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CAN'T BE BROKEN: THE SURVIVAL OF BLACK GIRLS IN A BROKEN
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

By

Ashley Monique Johnson

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Leadership and Policy Studies

The University of Memphis

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving parents, Jan, and William. To my mother, thank you for always being supportive and encouraging. You always taught me to walk with my shoulders back and head held high. Mother, I thank you for instilling in me values of strength and confidence and to always go after what I want in life. Your struggles, sacrifice, and success I have witnessed and embraced as your daughter, which has taught me resiliency and fortitude, and I thank you and I love you beyond words. To my father, thank you for your support and being the strongest man I know. Your life has never been easy and you did the best you could with what you knew raising me, I love you and I will always be a daddy's girl. Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother Vivian, her spirit gave me strength through this journey and I am forever grateful I experienced her care and love on this earth for as long as I did. I love you and miss you every day.

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Abstract

This dissertation follows a three-article format. The purpose of this study was to explore the components of K-12 urban or suburban, private/charter, and public schools to determine if the setting is prepared to implement holistic approaches to support Black girls to meet their social and emotional needs. The first article uncovers the perceptions of teachers not feeling prepared to implement a social-emotional learning environment through a culturally responsive pedagogical framework. The second article focuses on the impact Black educators have on Black students within the academic setting from a phenomenological lens, lived experiences were shared to understand the passion, purpose, and perseverance of Black educators through a culturally responsive pedagogy ideology. The third article discovers how Black parents from a k-12 school environment navigate the educational system as protectionists of their daughters from an intergenerational and historical standpoint, ensuring the identities and spirit of Black girls are not diminished within the academic setting. The conceptualization of Black parents' views, Black educators purpose of becoming educators, and the perspectives of teachers feeling prepared in the classroom, Black Girl Care framework was derived to ensure the understanding of Black parent protection, provide love and care, and redefining the school setting for Black girls to be supported and protected in schools

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
Introduction	
CHAPTER 2	14
I Didn't Sign Up for This: Teachers Perception Implementing a Social-Emotional Learning Environment	
CHAPTER 3	33
The Difficulties of a Black Educator: The Impact Black Educators Have on Black Students	
CHAPTER 4	57
Message from the Black Parent: Navigating Educational Spaces to Support Black Girls	
CHAPTER 5	73
Take Care of Our Daughters as You Would of Your Own	
REFERENCES	81
APPENDICES	93

List of Tables

CHAPTER 2

Table 1	24
---------	-----------

CHAPTER 3

Table 1	43
---------	-----------

CHAPTER 4

Table 1	63
---------	-----------

Chapter 1

Can't Be Broken: The Survival of Black Girls in a Broken Educational System

Introduction

Black females are the most scrutinized group in society whether it is from white people or our fellow Black man (Crenshaw, 2015; Crenshaw, Ocen, Nanda, 2015; Koonce, 2012). From the crown of our head to the sound of our voices, to the soles of our feet, Black females endure the language of criticisms of our existence (Koonce, 2012). The overzealous minds of white people wanting to know, in amazement, if they can touch of our hair as if Black females are like a pet or an object in an exhibit all the while Black females, internally are contemplating if their style is appropriate and or accepted within the academic or professional setting. Wanting to display owning thyself of being a Black female, the shapes of our bodies are observed, judged, and regulated within pieces of materials worn and at times restricted because the appearance is different on a Black body compared to non-black bodies (Crenshaw, 2015; Morris, 2016). Black females' identities have been dictated based on white societal norms of what is deemed to be graceful, elegant, feminine, and anything demonstrated outside of that specific norm, is inappropriate, especially within an academic setting (Andrews, Brown, Castro, & Id-Deen, 2019; Fordham, 1993; Jerald, Cole, Avery, & Ward, 2017).

Black females are stripped of our essence of beauty like the whips taking of our flesh during a time of slavery and questioned why Black females are so adamant of owning the phenomenon of being a strong Black female (Corbin, Smith, Garcia, 2018; Jerald, Cole, Ward, & Avery, 2017). The fight to exist in spaces is a hard-feat Black female's, young and old,

experience daily. Our hardships and racial encounters begin at such an early age in education, being strong-willed and a developed mindset of determination, is a characteristic trait a Black female has lasting endurance to withstand the hardships we encounter. In the space of a learning environment, Black females are the least protected when it comes to school discipline policies, practices, and protocols enacted by school personnel (Crenshaw, 2015; Joseph, Viesca, & Bianco, 2016). Black females are six times more likely to be suspended from school compared to white female students and are suspended at a higher rate compared to black and white male students combined (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2010; Crenshaw, 2015; Slate, Gray, & Jones, 2017; Watson, 2016). The assault on Black females' existence in the educational setting signifies the lack of acceptance and sense of belonging in the school setting. However, throughout the battle of attempting to exist in spaces that have not been created to support Black females within the educational setting, our education, qualifications, and knowledge are challenged daily.

Critical Problem

The critical problem of this study is the treatment and mischaracterization of Black girls/females within the academic setting. I will be stating Black girls, females, or women interchangeably throughout this paper. Black females are fighting to exist within an environment that has been created not to have a concern or need to address the needs of Black females. Black females are continually having to battle how to exist in a space that is grounded in whiteness. The process Black females go through to feel accepted and essence conforms to exist by downplaying our true Black identity and adopting white female characteristics to feel accepted. Black girls demonstrating self-advocacy, jeopardizing their educational opportunities, while

enduring the emotional and psychological harms by fighting the barriers of being perfect and taking on the persona of being white and existing in a Black body (Andrews, Brown, Castro, & Id-Deen, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to uncover the lived experiences of Black girls and their parents as they navigate the education setting to ensure their academic success. As well, identify strategies and coping mechanisms that are utilized to combat the pushout of Black girls in the educational setting. Black females are expected to adopt the ideologies of white supremacy and femininity to be successful in education, learning how to navigate whiteness while staying true to self and “for the culture” is a hard feat for Black females to master at times. This study will also address how Black females navigate whiteness and unfavorable disciplinary outcomes within the academic setting.

Background/Role of the Researcher

Why do you talk so proper? You must think that you’re white? The questions asked more times to count during my education journey in middle school and high school. The statement or assumption of being a white girl has always been a comment towards me in high school, college, and continues now as an adult. At the time, I didn’t understand the concern or misconceptions by my peers in regards to my visible identity. Confusion set in about being Black and enunciating words in a manner that would bring into question my Blackness. I began to feel inadequate to my Black peers. After all, my articulation or vernacular of words was assumed to be out of the ordinary because I am Black. The emotions that were felt during that time in life from words

used in a sense of attacking my existence as a Black girl, were internalized and manifested into how I later dealt with criticisms as a Black woman.

The experiences of being a Black girl in the academic setting did not come without a price. The embarrassment of being singled out to be ridiculed when a classmate shared their snack and the lunchroom monitor stands by you and says “give that back, you don’t take anyone’s food, and you need to bring your own” giggles erupt at the table, my classmate replies, I offered my friends some of this, and the lunch monitor replies with, “well, you don’t need to share your food with people”. However, I didn’t receive an apology for the inappropriate comment made towards me. Remembering the intense burning sensation on the inside of my body, feeling ashamed, as if I did something wrong. The feeling of not wanting to sit with my class during lunch and, at times, skipping lunch period or asking for permission to sit in the classroom just to avoid the harsh comments and blazing stares that watch every move that I made. Having support seemed non-existent within the academic setting. Attending an all-white elementary school isolation was a common feeling. Even though, having parents that were well known throughout our community, didn’t provide any exemptions to feeling the wrath of inspections of student desks or being singled out and questioned if something came up missing. The first to be asked do you know about anything missing, the Black girl would always be asked first. Telling the experiences for the day to my mother, I never got a sense of comfort or support, but more of, “well, it’s over with now” or “you’ll be okay”, which resulted in me becoming more vocal of the mistreatment I would endure at the hands of the individuals that were meant to provide a supportive learning environment.

Growing up in a small town where everyone knew who you were, whose child you were, which left no room for error or mistakes. Elizabethtown, Kentucky, a community with a sense of closeness and support was portrayed until the color of your skin or what side of the train tracks you lived on would that support be evident. If you resided “across town” meaning the “bottoms” or on the “hill” which meant the projects, you were classified as being poor, lacked resources, or needing assistance. However, kids that carried a certain last name carried the stigma of, “oh, you live over there”. It was a mixture of Black and white families that resided across town, however, it was always presumed that if you were Black, you lived in the “bottoms” or on the “hill”. I grew up in the house located on the corner of a four-way stop, which is identified as the cut-through neighborhood to make it to the other side of town quicker. There was a combination of Black and white students that lived in my neighborhood. It was a quiet neighborhood, the kids either attended Helmwood Heights, which is the elementary school that I attended or Morningside Elementary which was connected to T.K. Stone Junior High School, which I would later attend for 7th and 8th grade.

The school demographics that I attended was all-white elementary school less than two miles from my home. My home is positioned in between three schools, the one I attended, and the one that I wanted to go because of the diversity, more kids that looked like me, the high school. The school district which is classified as the city school district is an Independent school system, separate from the county schools which is a block over from my childhood home. My elementary school was considered the private uppity school in the community, the prestigious school that had an all-white staff and faculty. The teachers, staff, and families that sent their children to Helmwood Heights, resided in the newly developed housing subdivision. My

experiences in the Elizabethtown school system was never based off of where I lived, not because of whose child I was, but merely for the obvious fact that I am a Black female. Reflecting on those days, certain experiences have never been forgotten. As previously mentioned before, my experiences in the lunchroom with my peers and the lunch monitor staff, began to shape the identity of how I started to or not started to see myself as a Black girl. At times, I would be on the receiving end of inappropriate and insulting comments from white boys due to my physical features, and exclusion at times from white female students when it came to group activities or team selections for recess. As I matriculated through elementary school to junior high, I didn't have a moment where I felt proud to be whom I was. I always felt I was defensive and had to protect every step that I made in school. During the 7th and 8th grades, more racial undertones became evident. Receiving detention from a substitute teacher with a group of other Black female students due to talking, which we were not and our white fellow female student stated she was the one talking, she did not receive a consequence, it was just given to us Black female students, and the substitute stated, I really couldn't tell who was or wasn't talking, I could just tell which area it was coming from. I felt angry, defeated, and after pleading my case that it wasn't I that was talking, however, we were silenced, and told to take the consequence given and go to our next class.

Over time, my experiences within the Elizabethtown school district shaped who I became as a Black female. I not only dealt with the cruel and unusual encounters from white adults in the school system, standing my ground with the school dress code policy and being held to a different standard compared to white girls, or verbalizing my disdain of treatment towards me versus my white counterparts in the academic setting. I also endured the ridicule and harassment

from Black students and didn't understand why I was receiving such harsh treatment from people that look like me. I made it a purpose of mine to limit my time in the academic setting by enrolling in a course that would allow me to leave the school to go to work. I would start to internalize the comments, even though I would defend myself, however, I become labeled as being mean or having an attitude, but I truly became so self-conscious and insecure. I became ashamed of how I looked.

Throughout my academic and professional career, I continued to endure the classification of acting white or portraying to be better than other Black females. I learned to wear confidence as a defense mechanism, to protect myself from the strike of the words that ultimately tore down my existence or rather questioned my existence as a Black female. During an internship position, I was called a Heather Locklear who is a blonde hair, blue-eyed, white woman; the assumption of portraying a high profiled white woman all because my professional appearance consisted of being well-groomed. This dilemma made me the question, what expectation(s) did these other white women have of me? A young Black girl, pursuing an undergraduate degree, working as an intern in a professional setting? How was I supposed to look or dress or why was it out of the ordinary for a Black female to be nicely put together?

Research Questions

This section seeks to address the following questions for the study of how Black females navigate the academic setting.

1. Are teachers prepared to implement a social-emotional learning environment that would assist in supporting the needs of Black female students within the educational setting?

2. How do Black educators affect the educational trajectory of Black female students?
3. What are the perceptions of Black parents supporting their daughters during schooling?

White society has defined who and what a Black female should be (Andrews et al., 2019). The ideal of femininity is to be meek, gentle, and or soft, gentle. Opposed to being expressive, verbally assertive, and independent, which are attributes that have assisted in the professional, social, and academic achievement of Black females, however, discouraged because these characteristics are outside the norm of what white femininity consists of (Andrews et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2010).

Expected outcomes

The researcher anticipates discovering the lived experiences from Black girls and their parents detailing as a family unit, the strategies, and conversations to prepare their daughters to enter into the academic setting to overcome difficult barriers to ensure the academic success of for daughter(s). The researcher expects the outcome of this study to uncover the untold experiences of Black girls that not only experience unfair disciplinary actions, but also, share the deep-rooted emotions of understanding self as a Black girl in education, and feeling accepted and confident with one's identity as a Black girl. Black girls are encouraged and groomed by their parents, school personnel, and Black males to be silent, to embody a persona of whiteness to demonstrate and master appropriate feminine behaviors (Fordham, 1993; Haynes, Stewart, & Allen, 2016).

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study encompasses several different theoretical perspectives that guide my focus for this study., Crenshaw's (2005) Intersectionality and Collins' (1990) matrix of domination asserts that Black girls/females encounters of marginalization are based not only on race but also with gender and class, which contributes to the oppression of Black girls. Within the educational setting, Black girls are positioned to negotiate and compromise their identities, essentially becoming invisible and potentially losing the concept of self to exist in a space that has been created to support and encourage whiteness as the model of femininity (Cole, Avery & Ward, 2017). Black girl's experiences within the academic setting are grounded in predetermined stereotypes and or characterizations of how Black girls should act and chastised when being there authentic self. (Fordham, 1993; Haynes et al. 2016; Zimmeran, 2018).

Another lens that I utilize to guide my research study is the concept of the invisibility syndrome paradigm (ISP) (Haynes, et al. 2016). Invisibility is a concept that Black girls do exist in spaces, however, they are looked past as non-existent. This concept details how Black girls experience microaggressions within the academic setting by experiencing a lack of support, non-existence of Black femininity, but endure stereotypical bias (Andrews et al. 2019; Haynes et al. 2016; Joseph, Viesca, Bianco, 2016). ISP is comprised of seven components 1) one feels the lack of validation; 2) no reciprocity from interactions; 3) lack of self-validation; 4) lack of acknowledgment; 5) one's perception of existence is questioned; 6) One feels a sense of discourtesy; 7) One's authentic self is reconstructed to meet the sufficiency of hegemonic ways (Haynes et al 2016).

Resiliency is another concept that has guided the structure of this study. Three core competencies which guide the understanding of resiliency in youth. Resiliency is comprised of

three elements “Sense of mastery, sense of relatedness, and emotional reactivity” (Prince-Embury, 2011, p 673). History has described the endurance of a Black female from the roles Black females fulfilled during the time of slavery. Lack of protection endured more than the Black male by sharing the same oppression as the Black male, essentially entails the lived experiences that Black females endured during slavery, reminiscent of now what Black females endure within the academic setting (Davis, 1971).

Black girl’s struggles and success comes with a price of self. These concepts connect to the study by revealing the inequities Black females endure within a space that should be safe and supportive. The concepts support how Black girls have to question their existence, but also how the familial system plays a part in the development of Black girls.

Overview and Context of Methods

The anticipated approach for this study is a qualitative approach that allows for the experiences of the research participants to be revealed, through a phenomenological design. I plan to utilize semi-structured interviews of the research participants to gain a full perspective of the experiences of Black girls within the academic setting (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Using a phenomenological approach enables me to create questions that are semi-structured, conversational, and open-ended to gain a better perspective of the lived experience from the research participant. I decided to not use a quantitative approach with my specific study, as I am not wanting a statistical outcome, but more so a relative outcome to share to create a foundation to enable change and or support for Black girls within the academic setting. With this style of methodological approach, I want to ensure that my research questions are not pathologizing

Black girls within the academic setting. My research questions would encompass a method of allowing the participant to share their experiences from the academic setting.

Organization of Study

This study will consist of four chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction that provides the general context and purpose of identifying the strategies of Black girls and their families of navigating the white space within the academic setting. Chapter two will consist of a research study of how teachers lack the preparedness to create a safe place for Black girls within the academic setting and addressing their social-emotional needs. Chapter three is a research study on how Black educators affect the trajectory of Black students, specifically Black female students within the academic setting. The fourth chapter is a research study focused on the experiences of Black parents navigating the educational system while parenting Black girls.

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Chapter 2

I Didn't Sign Up for This: Teachers Perceptions Implementing a Social-Emotional Learning Environment

Imagine entering into a school building without any of your required class materials, uniform not in compliance with the school dress code, you didn't get the opportunity to eat the night before due to a shooting in the parking lot of your apartment complex. The uncertainty of where the family will be sleeping tonight due to an eviction notice on the door leaving for school. A mandated parent meeting is needed the next morning to attend school, however, that would impose a burden on the parent due to the work schedule. Missed school breakfast due to being late. Seated at the desk, no paper, no pencil, and no homework to turn in. No one has said good morning. No one has said it is great to see you. No one has asked how you are this morning. No one has shown that they care. No has shown you exist beyond fault.

Introduction

This scenario is a reality for students. What would it have taken for an educator in this situation to just simply notice this student could be dealing with something beyond their control by just taking the time to ask, how are you doing this morning? At times, educators miss the opportunity to establish rapport with students, to build a trusting supportive relationship (Rose, Lindsey, Xiao, Finigan-Carr, Joe, 2017). Children are exposed to traumatic events and have difficulties processing emotions from the aftermath (Rose et al., 2017; Yohannan & Carlson, 2018). The expectations of students to enter into a school building, follow all rules without difficulty, leaving all personal problems at the door, calls for concern to determine how well developed is the academic setting and the people in it? All aspects of the school climate, culture, and overall staff dispositions should be focused on supporting students. Developing strong students who have been exposed to trauma has shown to be a hard feat (La Salle, George, McCoach, Polk, & Evanovich, 2018; Moore, Wehby, Hollo, Robertson & Maggin, 2014). Implementing standards for students to meet expectations set forth by school personnel of

demonstrating appropriate behaviors, without showing any hardships a student may be dealing with can be a difficult task for a student, especially without the proper school support (Caplan, Feldman, Fishenhower & Blacher, 2016; Walkley & Cox, 2013).

Perceptions of Mental Health in the School Setting

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of teachers and staff on their knowledge base and preparedness on being a trauma-informed individual, a trauma-informed school, and implementing a social-emotional learning environment within the academic setting. Additionally, researching the perceptions of having a mental health curriculum integrated throughout the training of teacher preparation pre-service programs. Trauma-informed care and social-emotional learning are now becoming more of an initiative for school districts to implement to create a supportive learning environment for students (Blitz, Anderson, & Saastamoinen, 2016). Trauma-informed care within the academic setting means teachers and staff are aware of the sensitivity of a student's circumstance and providing a safe and understanding learning environment. However, teachers have challenges such as not having the skill set or preparedness to address students who are demonstrating behaviors viewed as being disruptive and or insubordinate within the academic setting (Atkins & Rodger, 2016; Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Blitz et al, 2016). Identifying the underlying issue of student behavior(s) is referred to as school support staff to address the concern while teachers are the first responders to students. Students are filled with emotions and at times, their behaviors are fueled by the thoughts they have. Unfortunately, "10 percent to 20 percent of children and adolescents have a mental health problem of some type" (Shulte-Korne, 2016, pg.184). Teachers have reported the lack of education received about mental health to even begin addressing any

social-emotional issue a student may have within the classroom (Atkins & Rodgers, 2016). Knowing trauma-informed care is a critical component missing in the school setting. Not equipping teachers with the knowledge base necessary to support students ultimately affects the school culture and climate; and, ultimately, the overall learning environment. The traditional teacher education programs lack the emphasis on responding to student mental health needs, and the feeling of unpreparedness on behalf of the teachers creates secondary stress for a teacher (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Ruppap, Neeper, & Dalsen, 2016).

Research reveals the belief of addressing student traumatic experiences in the academic setting by school staff, is a sign of weakness, and not maintaining structure (Blitz et al, 2016; Long, Albright, McMillan, Shockley, & Price, 2018; Walkley & Cox, 2013). Trauma is a norm in student's lives (Thompson & Swartz, 2014). The literature on trauma-informed schools reveals school staff is not prepared to deal with students exposed to trauma, oftentimes students are mislabeled as attention-deficit disorder, conduct disorder, and other diagnoses that inhibit the opportunities for effective interventions to be utilized (Walkley & Cox, 2013). Addressing mental health within the academic setting creates hesitation among teachers and staff (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014). For teachers to not have a strong comprehension of what mental health symptomologies may look like among children and adolescents, teachers express the concerns of not having the appropriate intervention base to address students who may be in distress. Not understanding trauma as a "habitual, inevitable, expected part of life for student learners (Blitz, Anderson, & Saatamonien, 2016; Thompson & Schwartz, 2014, p 51). Exploring the views of teachers on trauma-informed care is crucial as teachers are gatekeepers in service delivery and student learning. Teachers create the learning foundation in the academic setting

and are the ones who have and spend the most time with students at school (Ball & Anderson, 2014). Establishing trusting relationships between the student(s) and teacher(s), increasing the ability to understand, control, and express thoughts and feelings in a healthy manner are essential in creating a social-emotional learning environment (CASEL, 2019; Thompson & Schwartz, 2014). This study aims to answer three essential questions: 1) Do teachers feel fully prepared to work with students who may have a mental health diagnosis? 2) What are the opinions of teachers on integrating a mental health/social-emotional curriculum to teacher preparation programs? And 3) Does professional development address effective strategies in working with students that have been exposed to some form of trauma?

Building a Social-Emotional Learning Environment

Teachers are expected to meet the high demands set forth by their independent school district. Prioritizing test scores and academic achievement standards, the design of an academic environment that encompasses a supportive, empathetic culture, gets lost. Educating students who have been exposed to some form of trauma, is a challenging position (Venet, 2018). Creating an atmosphere in the school setting that encompasses the sense of support is a collaborative effort among school leaders and staff. Social-Emotional learning implementation is said to increase personal skills for children addressing positive self-concept, positive peer to peer interaction, expression of thoughts and feelings, and appropriate decision making (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Weissberg, Domitrovich & Gullotta, 2015). However, the question remains, are teachers prepared to implement this concept within their classroom to address the needs of students?

Strategies are created to shift the paradigm of how a conventional classroom should function by establishing relationships with students before the curriculum can fully be understood. If students are not focused on what is going on within the classroom due to focusing on what is happening outside of the school, establishing a relationship with the student to help support him/her is beneficial for that student to be academically, socially, and behaviorally successful. (Gase, Gomez, Kuo, Glenn, Inkleas, & Ponce, 2017; Venet, 2018). Implementation of a new dynamic for an educational setting requires buy-in from all adults within the structure of the school building. Shifting the mindset of individuals to implement a strategy to address student needs can cause discourse in addressing what is best for the school environment. Addressing the school climate is an essential component in assuring the needs of staff and students are met. Teachers taking the time to establish a social-emotional learning environment stems from the self-assessment of their emotions within the classroom and their sense of self-efficacy in the ability to provide support for students' social-emotional development (Shewark, Sinsser, & Denham, 2018; Yohannan & Carlson, 2018). Professional development is a key aspect of creating consistency amongst staff to create and maintain a cohesive school culture and climate. Essentially, professional development should encompass learning and practice strategies aligned with initiatives that are being implemented within the academic setting (Guskey, 2002; Darlin-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017; Long et al., 2018).

Changing the Climate Trauma-Informed Care

Establishing a temperament within an academic setting conducive to meet the needs of students and teachers is a difficult task, ensuring everyone who occupies the space is comfortable (Gase et al., 2017). Creating a well-balanced school climate would be no different. School

climate consists of many aspects of the student's academic experiences, their feeling of safety, peer relationships and interactions positively or negatively, and different paradigms on teaching and learning (Cohen & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Darlin-Hammond et al., 2017; Gase et al., 2017). The climate of the school creates the quality and spirit of the academic setting, it can have an overwhelming effect on a student(s) development within the academic setting mentally and physically (Cohen & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). The climate of the school can healthily contribute to the learning environment or it can create barriers towards effective learning (La Salle, George, McCoach, Pol, & Evanovich, 2018). A holistic approach to the overall development of the school environment to support the whole child is an important component of the student's social-emotional development. The school climate consists of two essential components that are student-centered, school connectedness, and school relationships. Each component focuses on the student's sense of acceptance, student-buy into the academic setting, and establishing a relationship with peers and teachers (Gase et al., 2017; Loukas, 2007). The key players to control the school climate are teachers, staff, and school leaders. The behaviors of a student can also be contributed to the lack of support or a sense of belonging from the negative encounters experienced at the hands of school leaders, staff, and teachers. Students, staff, and school leaders should demonstrate a cohesiveness to control the school climate, if not in sync, this offset contributes to the dysfunction of managing student needs (Gase, et al., 2017).

The purpose of a trauma-informed school is to create a learning environment for students knowingly the exposure to some form of trauma has been experienced (Blitz et al, Frydman & Mayor, 2017). However, exposure to trauma not only takes place outside the academic setting but also takes place within the academic setting, known as educational trauma (Gaywsh &

Mordoch, 2018; Rose et al., 2017). The negative interactions and/or language used by teachers and administration towards student's compromise the possibility of creating a rapport and establish positive student to teacher relationship (Gase et al., 2017; Shewark, Zinsser & Denham, 2018; Yohannan & Carlson, 2018). This type of interaction can create a hostile learning environment, which ultimately can affect the mentality of students (Caplan et al., 2016; Crosone, Johnson, & Elder, 2004; Thompson & Schwartz, 2014).

Are Teachers Ready to Help?

Teachers are considered first responders in the academic setting and are in a key position to identify any roadblocks that may be contributing to the success of students (Lee, Tice, Collins, Brown, & Smith, 2012). Educators are the gatekeepers and have the ability to prevent severe mental health developments and provide assistance, for all students, with the implementation of classroom management strategies that incorporate school climate and positive relationships with students (Crosnoe et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2012; Loukas, 2007). Modeling desired behaviors by school staff, demonstrates positive coping strategies, verbalization of emotions, enhance flexibility, and positive decision-making skills to students (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Blitz et al., 2016). Teachers express feelings of not knowing the appropriate strategies or interventions to use in addressing a child who may be demonstrating undesired behaviors (Atkins & Rodger, 2016). In establishing effective teachers, the implementation of in-service professional development training, for enhancing the comprehension of trauma-informed care, can create self-confidence from a teachers' standpoint by practicing step by step strategies to address students who may be demonstrating behaviors potentially stemming from mental health issues (Long, Albright, McMillan, Shockley, and Price, 2018). From lack of preparedness and

training on behalf of educators, attempting to intervene when a student displays behaviors stemming from experiences of trauma, strategies utilized to address the behaviors oftentimes result in the student receiving a more punitive consequence than what the actual behavior or offense warranted. Unfortunately, teachers cannot practice positive reinforcement strategies due to the unfamiliarity recognizing mental health symptomology training (Caroline & Line, 2014; Caplan et al., 2016).

The role of a teacher is a difficult position. Teachers are managing their own emotions from exposure to student trauma, which then develops secondary trauma for teachers which develops from work-stress as previously mentioned, teachers are first responders to students who have been traumatized. The managing of student emotions, ultimately affects the teachers, developing fatigue mentally and physically (Ludick & Figley, 2016). Research suggests that 12% of new teachers leave the profession before the end of their first year, and 28% leave the profession by the third year of teaching. Less than half of teachers will leave the field of education before completing the fifth year of teaching (Atkins & Rodger, 2016; Caplan et al., 2016). The importance of understanding the seemingly insurmountable stress teachers experience daily related to job performance, job satisfaction, and self-fulfillment, the overwhelming feeling of stress affects how teachers establish or maintain strong effective teacher-student relationships. The heavyweight of meeting the mental health needs of students which contributes to the stress of teachers directly affects the willingness and the ability to support the push and/ or buy-in to create a learning environment supportive to meet the mental health need of students. (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2004). In support of new teachers entering the profession of education, traditional teacher education programs should

place greater emphasis on strategies on how to identify and respond to student mental health needs. Teacher education programs are being confronted to respond to the needs of students and teachers to support and conduct training to address student mental health needs (Atkins & Rodger, 2016; Gase et al., 2017). With these strategies, facilitating training to address student mental health establishes resilience to decrease teacher burnout in newly certified teachers (Atkins & Rodger, 2016; Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Prince-Embury, 2011).

Conceptual Framework

This study will be framed from a theoretical approach of culturally responsive pedagogy. This specific ideology has an emphasis on the school environment implementing a culturally responsive trauma-informed approach. Culturally responsive pedagogy provides guidance for educators to understand the dynamics from which their student's environment consists of beyond the classroom. The ability to assist in developing strategic practices that can be implemented for student engagement and enhancing teaching skills, ultimately helps the student grow in learning concepts that enhance their skills in managing their emotions and becoming academically stronger (Blitz et al., 2016; Gist, 2014). An intent for culturally responsive pedagogy is to enhance life skills in a healthy manner that would encourage students to look beyond current circumstances with the support and encouragement from the academic setting and the people in it to express feelings appropriately.

Culturally responsive pedagogy does not eliminate the exposure/experience of trauma, the approach for educators helps promote student resilience and academic success. The element of culturally responsive pedagogy and or practices aligns with teachers needing the exposure to implementing a social-emotional learning environment to better support students and to be an

effective educator by supporting by having the toolset to do so. Knowing this practice will reduce the school-based trauma by utilizing practices that suggest support, healing, growth, comfort, and understanding instead of unwarranted disciplinary practices and exclusion (Blitz et al., 2016).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach that is informed by a phenomenological design. This design will be most effective in capturing the essence of teacher's feelings of preparedness within the P-12 academic setting, creating a supportive learning environment that addresses the whole child by acknowledging the social-emotional needs of a student. Using a phenomenological approach allows for the development of semi-structured open-ended interview questions to capture a true phenomenon from teachers of their personal experiences from entering into the field of education and occurrences that have taken place since becoming a teacher (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013).

Data Collection

The data collection for this research study will take place over a 3-week time frame. During the first week, recruitment for research participants and consent to participate in the research study will take place. I will use convenience sampling to recruit research participants/teachers that are within proximity and have availability (Urdu, 2017). Teachers in the K-12 academic setting, 18 years or older, and have teaching experience between 1-5 years, will meet the criteria for the research study. Once consent has been confirmed, the researcher will schedule times and locations to conduct the interviews from the research participants

choosing. The research participants will be asked 10 questions, developed from the literature surrounding the research study. The research participants should anticipate the interview to last approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Each participant will be given a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of the research participant. To maintain the confidentiality of the research participants, individuals were given a non-identifiable name. Data will be stored in a password-protected electronic folder.

Population and Sample

The sample size for the research study will consist of ten teachers from an urban school setting. As previously mentioned, the teachers will be selected by convenience sampling, will have between 1-5 years of teaching experience, gender and race is a non-identifiable factor if the teacher meets the previous requirement of 1-5 years of teaching experience. Each research participant was given a non-identifiable name to maintain the confidentiality of the research participant, as shown in Table 1. The research participants in this study teach within an urban school setting. Urban schools are characterized as low performing, under-resourced, predominantly Black, and high poverty and crime rates.

Table 1
Participants

Teacher	Gender	Race	Teaching Experience
Cougars	F	Black	4 years
Lucky	F	White	1 year
Professional Coach	M	Black	3 years
Baltimore	F	White	1 year
Mr. Bronx	M	Black	3 years
Melody	F	Black	4 years
Treble'	M	Black	2 years
Football	M	Black	5 years

Table 1 Continued

Lexington	M	Black	3 years
Bowling Green	F	Black	5 years

Note: Pseudonyms were provided for each participant.

Data Analysis

The interview responses from the research participants were analyzed by axial coding. This method is a procedure that allows the data to be put in categories by connections of the responses from the research participants. Significant statements of the participant(s) were then converted into themes (Savin-Baden & Major-Howell, 2013). From the themes created, the responses from the teachers were then regrouped into more significant categories. From the collection of the data, I was able to conclude a comprehensive experience from teachers from a K-12 academic setting.

Findings

Social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care is a concept teachers are unfamiliar with (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Walkley & Cox, 2013). It became evident from the research participants. Implementing such strategy and or concept is no easy task, and the implementation of creating a supportive environment using a social-emotional technique comes down to either the school leaders enforcing it and receiving buy-in from school staff, or teachers own personal desire to create a learning environment that is inclusive and supportive for all students, without implicit biases. In this section, the participant's responses to the interview questions were coded and then given themes that addressed the research questions used to guide this research study. This research study involved 10 teachers, with 1-5 year teaching experience. Each participant's teaching experience stems from an urban school setting.

School Setting Determines Teacher Perceptions

The research participants cohesively agreed that the school environment contributes to the mindset of whether or not feeling fully prepared to work with students who may have a mental health diagnosis. Research participants *Lucky*, *Professional Coach*, and *Baltimore* agreed the learning environment should feel welcoming and a safe place for students. Having flexibility and establishing a rapport with students, and students feel comfortable confiding and expressing themselves. Having a relationship with students is very important. The students should notice plenty of collaborative work and thinking among teachers, to assist in supporting students who may have difficulties within the learning environment, creating a social-emotional learning environment. However, *Baltimore* added, the ideal perfect setting in the academic setting would have fewer students per class. Having the capacity to work with students who demonstrate behaviors beyond the scope of a teacher's practice, all participants felt supported by their administrative staff in their position. *Lucky* stated not feeling fully supported. "I would prefer if school administration would allow for more time to check-in with students and not feel rushed in the mornings to jump into instruction, it could make a difference in how relationships are built".

Can't Be What You've Never Seen?

The expectation for teachers to practice a strategy that is foreign to them due to the lack of exposure (training) in creating a social-emotional learning environment. The *Professional Coach* passionately stated teacher preparation programs do not provide classes to address how to support a student who may have been exposed to trauma. *Mr. Bronx* implied he has not received a consistent amount of training over the years working in education, some training has helped in addressing how to better support students, but definitely could be exposed to more. The difficulty

for one teacher, *Melody*, discussed the difficulties supporting students on a social-emotional level, and lacks school support from a leadership standpoint, and left figuring out on her own on what are best practices. Along with the *Baltimore*, the support in special education classrooms falls short of assisting teachers with training on best practices to support students from a social-emotional, trauma-informed level. There was a consensus among the research participants to have teacher prep programs equipped to provide a learning curriculum on social-emotional and trauma-informed care learning. Teachers pursued different majors before enrolling in education courses. *Treble*, expressed a curriculum is needed in education problems, not just for sped students to address student's social-emotional needs.

Where Do I Fit

The research participants expressed a consensus of knowing their purpose and role as a teacher. In conducting the individual interviews, there was a consensus from the teachers that teaching is not just about teaching. It is more than that, the different roles fulfilled at times of being a mother, father, sister, brother, and extended family to students who are in need. *Baltimore*, expressed, "if you don't love teaching more than anything else, it isn't the right field for you". One of the biggest misconceptions about teaching, it's not just about teaching, you are a protector and advocate for students as teacher expressed during the interview. The multiple roles teachers fulfill, having an understanding of social-emotional learning is a concept that has now turned more into an initiative in the school setting. As *Melody* discussed in her interview, social-emotional learning starts with the teacher. Facilitating check-ins with the students, demonstrating that as a teacher the interest of the student's well-being and existence. *The*

Professional Coach, identified the part of the student that gets neglected is the social and emotional part, and teachers need to understand how to address it and support the student(s).

Discussion

This study contributes to the evolving literature on implementing a social-emotional learning environment within the academic setting and educators being properly trained to address the needs of students, without the concern of students receiving disproportionate discipline outcomes based on student behavior. The teachers in this study confirmed to not having the adequate training to not only address the social-emotional needs of students, but to appropriately identify student misconduct which potentially could stem from exposure to traumatic events, and unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control from community violence exposure, to traumatic exposure to what is taking place within the home environment. A major theme that derived from the study is relationships. The ability to establish positive relationships with students, to establish trust and support not only from teacher to student relationships but also the teacher to school leadership relationship. This study also revealed the dynamics within the school environment controls the school climate and culture. School leaders can control teacher motivation by encouraging and supporting teachers within the classroom. Demonstrating to teachers from a school leadership standpoint to encompass all aspects to create an environment supportive for students to allow teachers to create and implement the same support within the classroom.

Conclusion

This study provides a perspective from learning provides an overall concept to bridge together the school, family, student, and community teachers into how social-emotional learning is a concept that is not discussed through teacher prep programs to help teachers be prepared to enter into an academic setting with strategies to meet the needs of students. Social-emotional resources to support the whole student (CASEL, 2019). Further research in this particular study could assist in implementing a curriculum within teacher prep programs to educate teachers on effective strategies to create a learning environment that is supportive for the student as well for the teachers and would expose all educators to different living environments that students come from.

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Chapter 3

The Difficulties of a Black Educator: The Impact Black Educators Have on Black Students

A Black educator positioned himself to be a force to be reckoned with returning to a school he once taught at. Black educators experience a history of being pushed out or reassigned to a different school due to not conforming to the traditional or whiteness of teaching (Moore, 2013; Khalifa, 2015). He was summoned to return to the same school that voted him out. Taking on the position of being a principal, he also became a disciplinarian, a teacher, and a father figure to some students and ridding anyone who did not have the passion nor the dedication in being a contributing factor to making the change within the school. Over time, changes were made at the school but not without conflict from community members who did not agree with the standards being instilled in the students and faculty. Opportunities for Black students to be successful. In this film, based on a true story, how relevant is it to this day Black educators fighting to make a change for Black students in education, or have Black educators lost their purpose in becoming educators and conforming to a standard of teaching that was created to limit the education of Black people.

Introduction

The presence of Black educators has continued to have an impact on education, however, the under-representation of Black educators in a predominantly white profession also contributes to the impact of education (Bianco, Leech, & Mitchell, 2011; Kohli & Pizarro, 2016). Black educators bring a wealth of insight into the profession of education, however, their experiences and intelligence are not utilized or expounded upon within teacher-training programs (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016). Research reveals that Black educator's passion behind entering the profession of education for various reasons such as supportive to replicate familial experiences, advocating for injustices, and to address their personal educational experiences (Dee, 2005; Gist, 2017).

Research implies that Black educators deal with the challenges of fighting the double bind, attempting to manage personal and systemic ties that influence a person's thinking from a

cultural connection to institutional practices that control and regulate specific groups and individuals. Black educators are framed as both the problem, and the solution in education, where Black educators have denial in their cultural identification, matching with students of color, and to be effective in teaching students of color in a culturally responsive manner (Gist, 2017). While having the ability to replicate white supremacist contexts and practices that are directly oppressive towards students of color, contradicts the expectation of Black educators participating in the discourse of an unjust schooling system that fails, both Black educators and Black students (Khalifa, 2015; Jackson & Kholi, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to uncover the perceptions, experiences, and difficulties of Black educators and how these challenges affect educating Black students. Black educators play a vital role in education by serving as cultural translators and brokers to build bridges to learning for students of color. Black educators also act as role models and set high expectations for students of color (Gist, 2014; Brockenbrough, 2014). Black educators provided an essence of family structure for Black children in the classroom, structures of discipline demonstrated concern and interest for Black student's academic achievement (Brockenbrough, 2014). However, the benefits for Black students being exposed to same-race educators are not completely lucid (Lindsay and Hart, 2017). This study will explore essentially three questions: 1) What are the challenges of being a Black educator? 2) What are some of the expectations of Black educators concerning teaching Black students? 3) What are the essential positive experiences of being a Black educator?

The History of Black Educators

The institution of education is a general tool for social mobility is considered property or investment and not everyone is privileged to access it (Siddle-Walker, 2013). Black educators fought to have access to education and when denied, Black educators created curriculum, course work, lesson plans, to create an educational foundation for Black students (Hale, 2018). Black educators continue to fight for education and their position in education. History reveals Black educators were highly respected in the Black community (Carol, 2017; Milner, 2012). Black educators were such a benefit to the Black community because they illustrated culturally relevant leadership within the school and served as leaders within their communities (Khalifa, 2015). When schools were integrated, the presence and essence of a Black educator in the school setting were lost (Jackson & Kohli, 2016; Siddle- Walker, 2013). Black principals had an overwhelming impact by their presence in the school, measures to reverse the trend to place Black leadership back into schools have not been successful (Khalifa, 2015; Kholi & Pizzaro, 2016). After the integration of schools, Black educators lost positions in teaching in front of the classroom as well as school leadership positions (Siddle-Walker, 2013). The hopes for Black students from Black educators during school integration, aspirations by Black teachers encouraged Black children to believe they were part of the fabric of America, they have value, and they have a right to education (Siddle-Walker, 2014). Black educators committed to investing in student success making sure students were aware of social inequities facing people of color in society. Pre-civil rights teachers view their educational mission to prepare Black students to become young activists (Loder-Jackson, 2012).

Why Black Teachers Teach

Black teachers taught with passion and purpose and it showed during the time of school segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, and continues for many to this day. The decision-making process and overall dedication to enter the profession of education to serve students of color, the community, and to advocate for educational justice, for Black educators, is hard (Gist, 2017). The ambition and vision of becoming a teacher continue to motivate Black educators in the profession of education. Black educators hoped that black children would receive the same care they did from teachers under segregation and wanted to be role models for all students, especially Black students (Milner, 2012; Easton-Brooks, Lewis, & Zhang, 2009). The goal of Black educators was to help develop skills that would make Black students successful and competitive. With the approach of the understanding of Black people in society and the challenges they faced, educators felt a sense of responsibility to stimulate the knowledge and skills of students of color (Siddle-Walker, 2014; Carrol, 2017; Jackson & Knight-Manuel, 2019). Black educators used their personal experiences to encourage Black students and felt a sense fulfillment by using their knowledge to position students as change agents in their communities and “preparing students for life in the real world by encouraging productive life skills such as punctuality, good work habits, independent thinking, and providing supportive cultural capital” (Carrol, 2017, p. 121).

Griffin (2013) posits Black educators on a collegiate level continue to define personal reasoning of becoming an educator as a Black professor. Focusing on Black student development and achievement encourages Black students to connect to their own identity. The shared experiences between Black professors and Black students established a foundation of trust, specifically female professors often felt mother like relationships with Black female students

exemplifying the familial context of why Black educators felt the purpose of entering into the field of education (Robinson & Werblow, 2012).

Black Educators and Double Bind

Black educators fill a tremendous void when becoming an educator. However, Black teachers must also engage in balancing the act of advocating for educational justice and falling in order of the structure of education designed by White people. In describing the double bind and double consciousness, Gist (2017) notes that “Teachers of color are often placed in a stifling double bind, which is described as a tension between two different ties, personal and systemic” (p. 927). The double consciousness of the Black educator is perplexing. Black educators are positioned to see themselves from a deficit way of thinking from a societal view. The notion of battling two selves as a Black educator adopting oppressive mechanics, and being a Black educator (Black, 2007). The repercussions of systemic and personal binds create denial in Black educators with cultural identification, relating with students of color, and how to be effective in teaching students of color in a culturally responsive manner, being framed as both the problem and the solution in education (Bianco, Leech, and Mitchell, 2011; Gist, 2017).

Black educators cope with feeling isolated and out of place with the lack of diversity among faculty and staff. The difficulty for Black educators combating systemic ties, attempting to remain silent when observing the devaluing of critical and cultural teaching (Gist, 2017). Advocating for Black student’s education, oftentimes leaves Black educators frustrated trying to raise the bar for Black students, however encountering disrespect from Black students while expecting racial solidarity (Carrol, 2017). Black educators straddle the fence on the best practices on educating Black students. whether to stay true to one’s cultural identity or to switch and

adhere to the white standards of education, what effects are Black educators having on Black students while managing their racial battles?

Ethnic Matching

Easton-Brooks, Lewis, and Zhang (2009) found that Black students do not necessarily benefit by the end of kindergarten from having a Black teacher. The perceptions of having a Black educator who presents themselves dressed in a manner that does not appear to be authentic of a Black educator perpetuating the image of what success looks like could create a barrier in creating a strong student-teacher relationship (Warren, 2014). However, the effects Black educators have on the outcomes of Black students is undetermined. Teacher-student matching may be particularly beneficial for lower-performing students. Black teachers do see themselves as cultural bridge builders, serving as cultural translators and brokers increasing learning for Black students (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Gist, 2014; Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Research reveals positive and negatives of being ethnically matched as a Black educator (Easton-Brooks et al 2009; Lindsay & Hart, 2017).

The argument that Black students are more successful if ethnically matched teachers inform the discourse that Black principals can only lead Black schools and White principals can only lead white schools (Moore, 2013). Are Black educators no longer viewed as being effective leaders, only effective disciplinarians? History does indicate Black teachers' strict demeanor and no-nonsense strategies reflected the structure within Black families' homes (Brockenbrough, 2015). The foundation of Black educators entering the profession is to continue the familial structure of the Black family in educating Black students. However, this was during a time of

segregated schools. Now that integration has occurred, are Black educators less suitable to lead, but only qualified to impose consequences for behavior?

Are Education Programs for Black Educators?

New to the profession, Black educators cross the threshold into their new educational environment and experience “practice shock” for not having the proper training on how to utilize their cultural wealth to work with students who look like them (Gist, 2014, p. 266). Teacher preparation programs are structured to adhere to pleasing and ensuring White teachers receive the proper preparation to enter into the classroom while providing a lackluster of experience to care for the academic success for Black teachers (Bianco, Leech & Mitchell, 2011; Gist, 2017; Mayorga & Picower, 2018). Assessing the traditional teacher preparation programs, Black educators are limited to receiving an adequate and equitable education. Teacher preparation programs continue to minimize the presence of Black teachers, therefore devalue the innovative strategies Black teachers bring to the profession (Gist, 2017; Mayorga & Picower, 201). The purpose Black teacher candidates enter into teaching preparation programs is different compared to White teacher candidates. Black educators enter into the profession to replicate a familial structure of the Black family, as well as having more of a sociocultural political stance in becoming a teacher, and advocating for educational equity (Jackson and Kohli, 2016, Gist, 2017; Gist, 2014).

Teaching programs strongly recruit for Black educators. However, barriers continue to exist with having a diverse teaching network with below-average pass rate for potential Black educators, and when Black educators do enter into the field with an official teaching certificate, they are leaving the profession at a faster rate (24%) than White teachers. Educational inequities

affect the practices of teaching and should be acknowledged by the teacher education program to create a new framework in preparing programs to address social justice and prepare Black educators (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Mayorga & Picower, 2018). The urgency for evaluation of best practices on how to support and sustain Black educators is strongly needed in teacher preparation programs (Jackson & Kohli, 2016; Mensah & Jackson, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

This study will be grounded in the work of culturally responsive pedagogy. This approach supports identifying the difficulties of Black educator's dispositions, knowledge, and practices to meet the needs of students who are often marginalized in schools (Gist, 2014; Borrero, Flores, & De La Cruz, 2016 Jackson & Kohli, 2016). Cultural responsive pedagogy posits "Cultural relevant teaching is an ability to develop students academically, willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483). Uncovering the difficulties of Black educators, culturally responsive pedagogy ideology explores the experiences Black educators encounter ideologically and the curricular challenges in teacher preparation programs which affects how Black educators will develop in the education profession and effect Black students (Gist, 2017). Self-hatred as a context to explore the underlying internal battles that Black educators may experience when owning white supremacist notions, positionalities, or treatment of Black students, are Black educators reinforcing an oppressive school environment for Black students?

Whiteness in Education

Education is a possessive tool that is taunted back and forth between counterparts on who can control the majority stock of education (Kohli & Pizarro; Mensah & Jackson, 2018; Siddle-Walker, 2009). The concept of “Whiteness as property” implies tangible aspects of life that white people claim as their own, they are positioned to allow and or deny access because of their claims to property (Moore, 2015, p.8). Education is no different, assessing school buildings that house Black students are exposed to slave ownership mentality, with Black educators placed in positions to deal with Black students and families. Black teachers are posited to be gatekeepers to Black students. Black educators are provided curriculum to teach Black students which is constructed to diminish cultural relevancy, not only for Black students but for Black educators as well. Black educators are the “Tokenized” or “entrapped” in limited race-specific roles within education (Moore, 2013, p.493). According to Atwater, Butler, Freeman, and Parsons (2013), Black educators are experiencing exclusion and oppression. More support is needed to help Black educators cope as well as provide the best educational experience for Black students. Education has been developed to advance White students. Reviewing history, Black educators created their curriculum and lesson plans to teach Black students (Irvine & Irvine, 1983). Black educators have been positioned to not feel comfortable, and professionally supported to advocate for the educational injustices for Black students, in a White playing field of education. In assessing the makeup of education, 41% of all students in public schools are Black students, the teaching dilemma, 89.2% of the teachers are white (Henfield & Washington, 2012).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach informed by a phenomenological design that seeks to articulate the lived experiences of Black teachers as they navigate K-12 schools. The use

of phenomenology as a design is appropriate to find the shared experiences of Black educators that extend beyond the context of a singular school (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Savin-Baden, 2013). This design would be most effective in capturing the true essence of a Black educator's experience, thoughts, and feelings towards being a Black educator.

Data Collection

This study will take place over a 3-4 week time frame. During the first week, recruitment for research participants and consent to participate in the study will take place. The utilization of convenience sampling will be used to assist in the recruitment of Black educators for the research study. Once consent to participate in the research study, interviews will be scheduled based upon the availability of the research participant. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. The interview protocol was constructed from a peer-debriefing process. I, along with a research team, brainstormed 25 potential interview questions. These questions were sent to the peer-debriefing team, a team of eight, 5 doctoral students, and 3 tenure track professors, to rate each interview question. From the collective analysis of the peer-debriefing results, ten questions were assembled. The questions were then aligned to both the research questions and the themes in the literature. Face-to-face and phone interviews with the participants lasted around one hour and were audio-recorded and transcribed by the lead researcher. Ten Black Educators, 4 males, and 6 females, with 5 or more years teaching experience in urban schools qualified for the study. Interviews were used to collect their stories, experiences, and characterizations of their professional life in urban schools. The table below depicts the pseudonyms given to identify the teachers along with gender and years of teaching experience.

Table 1
Participants

Name	Race	Gender	Teaching Experience
Mustang	Black	M	17
Tiger	Black	M	32
Panther	Black	F	7
Eagles	Black	F	8
Bears	Black	F	6
Devil	Black	F	5
Rams	Black	M	5
Cardinal	Black	F	5
Hilltoppers	Black	M	12
Hawks	Black	F	9

Note. This table represents a summary of the participants in the study.

Data Analysis

In this study, interview data were analyzed using a modified Stevick-Coliazzi-Keen method of phenomenological reduction (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). The use of thematic analysis informed by an in vivo coding process was also employed to find the composite experience of the participants. We identified significant statements of the participants and organized them into named elements, or key phrases. The elements were then coded into key meaning units and clustered into themes. From these themes, we concluded the composite experience of being a Black teacher in K-12 urban school.

Findings

Depending on the perspectives about Black students (e.g. understanding the Black struggle, societal and familial influences) is the reason for teaching Black students for some Black educators, for one is the reason for discouraging Black educators to pursue the profession of education (e.g. no accountability, always the teacher's fault, lack of respect). This revealed the purpose, passion, and perseverance of Black educators. Close examination of individual

interview transcripts color-coded for shared thoughts revealed the role Black educators fulfill from their personal experiences as a Black student to now as a Black educator and how that impacts Black students.

Purpose: We have something in common

The importance of having a Black educator in the classroom fuels the purpose of the participants to be Black educators, however also questions the continuance of purpose for one participant, *Devil*. Strong cultural relatedness/connectedness and understanding of what struggles and/or barriers Black families embrace and endure is a common feeling amongst the participants. For example, a *Panther* stated, “If a girl comes into my classroom early in the morning with a bonnet on, I can take it off, and it not be a problem and I understand why she has bonnet on in the first place, in a different environment or a different type of teacher, it couldn’t work that way”. The participants shared an understanding of the frustration Black parents may deal with daily with the struggle from outside of the school that is beyond the student's control. *Mustang* stated “Black parents look up to you as an educator, to treat their child right, and provide them with the best education because you look like them” and this statement attests to the purpose of the participant's commonality with students of not just looking like them, but also understanding what it is like to be a Black student because the educator once was, which creates a foundation of a positive relationship with Black students. Black educators within this study also shared the same sentiments of commitment to the field of education to demonstrate to Black students the love, support, encouragement Black students desire, Black educators are purposefully in the role of an educator to provide these needs for Black students to be successful within the academic setting.

Passion: Carrying It Forward

The Black educators within this study acknowledged because someone did it for them, supported, encouraged, motivated, and believed in who they could become as a Black student pushed them into the profession of education to be a teacher for Black students. Bear stated, “I see myself breaking a trend and reminding students of their history, where they come from, it’s a privilege, so I make it a big deal and make them a part of education and tell them that if you have a little education, you can go a little further”. The participants reminisced of their experiences having a Black educator describing the admiration for Black educators and wanted to one day fulfill that role as well. Black educators want and desire to give back to Black students and be a role model and give back to the Black community by providing knowledge once given to them. A participant reflected the time of learning the Black national anthem and considered to be the most influential teacher in their academic career, stating “my teacher made me respect education, even more, I remember her and she is the reason I teach history to my students, I want to pass it on. The feeling I had from her being my teacher, is the same feeling I want to give my students that you matter, and that is why I became a teacher”.

The participants in this study were asked if there was ever a time as a Black educator did you prefer to not teach Black students. All participants admirably stated wanting to always teach Black students. A Bear stated “I have always wanted to work in a title one school. This is a school that receives more money for supplies to educate kids, and in this district, a title one school is predominantly black. The neighborhoods are overlooked, Black kids are overlooked, and I want to be there for those kids because they deserve it more, students who have more of a struggle, and possibly only get the love and stability within the 8 hours I have them in my class

because my teachers gave it to me”. The love, respect, and admiration a participant had for their teachers were reciprocated by the teacher *Tiger* expressed his feelings by saying “my English teacher grabbed me when I was at my lowest time. She showed me that Black people can be smart, can teach and lead, and be a great inspiration. She cared for her students as if they were her own, I wanted to be that, and I believe I am doing that for my students as well”. But one teacher, now in the role of a counselor, doesn’t have the same passion anymore of teaching. The torch he once carried appears to have burned out. The *Mustang* declared, “I would not advise a student to go into education. If I was twenty years old now, I wouldn’t go in during this current state. The significance of discipline and accountability is missing”. In discussing the context of school discipline and carrying it forward to support Black students, the participant eluded to Black students are no longer being disciplined and held accountable for their actions within the academic setting as he was during his time as a student. *Eagle*, *Hilltopper*, and *Hawk* reflected being disciplined within the academic setting and expressed the fear of getting in trouble. *Tiger* implies, fear from Black students does not exist anymore and the parents are not supportive of teachers correcting their child which creates a barrier in educating Black students.

Perseverance: More than a Label

The participants highlighted the current state of education and how it affects Black students and teachers. The disproportionate discipline outcomes, the struggle to teach the relatable curriculum, and keep engagement from Black students. The participants vowed to never display giving up on Black students, despite barriers in place that affect the trajectory of Black students. The strategy emphasized by a participant is to encourage Black students and to help them realize they are more than the stereotype that proceeds them. One participant stated he uses

his experiences to motivate Black students to defy the negative narrative surrounding Black students, by telling Black students what they need to hear, to show love because some may have never had it before and seek to understand Black children. *Mustang* continued by stating “I come to school to teach, the first thing Black students come to school is to survive. I relate to a child, I can understand why they may be upset. We all deal with something, they come to school and they’re so angry from they may have to deal with from their home life and are labeled because of bad choices from bad habits. My students are good, I am in a place as there teacher to teach them good habits compared to bad habits”. A kindergarten teacher, *Rams* emphasized Black students are capable of learning, and not all Black students are ADHD and not all Black students have a learning disability. Black students are special and should be treated as any other student in the academic setting, to feel respected, appreciated, and safe.

The participants expressed concern on how to protect Black student's images within the academic setting. *Devil* described interactions teaching Black students “Some students come to me and they are lost period, in life, not knowing who they are, their identity. Needing direction in real life. I help students develop their own identity. I am a coach also, so I see the different dynamics from just being outside of the classroom”. The participants within this study implied teaching Black students is difficult, but well worth it to see Black students surpass the limitations that are obvious and disregarded.

The Dilemma: Who is to Blame?

It became evident Black educators are striving to make an impact in the field of education. The outcome of the impact is weighted to either be negative or positive, contingent upon the source. When asked, have Black educators caused more harm than good when it comes

to teaching Black students, the responses were yes. One participant who responded yes more directed the negative impact from lack of discipline from Black educators to students. The participant was very adamant about Black students having multiple chances and the disregard for authority in the academic setting. Specifically, *Tiger* stated “It goes without saying, statistically speaking, Black educators have a positive and negative influence on students or white teachers to Black students have a positive or negative influence. The lackadaisical practices and excuse factors for Black students. We all have a story, it can’t always be an excuse, who doesn’t have issues at home”. *Tiger* expressed the concern of Black students not being held accountable, the participant added all schools he has provided educational services have been predominantly Black. To take into account the perspectives of the impact Black educators have on Black students as being harmful, the participants viewed Black educators being harmful in the context of how Black educators communicate and or engage with Black students. The description of how Black educators talk to Black students, as *Bear* identified an incident by stating “because we are Black, we feel we can relate better to our students. But we talk crazy to our students, using degrading terminology by calling Black students *boy*. These students have a name, labeling kids, at times as Black educators we are hurting our own.” However, when it comes to identifying if Black educators are failing Black students, responses from participants were mixed. *Rams* stated “It depends on who the educator is. I can’t label all in one category, but it has to be taken into account whether the teacher is older and is tired of teaching, and they begin to fail students by no longer being interested in teaching.” There is a consensus amongst the findings in which the participants feel the educational system is failing Black students as a whole.

Discussion

The purpose and passion for becoming a Black educator are to be an example of leadership within the Black community. Data in this study suggest Black educators within a K-12 urban school environment are carrying forward the passion and purpose they once experienced from a Black educator to their current students now in the role of a Black educator. However, data also suggests the role of being a Black educator isn't as influential within the Black community as it once was, and not as beneficial to Black students. Participants were able to expound upon their lived experiences which detailed their passion, purpose, and perseverance as being a Black student and the impact it has made on their teaching profession.

Participants identified the importance of relationship building with Black students within the academic setting. The assumption of because I look like you, means you should just understand everything about me as a Black student was discussed, however from one Black educator's view, it shouldn't be a reason to not implement accountability for academic failure or noncompliance to school culture and/or norms set within the academic setting. The frustration of Black students not being held accountable has projected the sense of becoming an educator today is not the best professional decision from an educator who has been in the field of education over thirty years, which highlights the dilemma of Black education and what is contributing to the failing of Black students in education, and the response to cultural responsive pedagogical practices within the academic setting. Data within this study suggest the importance of having Black educators within the academic setting to provide support, encouragement, and motivation for Black students. Black students are and can be great. However, the data also implies the disconnect beginning to peak between Black educators to Black students within the academic setting due to generational upbringings and teacher preparation for Black students.

Conclusion and Implications

This article depicts the current state of mind of Black educators within a K-12 urban school environment. The passion, purpose, and desire to educate Black students, to provide care, love, and support to teach Black students is evident. With over 50 years of teaching experience within this study, it has become apparent of the generational disconnect in teaching Black students, and the loss of passion and purpose and it goes without saying, the reason for becoming a Black educator is beginning to lose sight to encourage future students to become Black educators. The implementation of a new focus within teacher preparation programs to retain Black teachers within the field of education to support and encourage Black students who experience different out of school experiences to provide equitable educational experiences is needed (Ladson-Billings, 1995). To add, teacher prep programs increase cultural awareness and considerations to implement in preparing educators for the profession.

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Chapter 4

Message from the Black Parent: Navigating Educational Spaces to Support Black Girls

Do they even care about her education?

Why do you only call me, when there is a problem?

I see where she gets her disrespectful behavior.

Of course, neither one of your parents can't make the meeting, when do they ever make the meetings...

She's just looking for attention...

Why are you so defensive or aggressive when you talk?

She's a pretty girl, we just don't understand why she acts the way she does?

She always has something to say in my class...

We don't ever see her parents when we parent night events...

Introduction

These statements and questions filter through the front offices, counselor's suite, and classrooms of a school questioning the credibility not only of Black female students but also of the Black parent(s). Is it presumed that when Black girls demonstrate behaviors that are not of appropriate standards, there is a lack of parenting? This is the question I asked myself from my professional experiences working within the K-12 academic setting. I will be using Black girl, women, and female interchangeably throughout this paper, reflecting upon my own experiences as a Black female. It became uncomfortable to hear the conversations and perceptions surrounding Black girls and Black parents. I had academic support from both of my parents, I was not a perfect child, however, any perceptions of misbehavior I may have had within the academic setting didn't warrant the perception that I lacked parental engagement or involvement into my schooling. How could an assumption be discussed without having a relationship with the

student or the parent? The determining factor of Black parent engagement or involvement is characterized by stereotypes and not the understanding of Black experiences when it comes to the academic setting (Anderson, 2018).

The disproportionate disciplinary outcomes Black girls experience creates the academic environment to become a battleground, a sense of survival as Black girls nationally are suspended and or expelled at a higher rate than any other race or gender comprising of 44.7 % suspended and 41.7% are expelled (Smith & Harper, 2015). Black parents are having to defend and validate their presence as a parent to protect their child from the unsubstantiated treatment their daughter experiences (Crenshaw, 2014; Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). Damage-centered thinking of Black families and their commitment and or interest to the support their children's education have led to the negative stereotypes of Black family's responsibilities when it comes to learning and development (Ferrara, 2015; Latunde & Clark-Laque, 2016;). School administrators, faculty, and staff have not made the opportunity easy for Black parents to participate with them in constructive ways. Lack of understanding and cultural competence of Black families engagement with their children's education creates a barrier on how to create a partnership with parents or create supportive parent organizations, which contributes to the perception of Black parents have no value in education (Payne, Denny, Davis, Francis, & Jackson, 2015). Black parents advocate for their children's education in various ways, however, Black parent's methods in supporting their children's education is measured by traditional standards that lack cultural acceptance outside of what is perceived to be the standard of parent engagement (Posey-Maddox, 2017; Yull, Wilson, Murray, & Parham, 2018).

Misconceptions of Black Parents

The purpose of this study is to research the perspectives of Black parent's strategic methods in navigating the school system to ensure the academic success of their daughters. As well, uncover their lived experiences of positive and or negative encounters, challenges, and coping strategies to survive the school system. Due to the inequalities and mistreatment in the educational setting, a relationship between Black families and schools have become distant (Latunde & Clark-Laue, 2016). The academic support from Black parents may not be demonstrated physically at the school site, but more so community and home-based centered can be taken as non-parental engagement or involvement that isn't consistent with the traditional expectations by school personnel of volunteering with the school or becoming a member of school-based parent organizations (Malone, 2017; Posey-Maddox, 2017; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). It is perceived, when Black parents are engaged within the academic setting, for student support, encouraging academic success, and to ensure their child is treated fairly, the demeanor of Black parents are taken to be aggressive or confrontational. In actuality, Black parents are demonstrating activism for their children (Kakli, 2011; Posey-Maddox, 2017). The passion and persistence from Black parents to ensure their child/or children receive an equitable education stems from possible negative schooling experiences by the parent, which ultimately affects how Black parents perceive educators and are received within the educational environment. Black parents bring expertise to the educational environment that can be devalued by school personnel (Fenton, Ocasio-Stoutenburg & Harry, 2017). This study aims to answer three essential questions 1) As a Black parent what are strategies/coping mechanisms you teach your daughter to survive in the school setting? 2) As a Black parent, what supportive measures are used to encourage your

daughter to feel accepted as a Black girl in the school environment? 3) As a Black parent, how do you think you are perceived by school personnel, and does that impact how you support your daughter academically?

Black Partnership

When it comes to discussing parental involvement and engagement, there must be an understanding of how each concept is understood. Parental involvement encompasses being a part of planning and structuring of the school environment, whereas parent engagement is actively and visibly working with school personnel (Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016; Fenton et al., 2017; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). The driving lens of parent engagement and involvement used by the school setting is guided by a system, *Epstein's Framework* (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). The six types of parent involvement, parenting support programs, effective communication with school personnel, volunteering and supporting school-based programs to support parents, strategies to increase learning at home, include parents with decision-making and parent organizations, and collaborating with the community to provide resources to families (Erol & Turhan, 2018; Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016; Park & Holloway, 2013). All components to assist educators in building a relationship with Black parents. However, the framework for implementing a structure for parent involvement/engagement lacks the cultural lens of ability, race, socioeconomic status, which has been identified as a correlation to parent involvement.

The narrative about Black families and their ability to support and be active in their child's academic success dehumanizes the character of Black parents. The disproportionate disciplinary outcomes for Black students being suspended at a higher rate than any other race,

Black girls are only 16% of the student population but account for 27% referred to school law enforcement (Blake, Butler, Lewis & Darensbourg, 2010) This has created a barrier between the schools and Black families and affects the implementation of the six different types of parental involvement, creating a lack of trust between Black families and schools. The struggle of Black parents to be actively involved in the academic setting is due to the feeling of marginalization from school personnel (Baker et al. (2016; Erol & Turhan, 2018; Yoder & Lopez, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

This study will be framed from a theoretical approach of critical race theory (CRT) using critical race parenting to conceptualize how Black parents navigate the academic setting to ensure academic success for their Black daughters. According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), CRT has comprised of five tenets, *(1) centrality to race/racism (2) the challenge to dominant ideology/challenges to colorblindness and race neutrality (3) commitment to social justice and praxis (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge (5) historical context and interdisciplinary perspective* (Depouw & Matias, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The tenets of CRT are sought after to support and structure perceptivity that seeks to transform cultural and structural aspects of education. Critical race theory is being paired with parenting for counterstories to begin the conversation on how CRT impacts Black families (DePouw & Matias, 2016). The ideology of critical race parenting emphasizes the reason for teaching Black children strategies to survive racial injustices and familiarity with identifying institutional racism (DePouw & Matias, 2016). Critical race parenting guides the methods of promoting the development of identity, resiliency, and other factors contributing to systems of oppression.

Methods

This study employs a critical race methodological approach. This approach within the context of education allows for the understanding of individuals who have experienced oppression and marginalization within the educational setting (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002). The utilization of a phenomenological and narrative design. The two identified designs will be most effective in capturing the lived experiences of Black parents and provide the tools for analyzing the stories of Black parents who have daughters that attend a K-12 academic setting. A phenomenological design will uncover the lived experiences or phenomenon from Black parents (Savin-Baden, 2013). It also provides insight and meaning from Black parents in regards to navigating the educational setting while supporting their Black daughters. The narrative design will allow for the stories from Black parents to discuss their personal experiences with racism and sexism (Solarzano & Yosso, 2002).

Population and Sample

Nationally, 1.2 million Black students were suspended in a single academic year. 55% of those suspensions occurred in 13 southern states. The targeted population for this research study will consist of Black parents that reside within one of the 13 southern states. Black girls represent 44.7% of the overall suspension within the 13 states. (Smith & Harper, 2015). Black parents are assumed to have a lack of concern when it comes to education (Carter, 2008).

The sample for this study will be Black parents, male and female. Approximately 12-15 Black parents, either single, married, or divorced/separated. The sample for this research study should have a daughter that identifies as Black, attending, or has attended a K-12 public or private/charter school. Convenience sampling will be utilized to acquire research participants for this study.

Table 1
Participants

Name	Race	Gender	Marital Status
Jersey	Black	F	M
Country	Black	F	S
Omega	Black	M	D
Biker	Black	M	S
Alpha	Black	M	M
Dallas	Black	M	D
Coach	Black	F	S
KoKo	Black	F	S
Zeta	Black	F	S
Dance Mom	Black	F	S
Toledo	Black	F	M
Stanley	Black	M	S

Note. This table represents a summary of the participants in the study.

Table Key: M-Married S-Single D-Divorced

Data Collection

The data collection for this research study will take place over a 4-week time frame. The first two weeks will involve the recruitment of research participants and acquiring consent. I will use convenience sampling to recruit research participants/parents that are within proximity and have availability (Savin-Baden, 2013; Urdan, 2017). Black parents, 21 years or older, have a Black daughter that is currently attending a K-12 school. Once consent has been confirmed, the researcher will schedule times and locations to conduct the interviews from the research participants choosing. The research participants will be asked 10 questions, developed from the literature surrounding the research study. The research participants should anticipate the interview to last approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Each participant will be given a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of the research participant. To maintain the confidentiality of the research participants, individuals were given a non-identifiable name. Data will be stored in a password-protected electronic folder.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will begin once the interviews are completed. The data will then be transcribed and coded and placed into themes. The narrative analysis will be utilized to interpret the data from the research participants. This method of analysis is used due to the research being from a narrative approach, also the interview is structured to capture the stories, lived experiences from the research participants. Once repetitive significant statements have been identified, those statements will then be broken down into categories and will be regrouped into more significant themes that will reveal the lived experiences and stories of Black parents' strategies in navigating the educational setting.

Findings

Black parents within this study openly discussed their personal lived experiences when they were once students in school. The following sections discuss the results of the interview with Black mothers and fathers. The experiences they had as a student guides how as a parent they provide support and advocate not just for themselves as a Black parent, also for their daughters within the academic setting. A common denominator within the family structure of parents participating within this study, majority of the participants come from a background of generational educators which has also impacted the perspectives of how Black parents navigate the school equipped with the educational tools compared to other Black parents who may not have the generational professional background as an educator, however, maintaining a connection with the school system through a historical community and familial connection assisted in their educational support.

Parent Protection: My Experiences Should Not Be Her Experiences

Parents within this study identified the harsh realities of the experiences their daughters are experiencing within the academic setting. Some of those experiences are identical to those experiences of the parent. Other parents realized the experiences of their daughters in the academic setting are more severe than what they experienced has guided the way the participants view the academic setting. As one parent, *Zeta* recounts her experiences of being called “a white girl dipped in chocolate” by her Black classmates and ridiculed for being articulate, which has been characterized as speaking like a white girl. The concern of language and speech has been defined by a color. *Zeta* described how her daughter has encountered similar racial conflicts with peers, as she is very adamant of addressing such issues with school administrators and teachers to ensure her daughter feels safe going to school without the harassment of being a Black girl.

As other participants detailed the stress of choosing an appropriate academics setting their daughters to attend either a public or private school setting. The discussion if the only choice to attend a public school, they ensured their daughter would feel protected and supported as much as possible by doing all they could as parent to protect their daughter in the academic setting. One father, *Omega* described how he had to play the country fool as a student so that he wouldn't encounter any problems from his white teachers, implying they did not take fondness into his intelligence. *Omega* described having the advantage of coming from a background of educators. Lessons he was learning in the classroom were also being taught at home. His intelligence he stated he downplayed, but never his Blackness. He ensures his daughter will never have to be put in an academic environment to where she will have to downplay her intelligence or her Blackness, as he stated her “Black girl spirit” will be protected at all times,

and he would not allow a school to diminish it, by placing her in a private school, where she feels better supported and eager to learn, compared to her experiences within a public school setting. Another Black father, *Alpha* echoed the same as to the decision by enrolling his daughters in a private school. Recognizing his daughters are the minority in their current school, he states he is protecting them from the “lack of teaching due to the focus being on discipline and inexperienced teachers” in the academic setting. He acknowledges that his daughters may be missing out on “inability or ability” to see Black culture, but feels his daughters are learning more by being exposed to more diversity, and not exposed to “ghetto or being a thot” of Black people today in society.

A fellow Black father *Biker* discussed his experiences are not essentially similar to that of his daughter within the academic setting because of the exposure at an early age of how the educational systems work for and against Black families. *Biker* comes from a two-parent family household, his mother is an educator and his father as he described Pro-Black and teaching him to be aware of inequities towards Black people. The participant stated he was prepared by his parents from his educational experiences to be cognizant and or recognize a system that would not be supportive of his daughter. As a current educator fulfilling a principal role, *Jersey* a mother of a Black daughter described her childhood educational experiences as lackluster, didn't learn anything until her mother placed her in a private school. Her goal is to ensure that her daughter has a better educational experience by exposing her daughter to a better environment that provided a more rigorous curriculum and standards to meet the needs as it appeared to not just the daughter, but the mother as well. The participants intend to ensure their daughters are taken care of and exposed to a safe learning environment free of potential experiences in which

their parents may have experienced. The participants are willing to make sure that happens at any cost of either placing their daughters in a learning environment that could potentially not cater to their daughter's Black girl sparkle.

Parent Position: Not Hostile or Angry, Advocating

Participants made it known, one of the most important components in supporting their daughters within the academic setting is the relationship with the school administrators, teachers, and staff. The participants in the study unanimously stated, not just a parent but as a Black parent, education is important to them, and are willing to do anything that needs to be done to ensure their daughters have the best opportunities to get an education. All interactions with school teachers and administrators from the participant's perspective have not always been positive. As *Country* recounts a meeting with her daughter's classroom teacher addressing her concerns from approaching her at a school event, *Country* states "the moment I speak back, I see it, instead of it becoming a conversation, I see it flip into something, I have to defend myself". The Black parents within this study highlighted the perception school administrators perceive Black parents as not being engaged, and when a Black parent demonstrates interest for their daughter, and are capable of having a conversation, the parent is perceived to be angry or combative. The female participants *Jersey*, *Country*, *Coach*, *KoKo*, *Zeta* and *Toledo* described the frustration of being perceived as being uninterested or an angry black woman when advocating for their daughter in the academic setting. The assumption of Black parents being hostile or angry brings into question, are Black parents allowed to question or address concerns about their daughter's education. Forming relationships with school administrators and teachers is considered to be a "foreign language" for one parent but she instilled the building relationships

with teachers is important to her daughter and was her responsibility to learn to advocate for herself. As other parents in the study provided insight on parenting their daughters by teaching the position of not letting anyone put their hands on them or being made to feel inferior in the academic setting. As Black mothers within the study championed for their daughters within the academic setting, the fathers have been as well. The positions of the fathers having to combat the perception of Black fathers being active with their daughters. Three of the father participants *Biker, Dallas, and Omega* identified being stereotyped as a non-participant parent. *Stanley* and *Biker* described it is difficult at times establishing relationships with school staff due to the negative narrative surrounding Black men, Black fathers.

Identity Protection: Black Girl Care

Participants described their daughters as having bubbly personalities, free-spirited, opinionated, talkative, friendly, intelligent, strong-willed, independent, and sassy. All characteristics have been used against the participant's daughters in some form and brought to the table for parent-teacher conferences as being a distraction or demonstrating defiance within the academic setting. *Biker* stated he will ensure his daughter will be in an environment that will embrace his daughter's presence and essence of being a Black girl and using his professional position in education to protect his daughter and states "I will use my social capital and supplement her education" to ensure his daughter emotional needs are met in the academic setting. Black parents within the study details strategies of being supportive of their daughters by promoting positive affirmations, as one participant, *Coach* identifies her daughter as being an asset to any academic environment and will ensure she is treated as such. Black parents within the study described frustration with having to address and or referee the miscommunication

between teachers and staff when it comes to their daughter's personalities and demeanor during interactions in the school setting. As *Omega and Biker* describes the academic setting lacks the ability to form relationships which creates a barrier in understanding Black girls, and the intent to diminish their spirit in the academic setting by suggesting Black girls have attitudes, are too active within the classroom.

Discussion

Protecting Black girls at all costs derived from this study. Black mothers and fathers are determined to take the charge in making sure their daughter is not lost in the shuffle or shuffled out of the academic setting by the lack of inclusion or having a historical experience be the outcome in their daughter's academic experience. Tenants of CRT and CRT-Parenting became stronger as the study developed with the participants being able to recount stories of expressing marginalization and oppression within the academic setting. As participants protected the presence of their daughters in the academic setting, Black parents are also preparing their daughters to embrace their Black beauty and not to allow anyone to diminish who they are and who they want to become within the academic setting.

A surprising derivative from this study is the projection of antiblackness (Dumas, 2016) from one of the participants. The disdain of the stereotypes projected onto the Black community is the main reason, one father has been reluctant to expose his daughters to cultural relatedness of being a Black female by shying his daughters away of what is said to be ghetto or a thot. During the interview, having the participant elaborate on his stance of the Black culture, the participants' ultimate goal is to protect his daughters not just from societal stereotypes but it appears to he is

protecting his daughters from understanding their own meaning of what it is to be a Black female due to his unconscious biases of the Black community.

Data in this study suggest Black parents feel at odds with the academic setting. Some participants have now had good relationships with the academic setting, but it came after several meetings, and a parent having to prove themselves to be adequate as a Black parent to have a conversation and advocate for their daughter in the academic setting. The essence of a Black parent having to draw a line to protect their daughter and themselves in the academic setting.

Conclusion/Implications

This article brings forth the growing disconnect between Black parents and the academic setting. The success of Black girls in the academic setting should have a holistic approach to encompassing the school, community, and parents. This study highlights Black parents are having to prove the worth of their daughters in the academic setting when her light shines as being intelligent, helpful, free spirit, and the academic setting has interpreted it as a threat. This study employs more research to develop more of a critical perspective on the connection of Black parents and the academic setting and the underdevelopment or the sense of threat by the presence of a Black girl.

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Chapter 5

Take Care of Our Daughters as You Would of Your Own

Overview

Black girls are entering into an academic setting, with hopes and aspirations to be academically successful without the notion of having to sacrifice their identity of who she is or what she will become. Entering into spaces where you are considered to be a threat or a distraction, it is easier to pretend the existence of a Black girl exists in the academic space. Black girls encountering invisibility in the academic setting forces not only Black girls but Black parents as well to manage the presumed inferiority status not just from white teachers and staff within the academic setting, but also from Black educators as well (Haynes, Stewart, & Allen, 2016). Black girls are expected to suppress their uniqueness in the academic setting and conform to a standard of expectations to demonstrate femininity that is characterized as white (Andrews, Brown, Castro & Id-Deen, 2019; Ricks, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to explore the components of K-12 urban or suburban, private/charter and public schools to determine if the setting is prepared to implement holistic approaches to support Black girls to meet their social and emotional needs within the academic setting. A critical race methodological approach was used to guide this study to collect data through the lens of critical race parenting strategies by interviews via computer/video audio. This study is comprised of three articles that assess the components meant to support Black girls in the academic setting, the perceptions of teachers addressing social-emotional needs, Black

educators' impact on Black students, and Black parents navigating the educational setting parenting Black girls.

To be a Black female, the inner Black girl has unresolved issues that are to be addressed. My presence and confidence were shattered at times, a voice silenced during my academic experiences and at times, now in the professional setting as I advocate for Black girls and families. I wanted to gather insight to assess the perceptions and experiences of Black parents who have a Black daughter and how as a parent they feel accepted, supported by the school their daughter attends. Taking all data and assessing it to determine, what will it take to protect the presence and essence of Black girls in the academic setting.

Discussion of Findings

Black parents within this study feel at times they are at war with the school their daughters attend. At war in the sense of always having to protect the identity and validity that their Black girl has a right to exist in the educational space. As DePouw and Matias (2016) imply Black parents reflect upon their “own experiences, identities, bodies of knowledge, communities, relationships, and professional skills to support, and protect the well-being of our children to the best of our abilities” (p 238). A few of the participants discussed how they have an interest in participating with their daughter's school by being involved, however, one participant described subliminally the school that is predominately white rejected her money and communication attempts to be involved with her daughters' school as she wanted to fulfill a PTA office position. This experience coincides with literature that the socio-economic of a parent is not the overall culmination of Black parents' involvement, the literature suggests race and ethnicity have an effect on parent involvement acceptance. The lack of interest the school

demonstrated contradicts the notion of schools attempting to establish a collaborative effort in working with families to build a relationship to ensure academic success. (Ferrara, 2015; Malone, 2017; Park & Holloway, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). As one participant became engaged within his daughters' school, to create a community for Black students and families to be inclusive of the development of the school and to create a sense of belonging for his daughter, that her presence and intelligence would not be taken away from her or redefined to fit a different image. The lived experiences of Black parents provide a critical perspective of culturally responsive pedagogical practices lacking within the academic setting to provide support and inclusion for Black girls and Black families. A discover that goes beyond what literature has pointed out the outcomes of educational settings utilizing parent engagement initiatives or strategies, how that has impacted the academics of Black girls. Black parents are an underutilized resource within the academic setting. Through collaboration and consistency, Black parents who may not be visible or considered to be involved due to their presence not being visible at times at school events, should be considered in different capacities to be utilized in supporting Black families, Black girls (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016).

The participants within this study identified the lack of emotional support that teachers and staff, including fellow Black educators, have in addressing their Black girls. Many of the participants identified concerns of dismissiveness of Black girls' emotional support within the school setting. As literature guides the deficiencies implementing a social-emotional learning environment to just not address what is identified as poor coping strategies, but the development of positive living habits in the academic setting. As a parent identified he will place his daughter in a low-performing setting and supplement her academics by using his social-capital and

networking circle to make sure his daughter is in a learning environment that will embrace her, support her, and teach her positive ways to express self and not push out or silence her voice when wanting to express herself in the academic setting and it is deemed defiant.

The design of this study focused on the critical lens of how Black girls are perceived and treated within the academic setting. Black parents encourage agency for their Black girls within educational institutions. Black parents within the study questioned how supportive the academic setting wants to be for Black girls. The question became repetitive when identifying Black girls that are in predominantly Black educational settings. The concern highlighted pointed to the relationships between Black families and Black educators and the disconnect that is evident more so now than it has ever been. Black parents eluded to how Black educators speak down to Black girls based off of societal perceptions, as one parent discussed, Black female teachers have less tolerance for her Black daughters than any of her teachers and she attends a diverse academic setting. The experience of her daughter highlights the literature of the expectations Black educators had of Black students historically when schools were segregated. Now, has the expectation of Black educators to be more lenient for Black girls, or has the mechanics of teaching Black girls changed to fit more of a standard of not accepting the identity of Black girls in the academic setting.

A Framework for Black Girls Survival in Education

Through each study within this work, the conceptualization of experiences from the participants were created and themes were created. To ultimately answer the question, what are the key components for Black girl survival in a broken educational system? Taking all themes derived from data collected from the perceptions of teachers feeling unprepared to implement

and/or create social-emotional learning environment, the positive and/or negative impact Black educators have on Black students, and the strategies Black parents use to navigate the educational system to protect their Black girls, the Black Girl Care framework was developed. Black Girl Care is broken down into three major themes. The three prevalent themes in this study are: (a) Protecting Black Girls, (b) Care and Love, and (c) Redefining School Setting.

The first theme, *Protecting Black Girls*, consists of Identity Protection, Parent Protection, and Parent Position. This theme integrates the concept of Black parents as intergenerational protectionists. Building upon historical strategies to support and protect their daughters. Black parents are attempting to prevent their daughters to experience what they experienced in the academic setting. Black parents as protectionists encourage their daughters to embrace their identity and not let it be compromised within the academic setting. Black parents making it known, not in a hostile or angry demeanor, but are advocating for their daughter to exist in a space that is to educate, support, not judge, stereotype or degrade her presence. At all costs, Black parents will do what they feel is necessary to ensure their Black daughters are looked upon as being essential to the learning environment. The key aspect to understanding Black parents' position as protectionists' is to understand Black parents view of the educational system and the steps to prepare their daughters for their educational journey.

The second theme, *Care and Love*, is comprised of Purpose, Passion and Perseverance. This theme projects the support needed to ensure Black girls are visible in the academic setting not just from a parent's perspective but also for the educators as well. The purpose, passion, and perseverance of educators stepping into the profession of education, should be the same mentality towards educating Black girls. This component creates the foundation of collaboration

between parents and school staff. Black parents are purpose driven to show Black girls are more than a label and should be treated as such. The commonality between Black parents and educators is the purpose of educators choosing to become educators. Establishing a relationship with Black girls and their parents is a key component for supporting Black girls. It is a critical requisite for Black girl care.

The third theme, *Redefining School Setting*, combines all the themes that address who comprises the make-up of the academic setting, the educators. The dilemma of who is to blame when it comes to identifying who or what is responsible of the inequalities within the academic setting that is to support Black students, Black girls. As a whole, educators feel the structure of the educational setting is failing Black students. Educators trying to figure out where they fit in providing a culturally responsive educational setting is in question. The lack of exposure to what a social-emotional educational setting looks like, educators struggle to be something they have never seen in providing a supportive environment that addresses the social-emotional needs of Black girls. The school setting determines teacher perceptions and how educators interact with Black students. The dynamics of how school policies are enforced on Black girls creates distrust between school administrators, school staff, Black parents, and Black girls. Are educators ready to create a safe place for Black girls? This framework provides a structure to support Black girls with care as you would a flower; being delicate so it won't break, water and nurture it so it will grow.

Future Research

In the development of my research has stemmed from personal experiences. The choice of research is situated by the relationship to the study (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). A

portion of researching personal stances is to develop some aspect of wanting to implement change. Talking with educators' Black and white, Black parents, the voice that I have heard that can provide such power and influence, are the voices of the Black girls I seek to support and advocate for within the academic setting. Based on the findings of this study, future research should focus on (a) Black girl experiences within urban K-12 settings and (b) The role of Black father's in the educational support of Black girls.

Focus 1- Black girl's experiences within an urban K-12 private/public educational setting and its impact on academic trajectory leaving the K-12 environment. What are the strategies and or coping mechanisms Black girls utilize to achieve academic goals and the want to continue their education on a collegiate level? Researchers who are interested in Black education can assist in carrying this research forward. The benefit of raising the voice of Black girls in education can uncover the depths of experiences of what it is like to be a Black girl in education. The Black Girl Care framework will be a supportive framework for this study by uncovering the perspective from Black girls and their relationship with their parents as protectionist and how Black girls see their parents' position influence and/or impact their educational journey. Black girls would be able to highlight how Black girls interpret the love and care from within the educational setting, and lastly, the perspective of the school setting involving discipline practices and relationships with educators and how it has impacted the desire to continue education beyond the k-12 environment. This research could be provided to academic advisors within the pre k-12 educational setting to address disciplinary protocols towards Black girls.

Focus 2- Black fathers' role in the support of their Black children in the education setting. Negative narratives describe Black fathers as being absent or not as involved with their children's education. Educational settings are not accepting of Black fathers' presence and would prefer to interact with Black mothers. Looking to explore the strategies Black fathers utilize to make their presence known as an active parent in their child's education. Researchers interested in urban education, and the narrative of the assumption Black fathers are not active in their children's education. This specific research will be beneficial to debunk the narrative Black fathers have no interest in the success of their children education. The Black Girl Care framework supports this study with the components of Black parents as protectors as well as care and love. Identifying the strategies Black fathers utilized to be navigate the academic setting making their presence known and respected as an active parent in their children's education. This study would benefit the educational parent and community engagement programs in learning how to establish sufficient relationships with Black fathers.

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Appendix A-Recruitment (Email)

Overview of Study

I am Ashley Johnson. I am a doctoral student in the Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the University of Memphis. I am conducting a study that seeks to explore the lived experiences of Black parents navigating the school system of their child or children. With your input, our goal is to use your voice to decision-makers in education to increase awareness of parent perceptions of treatment and to establish a greater method in building strong and effective relationships amongst Black parents and school personnel.

Participation in Study

To participate in the study, potential participants must meet the following inclusionary criteria:

- Identify as a Black parent
- Must be 18 years or older
- Has a child or children currently enrolled in an urban school setting
- Has had a child or children enrolled in an urban school setting

Privacy and Confidentiality

We will keep the information you provide anonymous, however federal regulatory agencies and the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Your responses will be anonymous to ensure that they cannot be linked to you. If we write a report about this study we will do so in such a way that you cannot be identified. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you are otherwise entitled. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints now or later, you may contact us at the number below. If you have any questions about your rights as a human subject, complaints, concerns or wish to talk to someone who is independent of the research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu.

Thank you for your time.

Recruitment Continued

Dear Participant, (email)

I hope this email finds you well. I am conducting a study to explore the lived experiences of Black parents navigating the school system. Our hope is to uncover the experiences, stories, and opinions of Black parents as they recall positive and or negative encounters with school staff to ensure the academic success of their children. I would like to have your participation in a semi-structured interview estimated to last about 1 hour. Please note that I, as the researcher, will be conducting the interviews personally and your decision to participate will have no influence on your child's education. Also note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. You have been selected for this study, based on your meeting of the following criteria:

- a) Identify as a Black parent or guardian
- b) Must be 18 years or older
- c) Has a child or children currently enrolled in an urban school setting
- d) Has had a child or children enrolled in an urban school setting

Attached, you find a letter of informed consent. Please review and let us know if you are interested in being part of the study. If so, please also indicate possible dates for an interview, which can be conducted via telephone, face-to-face, or video conference. To participate in the study, please reply to this email. You will also need to print, sign, scan, and email the informed consent letter back to mjhnsn94@memphis.edu.

Sincerely,

Ashley Johnson

Consent for Research Participation

Title	Get to Know Me: Dismantling the Conditioned mindsets of Black parents
Sponsor	(Ashley M. Johnson, LSSW), (University of Memphis)
Researcher(s)	(Dr. Derrick Robinson, PhD), (University of Memphis)
Researchers Contact Information	(901-678-2369), (mjhnsn94@memphis.edu)

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher(s) any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of about 10 people to do so.

Key Information for You to Consider
<p><u>Voluntary Consent:</u> You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> The purpose of this research is research the perspectives of Black parents strategic methods in navigating the school system to ensure academic success of their children. As well, uncover their lived experiences of positive and or negative encounters, challenges, and coping strategies to survive the school system</p> <p><u>Duration:</u> It is expected that your participation will last 1 hour.</p> <p><u>Procedures and Activities:</u> You will be asked to express willingness to participate in the study, provide written consent to the study, establish a date, time, and location to conduct interview.</p> <p><u>Risk:</u> Some of the foreseeable risk or discomforts of your participation include no</p>

more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

Benefits: Some of the benefits that may be expected include happiness when being provided the platform to share your experiences on a being a Black parent.

Alternatives: Participation of this study is voluntary, the only alternative is to decline participation in the study.

Who is conducting this research?

(Ashley M. Johnson, MSW, LSSW) of the University of Memphis, Department of Leadership and Policy Studies is in charge of the study: Her faculty advisor Dr. Derrick Robinson, Assistant Professor, University of Memphis, Department of Leadership and Policy Studies. There may be other research team members assisting during the study.

What happens if I agree to participate in this Research?

If you agree you will be asked to schedule a time for the interview and the platform of their choosing(phone, video conference, or face-to-face). The study only requires one interview session, however, the researcher reserves the right to schedule a follow up interview should new information arise during later interviews. Such follow-up questions will be quick one or two question interview sessions.

Participation in the study entails the following:

- Express willingness to participate in the study
- Signature on formal consent letter
- Agree to an interview date, time, and location
- Answer an estimated 10 questions in a 1hour time frame
- Consent to being audio-recorded during interviews

For research involving survey, questionnaires, and or interviews:

- As a participant, you have the option to skip any question at any time and stop the interview completely if becoming uncomfortable.
- If participant should need an example of the question being asked, it is appropriate to ask the researcher to provide one.
- In the case of new information arising during the interview, the researcher reserves the right to ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper insight of the participant's thoughts.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

Information collected for this research will be used in combination with information from other people taking part I the study. When we write about the study to share it with other

researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study, however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

- Your name will not be used in any published reports, conference presentations about this study.
- We may publish/present the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?

We will take every precautionary effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. Precautions we will take involve:

- The researcher will use convenience sampling (personal relationships) to identify potential participants and contact them via email.
- The researcher will conduct interviews via telephone, face to face, or video conference at the participants convenience, which allows the participants to control the setting in interaction with the investigator.
- The research will contain only the principal investigator and the participants. No other research will be involved.
- The researcher will use audio-recorded phone interviews to obtain data from the participants.
- Interviews will be audio-recorded. The audio recordings, once fully transcribed, will be deleted.
- The information collected in this study involves personal recounts, reflections, and experiences of the participants regarding their experiences in being a Black parent.
- Participants will only provide their personal experiences and reflections, as they recall them about their experiences being a Black parent.
- To protect privacy during the interview process, pseudonyms will be given to each participant and their responses.
- Interview protocols will be applied to ensure that the minimum amount of information necessary to complete the study is provided.

Individuals and organization that monitor this research may be permitted access to inspect the research records. This monitoring may include access to your private information and (include any other records). These individual and organization include:

- Institutional Review Board

What are the risks if I participate in this research?

There are no risks participating in this research. You may find some questions during the interview process upsetting or stressful. If so, information will be provided to assist with any emotional feelings.

What are the benefits of participating in this research?

You may or may not benefit from participating in this research.

- Participating in this study has no known direct benefits to you as a participant. We do think that this study will allow you to reflect on your on being a Black parent and share your experiences.
- Although, not guaranteed, possible benefits to you include satisfaction when being given the platform to share your experiences of being a Black parent.

What other choices do I have beside participating in this research?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study

What if I want to stop participating in this research?

It is up to you to decide whether you want to volunteer for this study. It is also ok to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decided to withdraw your participation. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Memphis.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

- There are no costs associated with participation in this research study

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?

- You will not be compensated for taking part in this research

Who can answer my question about this research?

Before you decide to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the

study, you can contact the investigator, Ashley Johnson at (901) 678-2369 or by email mjhnsn94@memphis.edu or Dr. Derrick Robinson at (901) 701-7730 or by email at drbnsn28@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent to take with you.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation

As described above, you will be audio-recorded while performing the activities described above. Recordings will be used for data analysis only.

Initial the space below if you consent to the use of audio/video or photographs as described

_____ I agree to the use of audio recording

Name of Adult Participant	Signature of Adult Participant	Date

Researcher Signature (To be completed at the time of Informed Consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

Name of Research Team Member	Signature of Research Team Member	Date

Appendix C- Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

1. As a Black parent do you find that your child or children have similar experiences that you had in school?
2. Do you feel you have a positive experience when you visit your child or children(s) school?
3. What is your relationship like with your child or children(s) school administrators? Teachers? And the staff?
4. What is the most negative encounter you have experienced while navigating your child or children(s) academic environment?
5. How do you think you are perceived as a Black parent?
6. Are you or have you ever been an active parent on the school parent committees at your child or children's school? If not, why? If yes, how was your experience?
7. What have you done or continue to do to ensure and or maintain the academic, social, and emotional success of your child or children(s) in the academic setting?
8. Have you ever felt unwelcomed when entering your child or children(s) school?
9. What is one thing you would want the school administrators, teachers, and or staff to know about you as a parent? Your child or children?
10. Have your experiences as a student affected the way you perceive and or interact with your child or children(s) academic environment now that you are a parent?

Appendix D- IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

April 17, 2020

PI Name: Ashley Johnson
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Derrick Robinson
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Get to Know Me: Dismantling Conditioned Mindsets of Black Parents
IRB ID : #PRO-FY2020-101
Exempt Approval: April 16, 2020

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required every 2 years and is to be kept current at citiprogram.org.

For any additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.

Ashley M. Johnson

mjhnsn94@memphis.edu

Curriculum Vitae

SUMMARY: Advocate for equitable education for students and families, establishes relationships/partnerships with community stakeholders, serves as a liaison between school, family and community resources; develops strategic initiatives and implements community engagement; maintains appropriate school records and provides written reports and communications; participation as a resource person in in-service training and planning; acts as a consultant to resolve problems; create and facilitate curriculum plans; monitor and adjust school wide goals; complete school needs assessment/support plan

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Implementation of Social Emotional Learning within P-20 environment
Mischaracterization of Black girls in P-20 environment
Black fathers navigating the P-20 environment
Lack of inclusion of school social workers as leaders in P-20 environment
Black women and school leadership in P-20 environment

EDUCATION: **Doctorate of Education**, fall 2018 to summer 2020
University of Memphis
Concentration: Leadership and Policy Studies
Dissertation: Can't Be Broken: The Survival of Black Girls in a Broken Educational System

Graduate Research Assistant, fall 2018 to summer 2020
University of Memphis

Post Masters, fall 2014 to spring 2015
University of Louisville
Concentration: School Social Worker, Rank 1

Master of Social Work, 2011
Western Kentucky University
Concentration: Social Work

Bachelor of Science, 2008
University of Louisville
Concentration: Justice Administration

LICENSES Licensed School Social Worker, Rank 1 (Kentucky and Tennessee)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: **Licensed School Social Worker, Rank 1**, July 2018 to Present
Shelby County School District, Memphis, Tennessee

- Provide direct therapeutic interventions to students within the K-12 academic setting to ensure social, behavioral, emotional and academic success of students.
- Collaborate with school staff and personnel to provide school student support to ensure academic success and growth.
- Provide consultation to families and or guardians to ensure life basic needs are being met or acquire additional resources.
- Facilitate professional development sessions to teachers, staff, and personnel within the academic setting

Therapist/Case Manager, February 2018 to July 2018
Health Connect, Memphis, Tennessee

- Provide direct behavioral services to clients receiving intensive-home services three times a week
- Completed required clinical billing/payer documentation; conducted assessment of client needs; conducted family therapy sessions; completed client treatment plans with diagnoses; participated in client Individual Evaluation Plan (IEP) meetings, 504 meetings, behavior intervention plan meetings; collaborated with school staff to assist with client needs and undertook any other administrative duties as assigned.
- Assist clients with identifying treatment goals
- Attend medication management appointments with clients.

Site Coordinator, July 2015 to November 2017
Communities In Schools, Memphis, Tennessee

- Coordinate and facilitate the provision of appropriate community resources to identified students and families to help students stay in school and graduate or receive promotion to the next grade successfully;
- Encourage parent/caretaker involvement in the educational process of their student; provide individualized support to students and families;
- Establish relationship between community stakeholder's/school adopters and school personnel;
- Monitor and adjust school wide goals implemented for the academic year;
- Provide orientation and training to school staff, volunteers and community partners as needs are identified; design, implement, and coordinate an array of programs, services, and resources that will benefit students at risk as well the entire student population (Level I, II, and Service Delivery Model); provide and document short-term crisis intervention service on an as needed basis

Case Manager, March 2015 to July 2015

**Kentuckiana Works/Kentucky Youth Career Center/Right Turn Program,
Louisville, Kentucky**

- Manages caseload of 25-40 youth; guide and support each youth through the comprehensive career development process of self-exploration to career planning and management;
- Assist youth in developing their Individual Career Development Plan; identify and connect youth to the education and workforce development options that best match youth's current stage, skills, and goals
- Serve as a job coach; support youth success and retention in work experiences and employment as educational advocates supporting youth's school enrollment, attendance, academic achievement and credential attainment;
- Connect youth to community supportive services needed for success; maintaining databases and undertaking any other administrative duties as assigned.

**Recruitment and Development, January 2014 to March 2015
VISTA/AMERICORPS, Radcliff, Kentucky**

- Supervisor of match support for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Incorporated (BBBSI); ensure safety guidelines are followed by Mentors and Mentees; participation in fundraising events; coordinate, schedule and conduct interviews for potential Mentors for BBBSI;
- Generating appropriate volunteering opportunities and role descriptions based on the needs of the organization; ensuring there is appropriate support and training for volunteers; monitoring, supporting, motivating and accrediting volunteers and their work; raising staff awareness of the role and function of volunteers;
- Manage a caseload of up to approximately 40 clients; provide managerial and technical assistance in programs such as equal opportunity; develop and provide training and education; evaluate programs to identify and resolve systematic issues; facilitate and co-facilitate inter-agency training sessions and performed other related duties as assigned;
- Liaising with other departments to understand how they work, develop partnerships and assess their volunteering needs, if required; attend committees and meetings; maintaining databases and undertaking any other administrative duties as assigned.

**School-Based Therapist, April 2010-April 2013
Communicare, Inc, Elizabethtown, Kentucky**

- Provided direct behavioral health services to consumers in school-based setting; provided individual and group therapy using evidence

based practice therapeutic interventions; provided appropriate resources to meet client needs;

- Provided managerial and technical assistance in programs such as equal opportunity; developed and provided training and education; evaluated programs to identify and resolve systematic issues;
- Completed required clinical billing/payer documentation; conducted client home-visits; conducted assessment of client needs; conducted family therapy sessions; completed client treatment plans with diagnoses; participated in client Individual Evaluation Plan (IEP) meetings; collaborated with school staff to assist with client needs and undertook any other administrative duties as assigned.

Graduation Assistant Coordinator, February 2011 to June 2012
 Elizabethtown High School, Elizabethtown, Kentucky

- Provided mentor services to students that were identified at-risk of becoming dropouts; provided managerial and technical assistance in programs such as equal opportunity; developed and provided training and education;
- Evaluated programs to identify and resolve systematic issues; collaborated with school staff to assist in student success; conducted home-visits; reviewed and assessed students' semester grades;
- Provided outside community resources; referred student to appropriate assisting school programs to ensure academic success and undertook any other administrative duties as assigned.

Youth Worker, September 2008 to January 2009
Lincoln Village, Elizabethtown, Kentucky

- Provided intervention services to children/adolescents using individual, family, and group treatment; monitored daily activities essential in establishing and maintaining structured lives;
- Provided positive reinforcement and feedback during communication of social issues and undertook any other administrative duties as assigned

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE:

Leadership in Organizations (LEAD 8001) Fall 2019
University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee

- *LEAD 8001* is a three-hour doctoral level course designed to identify different aspects of organizational climate and the effects of climate on school organizations and leadership

Urban Education: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives (LDPS 8320)
Spring 2020

School Administration and Supervision
University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee

- *LDPS 8320* is a three-hour doctoral course designed to explore the multiple societal institutions impact on schooling experiences in urban educational settings

COMMUNITY

INVOLVEMENT: Memphis Grizzlies Team Mentor Program

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Johnson, A.** (2019, December). Social-Emotional Learning- Am I Doing This in My Classroom (Professional Development)
- **Robinson, D. & Johnson, A.** (November, 2019). Between logic and mindfulness: School leader perceptions of their effectiveness. University Council for Educational Administration 2019. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- **Johnson, A.** (October, 2019). Get to know me: Dismantling the mindsets of Black parents. Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education 2019. Charlotte, North Carolina
- **Johnson, A.** (October, 2019). I didn't sign up for this: Teachers perceptions on implementing a social-emotional learning environment. Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education 2019. Charlotte, North Carolina.
- **Platt, R., Gnnadass, E., Clay., V, & Johnson, A.** (April, 2019). The life and death of the Memphis college of art: A history, 1936-2020. Southern History of Education Society, 2019. Dahlenega, Georgia.
- **Johnson, A & Connor, C.** (June, 2019). Creating a social-emotional learning environment. 8th Annual West Tennessee Counseling Association 2019. Memphis, Tennessee.
- **Johnson, A.** (December, 2018). Teacher perceptions on mental health in the school setting. (Panel Discussion). University of Memphis 2018. Memphis, Tennessee.

PROFESSIONAL

MEMBERSHIPS: National Black Graduate Student Association (2019-Present)
 Memphis Embark Leadership
 National Association Black Social Workers

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQEUST