. The lack of a discussion concerning the merits of gifted education among the participants may be due to several factors. First, several participants were over the age of 50. The establishment of specific gifted programming outside of advanced classes and extracurricular opportunities may not have been explicitly available for these scholars throughout their K-12 matriculation. Second, the scholars in this study were situated within the context of the field of education. Scholars in the physical sciences, for example, may have expressed more of the need for accelerated and enrichment opportunities related to the STEM disciplines.

Connections, Mentoring and Support

Educational institutions facilitate social interaction for children and adults. However, access to information and overall interactions with peers and colleagues can affect attitudes, outlooks, and professional outcomes (McPherson et al., 2001). Many

Blacks in the professoriate have negative experiences at predominantly White colleges and universities where they are isolated and excluded from social academic networks, making it virtually impossible to maintain competitive research agendas (Lemelle, 2010). However, the recognition of ideas of Blacks and people of color through their research and teaching establishes an atmosphere of collegial acceptance (Kaba, 2016). Furthermore, as stated by Frazier (2011): “much research has been written about the essential role that mentoring plays in order for faculty of color to be successful in the tenure and promotion process” (p. 4). Participants communicated the significant influence of the colleagues and mentors they connected to on their developmental path toward becoming successful expert Black scholars. Mentors provided candid, essential information that mirrored the support and transparency of family relationships and friendships. With the guidance of mentors, participants found positions that reflected their values with colleagues who took their contributions seriously. Participants matriculated through supportive departments that fostered climates of collaboration, encouragement, and praise for a job well done. It is evident through the conversations with participants that the people in their lives served as the greatest resources of support.

School districts should emphasize the merits of developing interpersonal skills, as well as help-seeking and self-advocacy strategies for success. Students could be connected with mentors in fields of interest who are recognized as scholars with expertise to further develop their talent towards successful adult outcomes. As stated by Hartlep et al. (2016):

By socializing with ECs and DPs who may be alums of elite colleges and universities, students of diverse educational backgrounds can begin to acquire the

mindsets, skills, attitudes, and abilities that will enable them to become eminent scholars in the field of education. (p. 134)

In addition, the incorporation of gifted enrichment programs to prepare students to face challenges better may assist them to strengthen their overall well-being and motivation for learning (Gagné, 2008).

During the transition to post-secondary education, it is imperative that “campuses create supportive climates in which Black students can interact with faculty and develop meaningful relationships” (Goings, 2017, p. 56). Dr. Lacey’s extremely supportive departmental climate was the ultimate example of nurturing. She encountered the ideal environment because she was willing to leave the non-nurturing environment for one that better aligned with her interests, values, and research agenda. Black students and other students of color also benefit from professors who take the deliberate time to nurture and cultivate their academic talents and abilities (Goings, 2017; Noble, 2011), as with Dr. Townsend who was mentored directly by a senior scholar and the only Black female in the department prior to her arrival. The mentorship of this senior scholar grew into a relationship and introduced her to opportunities and areas for advancement that Dr. Townsend still benefits from today. Faculty members also need academic spaces that provide meaningful connections with colleagues and the capacity for guided mentorship (Simon et al., 2008). Colleges and universities should establish and maintain department climates centered on supportive and professional collegiality, as well as respect for wide-ranging research agendas and interests. This can be achieved through production of shared department goals for collaboration and expectations for professional discussion, as well as the dissemination of implicit yet pertinent information to faculty of color.

Self-preservation and Protection

At times, the harassment from White colleagues and administrators within their respective institutions may cause expert Black scholars to seek different positions and move to colleges and universities that hold a more tolerant view toward scholars of color in the academic community (Robertson, 2002). When contradictions and racism became more than they were willing to handle, some of the participants were open to moving to academic environments more acclimated to assisting people of color. Study participants discussed the challenges and issues they have encountered throughout their academic and career trajectories as being the only or one of few Black students and/or faculty in predominantly White academic spaces. As faculty members, participants exercised an extraordinary sense of mobility and self-protection, often uprooting themselves and their families to accept positions better suited to their interests and well-being. Participants communicated their strategies to turn negatives into positives for the sake of preserving themselves and their productivity. Institutions of higher education need to offer more supportive outlets for Black faculty in academia as these individuals continue to conduct the work that they were appointed, selected, and funded to do. Helping faculty to schedule time for sabbaticals and breaks, in addition to wellness activities are just a few ideas to help individuals care for themselves and their families while maintaining significant levels of productivity and meeting or exceeding the expectations of their respective institutions.

As indicated by participants, strategies for self-preservation and protection were important contributors to their success. Several of the participants learned to protect themselves through trial and error as they navigated the academic environment.

Although several participants received assistance for dealing with conflict from their families, each of the participants would have benefitted from formal coaching related to psychosocial skills development. Unfortunately, as stated by Subotnik et al. (2012), “academically talented students *rarely have access to psychosocial coaching*. Furthermore, school and college teachers receive no systematic training in this dimension of differentiated instruction” (p. 180). Subotnik (2015) offers the following consideration with regard to gifted students:

How many of our academically gifted students are coached in dealing with stress or adversity? Instead of trying to reduce the incidence of these factors, which appear in real life and are unavoidable—we need to help young people see that adversity is normal and can often be handled with thought and grace. Persistence and resilience can be built. Intrinsic motivation and persistence through good and bad times are basic psychosocial skills needed to transform abilities into great performance or creative productivity. And they are certainly related to each other. (p. 44)

Throughout the process of talent development, all gifted individuals experience psychological challenges (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). Successful [Black] students have the ability to persevere challenges as they use “their own internal resources (e.g., self-esteem, confidence, perseverance, etc.)” to surpass challenges (Mayes & Moore, 2016, p. 101). The participants in the study were able to excel and achieve high levels of success as they protected their own well-being. For example, Dr. Oliver shared the mechanisms he used to turn negatives into positives and work through frustration as faculty in academia. Academic domains do not blatantly express the importance of

psychological skills training to facilitate success domains (Subotnik et al., 2011). According to Kiewra (2008), educational scholars “must hone research and writing skills” and master their technique like those in the creative and performing arts as well as sports (p. 83). Olszewski-Kubilius and Thomson (2015b) utilize sports psychology to show the similarities of skills that athletes and gifted students need to employ for successful development of their talent. Psychosocial skills encourage self-preservation and protection for high-ability and gifted students throughout their process of talent development. Dr. Whitmore shared how his training as an athlete from early childhood helped him to become resilient and use feedback as constructive criticism. He continued to use these self-protection skills as a faculty member. As suggested by Subotnik (2015), “Psychosocial skills must be actively and deliberately cultivated via programming, counseling, and mentoring of students” for the successful talent development of gifted and high-ability students to occur (p. 46). These scholars were able to achieve successful outcomes as a result of the assistance, encouragement, and coaching they received from various individuals throughout their process of talent development.

Purpose and Direction for Research

Participants communicated that they had interests and passions as early as childhood that continue to inform and impact their research agendas. They also expressed gratitude for the intellectual environments and academic spaces they were exposed to that helped to cultivate their interests in and outside of school. The scholars held the conviction that the work and research they produce would be purposeful in helping the larger academic and social communities around them. They were driven by the desire to be useful to their communities, using their gifts and talents to help alleviate

social and academic concerns. They recognized that their productivity was attributed to a greater calling and purpose in which they were accountable to God and people. With that realization, they worked diligently and intentionally to produce significant, groundbreaking research. These expert black scholars initiated strategies for productivity, and made deliberate decisions to achieve their goals as faculty members, actions that helped them to advance in academia. The essential characteristics that drive causal agency, volitional action, agentic action, and action-control beliefs (Shogren et al., 2015), were present in the lives of these expert scholars as they demonstrated their self-determined capacity to achieve successful outcomes. It may be difficult to achieve great levels of success without the appropriate challenge or program design in the school setting to meet the needs of [Black] gifted students (Ford et al., 2011). High-ability alone in childhood is not enough to become successful in adulthood, and skills change in importance according to the stages of the talent development process (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015).

Each of the participants discovered their passion for education and developed their research interests as students. From the time they were young children, these scholars maintained interests, passions, and significant questions they deliberated over as they observed the world and environment around them. The skills and qualities they would need as adults were also refined as these scholars participated in school-based and extracurricular enrichment activities, within and outside of gifted education opportunities. This showed that the participants attained successful outcomes and developed their talent although some did not receive explicit gifted education services. School districts should encourage and allow for the discovery of interests and passions in the school setting,

providing opportunities for students to explore their abilities and develop their talent in a variety of disciplines and enrichment areas (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b; Subotnik et al., 2011). According to Gagné (2010), “There is a strong belief among educators that academic success goes hand in hand with high intrinsic motivation.... It is my conviction that extrinsic motives are as important in any talent development situation as intrinsic ones” (Gagné, 2010, p. 91). Educators must encourage the recognition of the role of motivation in the academic success of their students and throughout the process of talent development.

Navigation and Optimization for Success

In the Expertise stage of talent development, specialized interest begins to surface as individuals navigate their respective talent domains. Students take on the personal responsibility of directing their talent development, and obtain the assistance needed to do so as they acquire and utilize skills such as commitment, initiative, and stress-management (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). Problem-solving skills also surface as they consider advice offered from mentors, continue to connect with individuals having similar interest in the field, and produce original creative work (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). During this stage of the talent development process, students become more knowledgeable about their field of interest, to identify the culture, gatekeepers, and pathways toward success (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015)

Participants were tasked with the responsibility to navigate the inner-workings of the institution to ensure their productive matriculation as faculty members and expert scholars in predominantly White academic spaces. Dr. Eldridge used strategic observation to discover how academia worked, and deliberate strategies to merge her

interests and productivity with what the institution valued, to achieve successful outcomes as a faculty member. Dr. Hembrook worked to surpass the expectations of his institution to meet self-determined goals for his own productivity. Ivy League institutions tend to hire scholars who understand the inner-workings of their system and matriculated within their own walls or other Ivy League institutions for employment as faculty members (Kaba, 2016). Although participants completed doctoral degrees, some at Ivy League institutions, they communicated feelings of uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and naiveté concerning navigating academic spaces at different points in their educational and career matriculation. Dr. Lacey expressed the mismatch between her extreme naiveté concerning how academia worked, and her colleagues' assumptions of her knowledge. Much of the time participants spent as junior faculty members was dedicated to efforts to familiarize themselves with the inner-workings of academic spaces in higher education. Dr. Alfred and Dr. Clament utilized formulas for success that identified their passions and interest in conjunction with the system of validation communicated by their respective institutions. Participants dedicated large amounts of time for observation and conversation with mentors or colleagues to learn the inner-workings of academia. This time could have been spent working productively as researchers. However, Dr. Oliver and Dr. Sutton were sent by their mentors to other institutions, where they could develop knowledge and hone their craft as related to their own research interests, as well as learn about the academic environment. They both shared that this was time well spent during their development process.

The Eminence stage of talent development is recognized when individuals become socialized in their respective talent domain or field as influential contributors

(Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). Psychosocial skills related to productivity, creativity, and resilience, as well as diligence in promoting oneself are especially important at this stage (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015b). All of the participants reached a significant level of expertise and success as distinguished and endowed faculty.

Although the participants do not see this stage in their talent development as the pinnacle of their careers, it is evident that they have excelled in their work and become familiar with unwritten rules in academia. To cultivate the talent development towards successful outcomes for other aspiring expert Black scholars, doctoral program faculty must do a better job of providing the resources needed to familiarize these individuals with the expectations and nuances that will characterize future jobs as faculty members and administrators in academia. Faculty at colleges and universities must also do a better job of fostering a welcoming atmosphere of productivity for aspiring faculty members, especially Black scholars and scholars of other minority and marginalized groups. During the first year as junior faculty members, these individuals could complete surveys to gauge their feelings of readiness for advancement or indicate areas of improvement for their departments and mentor relationships. Communication is vital and necessary.

Recommendations for Future Research

Overall, “There is no situation or problem that cannot be improved, but we must first recognize the problem and acknowledge that it exists” (Allen, 2017, p. 84). This study helped to fill a current gap in the literature pertaining to the talent development experiences of Black faculty. The findings support the need for faculty of color to voice their experiences as distinguished and endowed professors in academia, especially related to the mentorship experiences that propelled them to successful development in their

career. The participation of the study was limited to 10 expert Black scholars serving as distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education. One direction for future research includes the investigation of Black distinguished and endowed faculty across disciplines beyond education, such as the arts, hard sciences, and humanities. The application of a variety of domains and approaches to qualitative or quantitative research could provide more insight on the process of talent development for expert Black scholars, such as survey research or case studies. Research could also examine the specific trajectories of Black distinguished and endowed faculty at various types of institutions. Experiences of talent development among Black expert scholars at different institutions in the United States and abroad would deliver more insight on how talent development is viewed world-wide for distinguished and endowed professors, especially those of color.

Although marital status and age were not determining factors for study participation, most participants were married and all participants were over the age of 40. Future researchers may wish to interview faculty who became distinguished and/or endowed under age 40, or those who have not yet established families, to determine information about personal factors that influenced their developmental journeys toward successful outcomes as expert Black scholars. How these scholars balance life as they develop talent for successful outcomes could provide information on the provisions needed to support the successful talent development of those with similar life responsibilities. Studies that highlight gender could also provide insight regarding the talent development process of distinguished and endowed faculty. Additional research

could explore the trajectories and talent development among the families of Black distinguished and endowed faculty and/or children of expert Black scholars.

Further, longitudinal studies could help to determine the supports that were prevalent across generations, as well as factors related to mentorship and motivation. Researchers could also identify patterns to be utilized for the establishment of talent development programs geared to cultivating the abilities of Black students. Studies that examine the creative production of expert Black scholars and the impact their work has had on society and/or research and practice could provide a mechanism to study more about society's knowledge and perceptions of these individuals. As the current study included several individuals who never participated in gifted education programming, another possible area of research could be the perceptions of high achieving Black Americans who did not receive gifted services as children (Henfield et al., 2008). On the K-12 level, future studies should investigate the perceptions of students, educators, and parents regarding expert Black scholar talent development and implications for the field of education, society, and the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

This study provides the foundation for a new body of research that combines the self-determined, deliberate action of individuals, social networking within academic spaces, and the talent development perspective of gifted education to enhance understanding of the trajectory of success for Black distinguished and endowed faculty members in education. The influence of social networking in academic spaces along the developmental trajectory of individuals who have reached vast amounts of success has been largely overlooked. This unique recognition was made possible through the

combination of causal agency theory, social network theory, and Gagné's differentiated model of giftedness and talent. Many have experienced the phenomenon of talent development, but the findings of this study indicate that only those who receive supportive resources (people) and work diligently and deliberately to reach goals as they involve themselves in their own development process reach successful adult outcomes. Despite concerns in the gifted education community that Black students are underrepresented in special programs, the results of this study suggest that identification of giftedness is not necessary to the development of talent. Other supports may matter more in students' educational trajectories.

Overall, this study suggests that the talent development process for these expert Black scholars was influenced by family, teachers, role models in the community, and the context of home as well as academic spaces. Social interaction with colleagues, mentors and people who served as support systems in and outside academia was extremely important to their development and provided connections to opportunities. These scholars realized the necessity to protect themselves from psychological harm in academic spaces and positions where they are underrepresented through the use of strategies to overcome frustration and challenges. The participants developed an understanding of their own passions and interests early on as students, and integrated them into their research and productive work as adults. They also made deliberate decisions to pursue advancement and recognized the source of their desire to complete good work. Learning to navigate academic spaces and employ strategies to advocate for and optimize their success were important for the talent development of these expert scholars as well.

Recognition of the significance of these influences was made possible through a combination of causal agency and social networking theory, coupled with Gagné's (2010) differentiated model of giftedness and talent and Subotnik et al.'s (2011) mega model of talent development. The study of talent development in gifted education is prevalent among individuals who have reached the level of eminence, but little research is available on individuals who may or may not have participated in gifted education opportunities in childhood and have achieved high levels of success in their respective career fields. Perhaps this study will encourage educators to explore the contextual influences in the talent development process; not just toward eminence, but successful adult outcomes for individuals of all backgrounds and ability levels. To make our nation truly the land of opportunity, we must consider the social influences and psychological supports needed to help children become adults who reach high levels of success in their chosen career and take a deliberate role in their talent development.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



KMarie B <kmbaylor@email.wm.edu>

Status of protocol EDIRC-2016-10-15-11405-klchan set to active

1 message

WM Compliance <compli@wm.edu>

Sat, Oct 29, 2016 at 9:12 AM

Reply-To: WM Compliance <compli@wm.edu>

To: klchan@wm.edu, kmbaylor@wm.edu, edirc-l@wm.edu

Cc: kmbaylor@email.wm.edu

This is to notify you on behalf of the Education Internal Review Committee (EDIRC) that protocol EDIRC-2016-10-15-11405-klchan titled Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education has been EXEMPTED from formal review because it falls under the following category(ies) defined by DHHS Federal Regulations: 45CFR46.101.b.2.

Work on this protocol may begin on 2016-10-29 and must be discontinued on 2017-10-29.

Should there be any changes to this protocol, please submit these changes to the committee for determination of continuing exemption using the Protocol and Compliance Management application (<https://compliance.wm.edu>).

Please add the following statement to the footer of all consent forms, cover letters, etc.:

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-10-29 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-10-29.

You are required to notify Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-3862 (jastev@wm.edu) if any issues arise during this study.

Good luck with your study.

COMMENTS

2016-10-22 08:34:39 (Tom Ward)

Please change Ray MCoy to o Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Ph.D., the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee by telephone (757-221-3862) or email (jastev@wm.edu)

BASIC INFO

Title: Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education

Start Date: 2016-10-29

Year Number: 1

Years Total: 1

Campus: Main

Committee(s): EDIRC

Cc: Emails: kmbaylor@email.wm.edu

PI INFO

W&M UserID: klchan

Full Name: Chandler, Kimberley

Role: Faculty

Department: EPPL Gifted Education

Day/Work Phone: +1 757 221 2588

Ext:

Alternate Phone:

W&M UserID: kmbaylor

Full Name: Baylor, Keisha

Role: Graduate Student

Department: EPPL Gifted Education

Day/Work Phone: +1 757 243 6341

Ext:

Alternate Phone:

Protocol modified by tjward on 2016-10-29 09:12:12

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Distinguished and Endowed Faculty: Invitation to Participate

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED
FOR A RESEARCH STUDY ON
TALENT DEVELOPMENT
AMONG EXPERT BLACK SCHOLARS**

I am looking for Black distinguished and endowed faculty in education to participate in a research study on talent development for successful outcomes.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to complete a brief biographical questionnaire online, recall some memories from your own life, and answer a few questions about those memories. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes for you complete. The interview of approximately 60-90 minutes will take place separately by phone or videochat.

If you are interested, please inquire here:

https://wmsurveys.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eVQ0QZS4v7qI9PL

Thank you,

Keisha Baylor

College of William and Mary PhD Candidate
Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership
2015 AERA Research Focus on Black Education
Asa G. Hilliard III and Barbara A. Sizemore Fellow
Research Institute on African Americans and Education
kmbaylor@email.wm.edu
Mobile: (757)243-6341

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-10-29 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-10-29.

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL



KMarie B <kmbaylor@email.wm.edu>

Re: Distinguished and Endowed Faculty: Interview

3 messages

KMarie B <kmbaylor@email.wm.edu>

Thu, Nov 3, 2016 at 9:06 PM

Bcc: _____@_____

Hello Dr. _____,

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. What is your availability this month for the interview? If you prefer a day and/or time, please let me know. The phone number I have for you is (---) --- ---- - is this correct? I look forward to speaking with you soon,

Keisha Baylor

College of William and Mary PhD Candidate
Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership
2015 AERA Research Focus on Black Education
Asa G. Hilliard III and Barbara A. Sizemore Fellow
Research Institute on African Americans and Education
kmbaylor@email.wm.edu
Mobile: (757)243-6341

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APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent for Participation in Research

“Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education”

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information to make an informed decision to participate in this research study. Keisha Baylor, the researcher, will answer all of your questions pertaining to study participation. Please read the information below and ask any questions before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Black faculty in education, especially concerning their lived experiences of talent development. The researcher is conducting this phenomenological study to satisfy dissertation requirements at the College of William and Mary.

You have been asked to participate because you are a distinguished and/or endowed faculty member in education. This unique group of scholars has experienced the phenomenon of achieving the highest professional honors in academia and each member of the group has devoted vast amounts of time, effort and dedication to become an expert in a particular field. Your experience in that process is the focus of this study.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a brief biographical questionnaire online
- Participate in one face-to-face or phone interview, approximately 90 minutes in duration

During the interview, you will be asked to recall and describe your personal and academic experiences on your path toward successful outcomes. Your interview participation will be audio recorded for transcription purposes only.

What are the risks involved in participating in this study?

There is no anticipated risk associated with your participation in this study.

What are the possible benefits of participating in this study?

The possible benefits of participation are contribution to the growing body of knowledge on high-ability students of color and talent development, as well as self-reflection and personal growth. In addition, study results may inform the larger body of educational research on the topic.

Do you have to participate?

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all, or if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher of your intent. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the College of William and Mary in any way.

What are my confidentiality or privacy protections when participating in this research study?

Please know that the confidentiality of your identity will remain protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your name and other identifiable information you provide will be known only to the researcher and each participant may choose a pseudonym. If you choose to participate in this study, your interviews will be audio recorded. All audio recordings will be password-protected and stored securely on the researcher's home computer. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be erased once the study is complete. Neither your name, likeness, nor other identifiable information will be used in any presentation or published work without consent.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior to, during or after your participation, you can contact the principal investigator, Keisha Baylor by phone (757) 243-6341 or email at kmbaylor@email.wm.edu. You may also contact the co-principal investigator, Dr. Kimberley Chandler by phone (757) 221-2588 or email at klchan@wm.edu.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your participation in any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Kimberley Chandler, the project director and committee member by phone at (757) 221-2588 or email at klchan@wm.edu. Should you choose to report dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Thomas Ward, Chair of the School of Education Internal Review Committee at (757) 221-2358 or tjward@wm.edu or Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary at (757) 221-3862 or jastev@wm.edu.

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-10-29 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-10-29.

Electronic Submission of Consent

I have read the information describing the general nature of this study entitled “Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education” conducted by Keisha Baylor. I have been informed of this study’s purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and I understand that confidentiality will be preserved and that my name will not be associated with any results of the study unless I authorize the researcher to do so. I know that I may discontinue participation at any time and I may request a report of the study’s findings from the researcher at the conclusion of the study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions before consent, and may can ask other questions at any time. I provide consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the study procedures. By continuing with the questionnaire, I am agreeing that I meet the qualifications and am participating voluntarily.

Agree

Disagree

APPENDIX E

BIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

What is your name?

This information is only to identify the participant. Your name will not be attached to the reporting of the biographical questionnaire results.

What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female

What is your age range?

- A. 30-39
- B. 40-49
- C. 50-59
- D. 60+

What is your doctoral area of expertise?

- A. Arts
- B. Education
- C. Humanities
- D. Social Sciences
- E. Sciences
- F. Other

What was your childhood environment like? (choose all that apply)

- A. Rural America
- B. Suburban America
- C. Urban America
- D. US Military Base
- E. Abroad
- F. Other

What was your parental status growing up?

- A. Single parent – mother
- B. Single parent - father
- C. Two parent
- D. Other

What is the highest education level of your father?

- A. High school
- B. Some college
- C. Bachelor's degree
- D. Master's degree
- E. Doctoral degree
- F. Unknown
- G. Other

What is the highest education level of your mother?

- A. High school
- B. Some college
- C. Bachelor's degree
- D. Master's degree
- E. Doctoral degree
- F. Unknown
- G. Other

What was your school environment like growing up? (choose all that apply)

- A. Public
- B. Private
- C. Home-schooled
- D. Other

What type of undergraduate institution did you attend? (choose all that apply)

- A. Public
- B. Private
- C. HBCU
- D. Non-traditional format
- E. Other

What type of graduate institution(s) did you attend? (choose all that apply)

- A. Public
- B. Private
- C. HBCU
- D. Non-traditional format
- E. Other

Which in-school activities have you participated in? (choose all that apply)

- A. Gifted and talented classes and/or enrichment
- B. Advanced Placement (AP) and/or honors classes
- C. International Baccalaureate (IB) program
- D. Junior varsity and/or varsity sports
- E. Academic clubs
- F. Academic honor societies
- G. Student government
- H. Peer mentoring
- I. Other

Which outside of school activities have you participated in? (choose all that apply)

- A. Community activism and/or volunteering
- B. Leadership opportunities
- C. Athletic leagues and/or sports teams
- D. The arts (music, drama, visual art)

- E. Extracurricular Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities
- F. Mentoring and/or career shadowing programs
- G. Greek Letter organizations (Fraternities or Sororities)
- H. Entrepreneurship opportunities (authorship and business)
- I. Other

Other comments (optional):

If contacted for an interview, what is your format preference?

- By teleconference (i.e. over the phone)
- By videoconference platform (e.g. Google Hangout or Skype)

Powered by Qualtrics

APPENDIX F

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT STATUS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities / Status	A	C	E	H	L	N	O	S	T	W
Married		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Child(ren)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Gifted and talented classes and/or enrichment			X			X			X	X
Advanced placement (AP) and/or honors classes			X		X	X				X
International Baccalaureate (IB) program										
Junior varsity and/or varsity sports				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Academic clubs		X		X		X	X		X	
Academic honor societies	X	X			X	X			X	
Student government	X						X	X		X
Peer mentoring			X			X		X		
Community activism and/or volunteering			X	X	X		X	X	X	
Leadership opportunities			X	X	X				X	X
Athletic leagues and/or sports teams	X		X				X		X	X
The arts (music, drama, visual art)	X				X				X	
Extracurricular STEM activities			X							
Mentoring and/or career shadowing programs			X	X	X				X	
Greek letter organizations			X	X			X		X	X
Entrepreneurial opportunities					X					
Other		X	X		X	X			X	

Note: A=Dr. Alfred, C=Dr. Clament, etc.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

“Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education”

The purpose of the study is to explore the lived experiences of expert Black scholars, described as distinguished and endowed faculty in the field of education.

Time and Date of Interview:

Method of Delivery:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

(Participant welcome, briefly describe the purpose of the study, outline the interview topic)

Question: Tell me about your developmental journey toward becoming a highly-accomplished faculty member and expert scholar in the field of education.

Possible Follow-up Questions:

1. What, if any, challenges have you encountered along your journey? How did you get through them for successful outcomes?
2. How and at what point did you decide to pursue your current career and research area?
3. What was it like growing up in your home, neighborhood, and school environments? What role did these and other contexts play in your talent development process?
4. What personal strengths separate you from your colleagues and peers?
5. Who has been the most influential in your education? What qualities do they possess? How do they differ from the person most influential along your career trajectory?

6. What resources were most valuable to the development of your talent? How did you advocate for yourself and those resources along your career path?

7. What, if anything, happen by chance along the journey?

(Participant thanks and assurance of confidentiality, next steps and potential of future interviews)

APPENDIX H

CONSENT FOR ANALYSIS

Consent for Participation in Analysis

Natalie

“Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education”

Doctoral students who have participated in a phenomenological research group during the fall 2016 semester at the College of William and Mary will be invited to participate in the data analysis portion of the study. You have been selected to participate. Each doctoral student that agrees to participate in the analysis will have obtained a certificate of completion for CITI training on human subject research prior to the start of the analysis. Students who volunteer to participate will be compensated with a gift card.

You will be asked to participate in two Saturday sessions no longer than two hours each.

Session 1: Code clarification / movement from patterns to themes

Session 2: Validation of textual and structural descriptions and synthesis of commonalities in experiences

Detailed descriptions will be validated for accuracy and reliability with a team of two to three researchers to triangulate and cross-analyze findings for confirmability, in addition to clarifying researcher bias in interpretation, all of which serve as components of the total evaluation of the study (Creswell, 2013).

By providing your signature below, you are agreeing that you meet the qualifications as set forth by the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary and are able to provide copies of your CITI certifications if requested. I acknowledge that I am participating in the analysis voluntarily.

Signature:

Nataliya Dudnyfska

Date:

03/11/2017

Consent for Participation in Analysis

Clay

“Distinguished and Endowed: A Phenomenological Exploration of Talent Development among Expert Black Scholars in Education”

Doctoral students who have participated in a phenomenological research group during the fall 2016 semester at the College of William and Mary will be invited to participate in the data analysis portion of the study. You have been selected to participate. Each doctoral student that agrees to participate in the analysis will have obtained a certificate of completion for CITI training on human subject research prior to the start of the analysis. Students who volunteer to participate will be compensated with a gift card.

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By providing your signature below, you are agreeing that you meet the qualifications as set forth by the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary and are able to provide copies of your CITI certifications if requested. I acknowledge that I am participating in the analysis voluntarily.

Signature:

Clay

Date:

03/11/17

APPENDIX I

CODED TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE

Speaker 1: So, um, it is November 16th, 2016, um, 10:03 am, and... this is an interview with Dr. Um, the purpose of this study is to.. talk to distinguished and endowed faculty members in education about their experiences, um, and, their path along talent development for successful outcomes, excuse me. Um, so, I have one overall question and then follow up questions. So, the first question is: tell me about your developmental journey towards becoming a highly accomplished faculty member an expert scholar in the field of education.

Speaker 2: Okay... Are you looking for sort of the long story, or (chuckles)?

Speaker 1: LOL!

Speaker 2: How far back do you want to go?

Speaker 1: Um, wherever you would like to start, and then maybe some of the follow up questions will kind of guide that, as we finish talking.

Speaker 2: Sure. Okay, um... so, my mother, uh, was a teacher and my father, ah, came up, you know, during the Civil Rights era, ah, with Affirmative Action opening up, ah, opportunities for Black men in corporate America. Um, and they both were strong believers in education, so, from as long as I can remember, um, they emphasized the importance of education; education was the key to having control over your life and having choice. Uh, so, I did well in school, and was certainly going in this direction, um, but did not expect that I was going to end up studying education as a researcher. Basically, what happened is when I was I college, uh, I really started focusing on the study of poverty and equality, and had this burning question kind of in the back of my mind about, um, civil rights, and, which, um, groups were able to make progress, why, you know, the Black middle class was created, it didn't seem to be sustaining itself, there were concerns about kind of the turning tide of support for-for issues of civil rights and-and, so I was just very concerned about who made it, were they able to sustain prog-progress, and education being a really important part of that. Now, my undergraduate and my doctorate are in (omitted), uh, so I'm coming through it-coming to this from a social science and a particular disciplinary slant? Um, in (omitted), there's a lot of the study of-of social policy of poverty, of inequality, and so forth. Um, and when I was finishing, um, graduate school and working on my dissertation, this was kind of the explosion of, um, the (omitted) education, and so by studying issues about inequality, education just seemed to be, um, the most important driver of, of, you know, basically who made progress versus who didn't. Um, and I made some decisions to focus more on the transition from higher-um, high school to higher education, um, thinking about what higher ed or secondary ed could do as second chance institutions and also just, you know, where at a time when this is the late 90s where it's pretty clear that just having a high school degree wasn't gonna be enough. Um, and so then my career was focused on understanding the role of higher education, and-and, um, supporting progress, basically. Um, but I've been thinking a lot about it from the point of view of, um, you know, the 17-year-old first generation, low-income college student, or aspiring college student, what does the world look like to them? What are the policies, what are the supports, the programs, and so forth that might

Mother as teacher
Father in corporate America
Believed in Edu. + its importance
Education as choice having for control of life
Influence of the time
Decision-making
Interests

★
Influence of successful development of talent

support that student to, um, make a decision to access, um, higher education to be successful in higher education and so on.

Speaker 1: okay, thank you for that. Um, what if any challenges have you encountered along this journey, um, towards your research and, just, successful outcomes?

Speaker 2: Uh... do you want to go back to graduate school, to like the challenges throughout my development, or, challenges after, um, I was a faculty member?

Speaker 1: you can talk about both of them.

Speaker 2: Okay. Uh, so, I'm in a field where, there are very very very, very very few people of color, and there are very very few women. Um, and while I've grown up in predominately white, um, schools and college, just getting to graduate school and being one of only, you know, my graduate program accepted probably one person, one African American student every other year,

Speaker 1: wow...

Speaker 2: Let alone to be a woman, um, and so there was feelings of, it-it hit me later in life, to, to kind of look around and feel like I was alone, particularly in a field where very very very quantitative and I was, I was in a program with people with master's degrees in physics and engineering and other kinds of things. Um, and so there was- there was some of that. I think, you know, there was few, there's few of us in graduate program, just generally speaking. Um, but another big thing is I-I think academia, I think being a faculty member is a very strange profession. It's not something, um, it's not the norm, it's not something where, you know, I had-I knew anyone who was a college professor. I didn't quite understand the profession very much. Um, and every profession I think has it's unwritten rules, but if you-you, you know, you're being a doctor or a lawyer, it's a bit more obvious, and trying to understand what's rewarded and what's not rewarded, what makes a good research project, um, how do you write that up, there's just, ah, you know, a certain kind of style of doing things, and lots of nuance to what's rewarded and not rewarded. You have a great deal of freedom with your time, but you have a ton of things to get done, so there are all of these micro decisions and questions about how you, where do you put your effort, um, and-and so forth, um, through this process. Um, and so I found that, I found the early years of my career just trying to figure out what are the unwritten rules of academia? Um, with some sensitivity that the rules were going to be a bit different for me given, um, given my race, given my gender, given my age, 'cause I was also fairly young (sigh) when I started, um, when I came out with my doctorate. Um, and you know, I think there's heightened questions about do you study race directly? Do you study race indirectly? How do you, um, incorporate the views of populations that aren't as represented. And the-and the WORK or at the institutions, you know, those-those kinds of things. Um, so it's just a, you know, I've- I continue to feel, um, particularly when I was younger, just a constant balancing act, trying to figure out how to spend my time, where to invest, my energies, what projects to choose, when to speak up, when not to speak up, what trips to go on or not to go on, um, so forth and so on. And, I think it's also worth noting, this is during the time when the field of education was getting very crowded and confusing? There are people who go through

Post experience

Hmm
Academia as a "strange profession"

Periods of questioning and familiarizing oneself with different rules based on race, gender, age

Influence of time →

loneliness

negotiating

education programs and get their doctorates in education, but, I was coming up during a time where you also had the discipline, you got the sociologist, the economist, the psychologists who were also studying education: policy people, law people, business people, um, and do there's a lot of, I think discussion within the profession about insiders versus outsiders and what was valid and not and-and, so that was also just kind of influx during this entire time, um, and I happened to be at an institution that's very multi-disciplinary, um, and it-but it takes a lot of work to be able to speak, you know, to-to speak about things and, um, 'cause sometimes it just feels like your using different languages.

Influence of the time
Confused Communication

*
Influenced for success

Speaker 1: oh...wow...Okay, um, throughout those challenges that you were just describing, how did you... navigate them or get through them for successful outcomes?

Speaker 2: Ah, I think it's a constant, you know, what do you – thinking to yourself – what do you care about? And figuring out that kind of group of things because tenure's pointless if you hate what you're doing. And then at the same time, you know, I was really lucky, and I just talked to a lot of people, and I sat back and I observed a lot of what was going on to try to figure this out. So, I had fantastic mentors of every shape and size, um, and so coming- you know, I was hired by an older white gentleman, who really saw something in me that I went to for certain things. There was another woman at my institution who studies something completely different than what I studied, using completely different methodologies, but she had a very good understanding of the institutional culture, and what was rewarded and what wasn't, and what was the history, and why things were the way they were and what might change, what not, so she was another great kind of informa-source of information and support in trying to figure out how to navigate the system. I would sit in meetings and just kind of watch the interplay between people, and you would notice when some people spoke other listened, versus when others spoke, nobody listened, and how would they frame the way that they talked about things, and how did they present themselves, when did they choose to speak up or not speak up, kind of watching all of those interplays as well. Spent a lot of time going to conferences, different kinds of conferences outside of my own discipline, um, to ah-again, just meet a lot of people, watch a lot of people, um, try out different ways of talking about issues. Um, so, I-I mean, I think for the-for the beginning, It was just a lot of exploration, a lot of conversations, and a lot of figuring out what I wanted to do, and then, you know, trying to identify where was there overlap of what I wanted to do anyways, and the things that were going to be rewarded.

Revisited again
Unlikely mentorships

absorption of the context and interplays between people

Mapping out plans

Speaker 1: okay... What personal strengths do you think separate you from your colleagues and peers?

Speaker 2: Um, oh... I don't know if anything does (chuckles). I don't know that I'm all that different. I think...I don't know that I'm all that different. I know a lot of people work incredibly hard. I think, maybe, I have approached this in a very, kind of strategic, deliberate way? Where, I kind of maybe because I'm an (omitted), or maybe I just organize things that way, I knew there was an equation I was trying to optimize. And I just needed to figure out, like, what were the signals, what were the measures that were gonna be valued and-and supported. That were gonna be visible, and people would take notice, and happened to overlap within things I already wanted to do. So,

What to do to push figure out success

11.16.16

Optimal Equation

3

APPENDIX J

SUMMARY OF CODES AND SAMPLE PARTICIPANT STATEMENTS

Codes	Sample Participant Quotes
High expectations in childhood	<p>“I didn’t aspire to become a distinguished professor, or an endowed chair, or anything like that. I just tried to do good work, and to be ethical. I know my parents having very very strong expectations of me influenced my persistence.”</p> <p>Dr. Gerald Nelson</p>
Education as a family value	<p>“Both of my parents have terminal degrees... Growing up, you always understood that you were gonna go to college.”</p> <p>Dr. Lance Oliver</p>
Strong role models in family and community	<p>“We had many, many accomplished people of color who were educators, who were principals, and who worked on the school board...So they were more like heroes and she-roes and I would watch, their trajectory and careers. I realized that many things could be accomplished.”</p> <p>Dr. Felice Townsend</p>
Family assistance with overcoming conflict	<p>“My parents were hard-working blue collar folks. I admired the fact that they worked hard, that they had integrity. They kept it real. My dad taught me very specifically about race and racism and my mom just made sure that I had what I needed to be successful.”</p> <p>Dr. Gerald Nelson</p>
High expectations for self	<p>“It started with taking a focus on my academics and schooling, taking it seriously at a younger age, like around high school, and developing habits of focus. I guess you could say hard work, those sorts of things, and using that as a foundation and then using that as a springboard to college... and essentially continued on with some of those same kinds of study habits.”</p> <p>Dr. Keaton Hembrook</p>
Relationship building / networking	<p>“Being exposed to a number of people who became my mentors or heroes, allowed me to think through this whole idea of Black education and the experiences of Black students.”</p> <p>Dr. Avner Sutton</p>
Mobility and progress through others	<p>“Generally, people took an interest in me, and they were very helpful. I would call this ‘responsive mobility’ and yeah, it’s for sure responsive mobility because each one of them sort of,</p>

they just see something in you and they reach out.”
Dr. Ellison Whitmore

Candid advice, guided assistance and feedback

“I had great mentorship, I mean really direct, up-close mentorship from a senior Black scholar, who said, “do this, don’t do this, this is how you think about it, what are you doing?” She made me accountable, she gave my things to read... and because she *mentored* like that, she pulled the best out of me. She encouraged me to read *widely*. She just *encouraged* me. She taught me how to mentor *students*. She taught me how to navigate *climate*. She was *incredible*.”
Dr. Elizabeth Lacey

Supportive department climate

“I was in a department that mirrored my values, and anyone in the department would help me. I was the baby, and they all seemed invested in seeing me do well. So, they nominated me for things, and they were there to clap when I got them. So it was just an extraordinarily supportive departmental climate, great mentorship, individually, but then the sense that I can get help from anybody.” Dr. Elizabeth Lacey

Indirect and informal mentors or role models

“I’m a biography person, so there are some people who’ve been influential that I’ve have never even met, and I just read their biography and come to understand how they have moved forward ideas... So, in combination with all of those individuals, provide me a template for, you imagine, higher ed.. I mean, all of them were just educators of the highest order and each provided a piece for me that continues to come through today.” Dr. Ellison Whitmore

Strategic mentorship / multiple mentors

“There are faculty members, there are other people along the way who have just been supportive. Maybe not for years, and years, and years, but just at a key moment... If you’re going to be a Black woman going through all of this, if you’re going to be a Black person going through all of this, often times mentors will acknowledge the fact that look, this is hard, that this is different, that there are complexities that you may have to deal with that others don’t. But they had some key piece of information, or they shared what they did themselves”
Dr. Candice Eldridge

Methods for difficulty and conflict

“There are challenges all the way to this day... One of the big ones early on was time management... how to best utilize your time; how to survive under the pressure of sort of that clock just ticking away. And, what I basically did was, I worked in my teaching. I was fortunate enough to have

leaders in my department who let me teach some of the same courses for awhile. I didn't have a bunch of new preps right away." Dr. Keaton Hembrook

Continuous self-
reflection/improvement

"I'm very, very determined, and I think that's kind of the key. I believe very strongly in myself and my ability to learn whatever it is I need to learn to be successful. When I entered the academy, I was an okay writer, but I wasn't a great writer. And I really decided I was going to be a great writer... I knew you had to do that in the academy and I didn't want to be in a situation where I felt challenged, anxious... So I worked at it." Dr. Lennore Alfred

Authentic self and
identity maintenance

"I think it's important when you are dealing with everybody to be authentically who you are. One of the reasons that I was kind of my crazy self in graduate school is I refused to be someone other than I am to be successful. I'm me. And I really believe that when you're your authentic self, it's going to win in the end." Dr. Lennore Alfred

Adaptation to the
academic world

"I grew up where I was constantly having to adapt... and that's pretty valuable in this profession... As I've gotten older, I don't need to do that as much [work a tone/hone your craft], because I have much more judgment to understand roadblocks, like, anticipating roadblocks, or figuring out what's gonna work or what's not gonna work, or having a structure around you. But in those early days, it's just a lot of work." Dr. Candice Eldridge

Balance in personal life
/ use time wisely

"There's no real off switch, I mean it can be all consuming. Especially on the way to promotion and tenure, it can take up a lot of time, effort, it can drive you crazy... you could always be thinking about it. And later now in my career, at this particular point, I'm not quite as stressed out, I probably found a better balance... because I make a conscious choice to say, I've got family. I've got some other things. I've got more administrative responsibilities. But that balance will always be tricky."

Dr. Keaton Hembrook

Work that is shaped by
social realities

"I was shaped philosophically and ideologically by the social realities around me... An so, with the consciousness of the African freedom movement, that was an opportunity for me to be consciously aware that I did not want to be hand-picked and taken out of my relationships and out of my community... we established a Black studies program and connected with

the local community...and I brought that orientation into my professional work.” Dr. Ava Clament

Research reflects
passion and interests

“It allowed me to be able to identify a next step, where I could blend people in higher ed, a research institution, but people who really cared about Black children. So, that was very important for me...I’ve intersected a place that cares about what I care about, but it’s a Research 1. I now have a research agenda that matters to me, and I think that’s what ultimately made the difference.”

Dr. Elizabeth Lacey

Experiences drive
research interests

“Well, I think a lot of our experiences drive our initial interest...But I think I was studying myself... I think my trajectory was probably trying to understand myself and that brought me to understanding the practice of African American teachers, and then eventually I tried to apply that research. I went from a basic research agenda, just trying to understand something, to application.” Dr. Lenore Alfred

Decisions to pursue
academia

“So, when I came out of graduate school, I wasn’t clear what I wanted to do. Being a faculty member, a junior faculty member in particular, sounded like a horrible job. I got the job and thought, I can try it out for a year, learn more about what this profession really is and if I hate it, then I’ll just leave and I’ll go do something else. It was that first year that I realized how much of a luxury it is to do research... I realized how much I really like the idea of being a faculty member.”

Dr. Candice Eldridge

Accountability to God
and community

“I actually have a very deep sense that we are all sent here to do something. We have a job to do, that we are accountable to someone higher than ourselves, for what we do with our lives. And so, doing work that’s purposeful, and trying to align myself with that greater sense of good, greater calling, that’s the only place that I would say that I have had agency, and even there, it’s in a mode of accountability to God.”

Dr. Elizabeth Lacey

Pave the way for others
/ give back

“I was always interested in how can I be helpful? How can my education make a difference to my community?... So, I don’t think about the journey in terms of oh, I learned this, and that helped me do that... What was central was that I wanted to be a person who could be helpful to my community, and to the people who sacrificed for me to be there.” Dr. Ava Clament

Recognition of prestige / system validation	<p>“I applied for and was accepted into a very prestigious fellowship program... it was an opportunity to travel internationally and look at social change in different parts of the world...you can take advantage of the system’s own validation of what is prestigious, whether that means a fellowship or something else that brings honor and attention to your institution, or using technology in a very progressive way.” Dr. Ava Clament</p>
Outstanding work go above and beyond	<p>“...if you do anything over and above being average, you’ll always be identified for more opportunities than the average person... And so, I always try to position myself... If you want to distinguish yourself, I firmly believe that through work and effort, that’s above average, you can compete with people who might have more talent and ability, and if you were trying to rank order them, you probably could be better than many.” Dr. Ellison Whitmore</p>
Observation to figure things out	<p>“I rarely meet a person, be it, if we are in academic spaces or if we’re in non-academic spaces, where I don’t believe I can learn something from them. I typically walk in the room and recognize that I’m not the smartest person in the room. I don’t have to be the one that’s talking the most or the loudest either. So, one of the things that have been most helpful to me is just having the opportunity to study with, be alongside, and just engage really, really smart people... and that is probably the greatest resource that I’ve had.” Dr. Lance Oliver</p>
Strategic, deliberate approach	<p>“The reality is that we live in a credential-oriented society that people care about whether you’re going to school and they care about WHERE you’re going to school... and so I think that, having gone to those institutions certainly provides an advantage for me...I chose intentionally to go to [an ivy league undergraduate institution] because at the time I was applying to doctoral programs, it was the number one school of education in the country... I think also that having learned to write as well as I do in graduate school has advantaged me because I’ve been able to publish widely.” Dr. Avner Sutton</p>
Formula for success	<p>“You know, It took awhile, but eventually those two parts of being a good academic, which is the creative drive, which you need if you don’t have anything to say or it’s not original... and the technical part which is writing well, good grammar, learning the textual forms, kind of merge. And so, I think</p>

that's what happened for me. It was also not a straight thing, it was circuitous."

Dr. Lenore Alfred

Help-seeking and self-promotion

"I have really tried not to walk around feeling like I couldn't do or be or have what I needed. I'm very frank and upfront with the people, the powers that be, about what I need to be successful. And I also try to use what I know to function and get what I need to get done vis-s-vis my work."

Dr. Gerald Nelson

Consistent productivity / maximize potential

"The more time you can have to get your work done, the better off you are and the better your chances of advancing your work. In fact, I would say time is probably... Having time to get my work done has probably been the most valuable asset... or no, the most valuable resource I have been able to have in this work... I always said if you do your work, if you go good work, things will work themselves out."

Dr. Gerald Nelson

APPENDIX K

SUMMARY OF CODES AND PARTICIPANT FREQUENCY

Code	A	C	E	H	L	N	O	S	T	W
High expectations in Childhood	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education as a family value			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Strong role models in family and community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Family assistance with overcoming conflict	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
High expectations for self	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relationship building / networking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mobility and progress through others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Candid advice, guided assistance, and feedback	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Supportive department climate	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indirect and informal mentors or role models	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
Strategic mentorship / multiple mentors	X		X	X			X	X	X	X
Methods for difficulty and conflict	X	X	X	X			X	X		X
Continuous self – reflection / improvement	X	X	X	X			X	X		X
Authentic self and identity maintenance	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Adaptation to the academic world	X	X	X	X			X			X

Balance in personal life / use time wisely			X	X	X	X	X		X
Work that is shaped by social realities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Research reflects passion and interests		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Experiences drive research interests	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Decisions to pursue academia		X	X	X	X		X	X	
Accountability to God and community	X	X		X	X		X		X
Pave the way for others / give back	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Recognition of prestige / system validation	X	X	X	X				X	X X
Outstanding work / go above and beyond	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Observation to figure things out	X		X		X	X	X	X	
Strategic, deliberate approach	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Formula for success	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Help-seeking and self-promotion	X		X	X		X		X	X X
Consistent productivity / maximize potential	X		X	X		X	X	X	X

Note: A=Dr. Alfred, C=Dr. Clament, etc.

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