

CHALLENGES AFFECTING EDUCATOR CAREERS OF BLACK MALE TEACHERS IN
K-12 SYSTEM IN SOUTH CAROLINA: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL
STUDY

by

David J. Williams, Jr.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the multifaceted challenges that impact the careers of Black male teachers within the K-12 education system in South Carolina. Despite efforts to increase diversity in the teaching profession, Black male educators remain underrepresented, facing unique obstacles that can hinder their work due to growth and retention. Grounded on critical race theory and Black male identity theory Through in-depth interviews and rigorous analysis, this research uncovered these educators' lived experiences and perspectives on the complex interplay of factors that shape their career trajectories. The study employed a phenomenological approach to capture the essence of the challenges faced by Black male teachers in South Carolina. By engaging participants in reflective dialogues, the research revealed the issues related to racial identity, cultural perceptions, institutional dynamics, and community expectations. Findings from this study contributed to a deeper understanding of the obstacles that hinder the progression of Black male teachers in South Carolina's K-12 education system. The qualitative data analysis provided insights into how these educators navigated stereotype threats, lack of representation, limited advancement opportunities, and cultural misconceptions. In addressing the identified challenges, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Black male teachers. Such efforts are essential for cultivating a diverse teaching workforce that better reflects the student population, fosters positive role models, and ultimately enriches the educational experiences of all students in South Carolina's K-12 schools.

Keywords: Critical race theory, Black male identity theory, Black teachers, teacher attrition, education policy, discrimination, school, equity.

Dedication

This manuscript honors my village's affection, friendship, and loyalty, whose unwavering notion of my potential has maintained pressure for this journey. This accomplishment will also motivate and encourage them to pursue their endeavors. This manuscript can pay homage to the dedication and timely efforts of Public Schools educators in rural communities in South Carolina, who worked ceaselessly to guarantee that the youth in the district received a world-class education. Finally, this manuscript is dedicated to all African American college students who are overcoming stereotypes and opting to persist in attaining their educational goals. There are not any limits on your greatness! **YOU CAN AND WILL ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS!**

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“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” – Psalms 23:6.

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List of Abbreviations

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Black Masculinity Identity Theory (BMIT)

Call Me MISTER (CMM)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Historically Black College and University (HBCU).

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Despite recent attention to the benefits to Black teachers, the K-12 teacher labor market in the United States remains represented mainly by White and female teachers (Campoli, 2017; Dantzler, 2018; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). Black male teachers represent only a tiny percentage of classroom teachers in K-12 public schools in the United States (Benson et al., 2020; Sandles, 2020). The shortage of Black male teachers has negatively impacted the teacher efficacy, their career aspirations, and the academic outcomes of Black students (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). This study focuses on the challenges affecting pursuing a career in education as perceived by Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. Chapter 1 will focus on the introduction. The researcher will present an overview of the chapter, the background of the study, the situation to self, the problem statement, the significance of the study, the research questions, and the definitions, and conclude with a summary.

Background

There are over three million teachers in public schools across the U.S., and men comprise less than 25% of this population. The rate is far lower for Black male teachers, on the verge of extinction in the country's public school system (Lewis & Toldson, 2013). The National Center for Education Statistics reports that there has been a change in the racial/ethnic makeup of students enrolled in public schools nationwide (Benson et al., 2020). Black students will make up 15% of the nation's overall school enrollment in 2026, as Black pupils are expected to rise from 7.8 million to 7.9 million (Berry & Cook, 2018). Black male teachers comprise only 2% of the public school population (E. E. Bell, 2017). Research has repeatedly demonstrated that social, economic, educational, and cultural factors contribute to the absence of Black male teachers.

Historical Context

The socio-historical background of opportunity gaps and racialized educational challenges for Black male teachers is rooted in the racial politics of the culture (Brown & Thomas, 2020; Young & Young, 2020). Moreover, such challenges, ranging from underrepresentation, institutional racism, micro-aggressions, and marginalization to lower academic status, lower salaries, stunted advancement, and heavier workloads (Louis & Freeman, 2018), are considered in the discourse to be of racial politics that take second place to other concerns such as gender equity issues (Young & Young, 2020) and considerations for culturally relevant teaching (N. Bryan & Williams, T. M., 2017). However, systemic racism has historically persisted as a primary barrier to career progression for Black male teachers (E. E. Bell, 2017; Kohli et al., 2017; Vallejo, 2020). For instance, starting in the late 18th century, the abolitionist Manumission Society established the African Free Schools, serving children of enslaved people and the free poor and taught by white teachers, only welcoming Black male teachers following a boycott and dismissal of the headmaster and his pro-colonization ideas (Young & Young, 2020). Also, working at private schools, Black male teachers were replacements for the dismissed white teachers (Rury, 1983) and were considered to positively impact the future of the Black community (Brown & Thomas III, 2020; Rury, 1983).

From the 1860s on into the early part of the 20th century, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) trained students to work as teachers and preachers, two of the few professions open to Black men (Will, 2019). As teachers, they served an agreed-upon role as social and educational reformers of troubled Black boys (Brown & Thomas III, 2020), a role that has informed many racist assumptions about the extent to which Black males can teach—provided their teaching involves Black issues or concerns (Haque & Elliott, 2017).

There was a devastating decrease in the total number of Black educators from 82,000 to 38,000 in the South and border states alone (Oakley et al., 2009) exemplified the racial fallout after the *Brown v. the Board of Education* case ruling determined racial segregation of children in public schools unconstitutional incited the closing of Black schools (Oakley et al., 2009), and the Black male teacher never gained traction. It was not until 2010 that attention returned to the plight of the Black male teacher and the gap, when under the Obama administration, the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) (2011) launched the TEACH Campaign, encouraging male minorities to pursue careers in education—with DoE Secretary Arne Duncan noting a particular need for Latino- American and African American male teachers. The campaign did not meet the goals of increasing diversity in K-12 classrooms. However, it did inspire "...development of various local programs to create additional strategies to recruit Black males" (Underwood et al., 2019, p. 11).

However, despite national efforts, initiatives, and programs for Black male teacher recruitment and retention and the ultimate diversification of the teaching workforce, current research points to the unavoidable structural and systemic racism that persists as a barrier to career opportunities, entry, and advancement of Black male teachers. Kohli et al. (2017) conducted research to challenge racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches to studying racial disparities in K–12 schools. After narrowing over 4,000 articles that reviewed racial inequity in education research, Kohli et al. (2017) conceptualized the permanence and significance of racism in the life of people of color as evaded racism, antiracist racism, and everyday racism. E. E. Bell (2017) aimed to understand how a Black male experienced the interview process while seeking a teaching position and explored the role that both race and gender played in the hiring process. E. E. Bell (2017) revealed that racism did play a subtle role in hiring.

Using a large population sample, (Van Overschelde & López, 2018) examined who would be denied admission to a teacher preparation program and the teaching profession if the admission criterion increased. Van Overschelde and López suggested that the higher standard not only reduced the number of high-quality teachers but Black male applicants would be negatively impacted to a much greater degree. Applying critical race theory (CRT) and critical studies of Whiteness and microaggressions, Vallejo (2020) analyzed the experiences of teachers of color through their educator careers. They found a process of naming shared experiences, being dismissed, silenced, censored, and becoming exhausted in a colorblind workplace.

Systemic racism results in the shortage of Black male teachers in the K-12 school system in the United States (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; Will, 2019). Approximately 40% of Black male teacher applicants were denied employment opportunities in teaching (Kohli et al., 2017). N. Bryan and Williams (2017) examined the lack of diversity of teachers in K-12, with specific attention to recruiting and retaining Black male teachers in early childhood education. Campoli (2017) analyzed data from a sample of approximately 1,600 Black teachers who participated in the Schools and Staffing Survey and found that Black teachers made implications about the role of supportive principals.

Ingersoll et al. (2019) examined and compared the recruitment, employment, and retention of minority and nonminority schoolteachers over the quarter-century; the purpose was to empirically ground the ongoing debate regarding minority teacher shortages and changes in the minority teaching force. Ingersoll et al. documented the persistence of a gap between minority students and the percentage of minority teachers in the United States. Ingersoll et al. (2019) also showed that this gap was not due to a failure to recruit new minority teachers. Using CRT, Sandles (2020) examined the shortage of Black men and identified some of the existing

challenges facing prospective Black male educators, such as meritocracy and color blindness. Sandles (2020) also offered insight into forces that began an involuntary exodus of Black educators from the profession.

The shortage of Black teachers has severe, detrimental effects on students (N. Bryan & Williams, T. M. & Campoli, 2017). This trend hinders classroom teaching and learning (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). Historical research shows how Hispanic and Black teachers support their Hispanic and Black students' social and emotional development during state-sanctioned school segregation (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019).

Using quantitative research methods and leveraging the Schools and Staffing Survey data (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018) examined job satisfaction among Black female teachers. The results indicated that Black female teachers were satisfied with their jobs in urban, non-charter schools. Moreover, (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018) found that these Black female teachers were happy when they received administrative support or experienced positive student behavior. Their research further showed that Black female teachers had job satisfaction when committed to teaching. More recently, Carver-Thomas et al. (2020) indicated that teacher shortages most severely affected schools serving the least advantaged children.

Some initiatives and policy interventions took place to mitigate the Black male teacher shortage. Efforts to enhance Black males' academic performances and educational experiences in college have exploded since the 2000s, including institutional, state, system-level, and national programs, policies, and calls to action (Brooms, 2018). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) used the national data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 2020, and the Teacher Follow-up Survey to investigate attrition trends among Black and Black female teachers to determine teacher retention policy interventions. White et al.

(2020) examined interview responses from prominent education researchers who were asked to consider the role of significant educational policies in the underrepresentation of Black teachers in public K-12 schools. White et al. (2020) found that Black teachers held different views about whether and how policies undermined the presence of Black teachers in schools. White et al. (2020) further showed that participants perceived educational policies had a mixed impact on Black teachers, and some of the participants believed educational policies contributed to institutional racism and the systemic marginalization of Black teachers in schools.

Social Contexts

In the K-12 schools in the United States, the shortage of Black male teachers is a worsening problem (Campoli, 2017). The percentage of Black male teachers in the United States has not surpassed 2% over the past 50 years (N. Bryan & Williams, T. M., 2017). While the enrollment of students of color in K-12 public schools has held steady for over a decade, Black teachers continue to represent only a tiny percentage of classroom teachers and leave the classroom at higher rates than their White counterparts (Benson et al., 2020; Sandles, 2020). Teachers of color teaching students of color produce positive learning outcomes for students of color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). Black teachers contribute to the learning outcomes of students of color by building relationships with students of color and helping those students feel connected to their schools (Griffin & Tackie, 2017).

Besides, many non-Blacks and the media hold negative stereotypes against Black male teachers. Such stereotypes adversely influence how students perceive them as teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Moreover, Black male instructors in most institutions are disciplinarians rather than sources of intellectual growth for children (Brooms, 2018). However, the proportion of Black males seeking teaching has significantly decreased because of social rejection (Campoli, 2017).

Kohli et al. (2017) argued that school districts had a responsibility to ensure the welfare of teachers and that their basic needs were met; however, most district boards did not adequately address the interests of Black male teachers. In most cases, the teacher appraisal system is biased against Blacks (Pabon & Basile., 2019). (Meidl, 2018) investigated 23 Black males' beliefs about the challenges of recruiting Black males to teach in early childhood education. Using the Black masculinity identity theory (BMIT) to understand the socio-cultural context the participants provided, Meidl collected qualitative data and emerged themes from their experiences, including (a) challenges to recruitment, such as the presence, financial, and systematic obstacles in society; and (b) recommendations for change, such as recruitment, alternative approaches, encouraging educational paths, and valuing personal interaction.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study "Challenges Affecting Educator Careers of Black Male Teachers in the K-12 System in South Carolina: A Qualitative Phenomenological" can be built upon multiple interconnected theories that provide a comprehensive lens to understand the complex dynamics at play. By integrating these theories, the study can provide a multifaceted understanding of the challenges affecting Black male teachers' careers within the South Carolina K-12 education system. This framework enables a holistic exploration of individual experiences and systemic factors, contributing to a richer and more nuanced analysis of the phenomenon.

Critical race theory and Black masculinity identity theory are the theoretical foundations for this study. Critical race theory, or CRT, is a theoretical framework in social sciences that examines society and culture related to categorizing race, law, and power in the United States (Delgado et al., 2017). Black masculinity identity theory, or BMIT, indicates that Black men make meaning of their experience in the school environment, which is implicitly tied to how they

internalize and demonstrate their masculinity (Pelzer, 2016). CRT has been used to explain racism in education and teacher shortages among minority groups.

Berry and Cook (2018) provided a critical race-reflective examination of the teaching and learning experiences and dilemmas. The researchers highlighted the significance of CRTs and critical race feminism's unique voice of color, creating a personally engaged pedagogy. Through a qualitative case study, Thomas (2020) explored teacher diversity efforts in one non-urban district based on the CRT. Thomas called for a radical rethinking of teacher diversity efforts by insisting on a comprehensive approach to teacher diversity that challenged norms and commonsense practices.

Like Thomas's (2020) study grounded in the CRT, Sandles (2020) examined the shortage of Black men. Sandles identified some of the current challenges facing prospective Black male educators. Grounded in the CRT, the researcher suggested the Black male teacher shortage was based on racial considerations and was a patently nationwide epidemic. Edwards (2020) urged more researchers studying youth homelessness to use a critical racial lens to address the current racial knowledge gap in the existing literature on student homelessness. Drawing from portraiture, CRT, and Ethnic Studies frameworks, Curammeng (2020) detailed how Ethnic Studies prepared Black teachers in ways their formal education did not.

Black male identity theory is a relevant theoretical perspective to researching phenomena associated with Black males in higher education (Hill, 2016). Hill introduced BMIT development and presented its relevance to education. Framing the research with BMIT, Hill (2016) explored how Black males developed identities that might enhance or impede the likelihood of becoming willing participants in challenging academic contexts. Existing literature reveals that limited research exists on the experiences of Black male student teachers (Maylor, 2018). Moreover,

there has been a paucity of research on the educational experiences of young Black women in K–12 education in the United States (Neal-Jackson, 2018). Further, few attempts have been made to examine how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers, mainly using CRT and BMIT as the theoretical foundations. Therefore, this study could advance knowledge by filling the gap in the research and contributing to the scholarship.

Problem Statement

The problem is that it is unknown how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers. Black male teachers are disproportionately underrepresented in the K-12 system in the United States (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). The percentage of Black male teachers in the United States has not surpassed 2% over the past 50 years (N. Bryan & Williams, T. M., 2017).

The shortage of Black male teachers has negatively impacted student outcomes, especially the learning outcomes of students of color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), between the fall of 2000 and the fall of 2020 (Sandles, 2020), the percentage of Black students decreased from 17% to 15%, or a total of 7.7 million Black students out of the 50.7 million students enrolled in K-12 schools in the United States (NCES, 2020). The shortage of Black male teachers in the United States has also influenced teachers' efficacy and career aspirations (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; Goings et al., 2018; Maylor, 2018). Systemic racism has historically persisted as a primary barrier to career progression for Black male teachers (E. E. Bell, 2017; Kohli et al., 2017; Vallejo, 2020; Van Overschelde & López, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. At this stage in the research, the experiences will be generally defined as the challenges experienced by Black male teachers in the K-12 system.

Significance of the Study

The study could advance knowledge and contribute to the scholarship. Moreover, few attempts have examined how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers, mainly using all the CRT and BMIT as the theoretical foundations. The findings from the study could support positive changes in the recruitment and hiring practices within school systems, especially in hiring Black men as teachers. The study's conclusions could support positive changes in school system recruitment and hiring practices, especially in hiring Black men as teachers.

From an axiological position drawing on CRT, the findings of this study may contribute to positive change in the ethos and values of public education in K-12 schools in South Carolina. More specifically, where CRT is fundamental to efforts to "...reinterpret and remake the world to reveal silenced suffering and to relieve social misery" (West, 1995, p. ix), this study and its findings can not only uncover nuanced systemic racism that persists in such institutions but contribute to changing policy, practices, and procedures so they tilt more towards giving Black male teachers a more unmistakable voice, tremendous respect, and effecting improvement of Black male teacher recruitment and retention in the public school context. Moreover, Haddix (2017) asserted the need to move beyond the rhetoric and into efforts toward actual change. This

study may help offset some of these legal and political factors and support positive changes in recruitment and hiring practices in public schools.

Theoretical Significance

Existing literature reveals that few attempts have been made to examine how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers, mainly using CRT and BMIT as the theoretical foundations. According to some scholars such as Haddix (2017), the body of literature by academic researchers and public scholars focused on the lack of linguistic and racial diversity in public school teaching staff is growing. Much attention has been paid to the underrepresentation of Black male teachers (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; White et al., 2020). However, as other authorities point out, research focused on the underrepresentation of Black males in public school teaching roles often fails to offer a research-based rationale for recruiting and hiring Black male teachers or teachers of color (Gist et al., 2019; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Expansions of theoretical offerings supporting Black male teachers' perceptions of challenges affecting their educator careers are also limited. Of those studies that do provide the research-based rationale for recruiting and hiring Black male teachers (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; White et al., 2020) or do further understanding of how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers (Bristol & Goings, 2019), few lend credence to CRT (Gaspard, 2019; Maylor, 2018) or BMIT (Callender, 2018; Whitaker, 2020; Woodson & Bristol, 2020) as the theory that lends to improving knowledge about how Black male teachers perceive challenges of racial and gender underrepresentation. In these respects, it is believed this study will contribute to a theoretical

foundation for an improved understanding of how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers.

Empirical Significance

Several researchers have started or added to a discourse on the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in primary, secondary, and even tertiary education (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; White et al., 2020). Some researchers have also applied CRT (Gaspard, 2019; Maylor, 2018) or BMIT (Callender, 2018; Whitaker, 2020; Woodson & Bristol, 2020) as the theory that lends to improving knowledge about how Black male teachers perceive challenges of racial and gender underrepresentation. However, few studies have involved a hermeneutic phenomenological research design (Bowman, 2018) as it contributes to an improved understanding of K-12 Black male teachers' perceived challenges affecting their educator careers.

Most of the research has been quantitative and has employed quantitative methods. For example, Campoli (2017) used structural equation modeling as the analytic method to generate results that account for the interrelatedness among working conditions, job satisfaction, and retention and analyzed data from a sample of 1,600 Black teachers who had completed the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey to suggest implications for the principal's support of Black teacher retention and state departments of education use of Every Student Succeeds Act funds. Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) also analyzed data from Black teachers who had completed the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey but used a sample of Black female teachers and pursued the goal of examining Black female teachers' job satisfaction as it affects attrition, school climate, and student achievement. Another quantitative approach was applied by White et al. (2020), who examined responses from prominent education researchers as interviewees were

asked to consider educational policy and how it impacts the underrepresentation of Black teachers in public schools. The interviewees' reactions ranged from educational policy having a mixed impact, an unintended but harmful impact, or a deleterious impact on Black teachers. They were analyzed in terms of offering suggestions for potential diversity workforce-strengthening initiatives.

In contrast, this study's hermeneutic phenomenological research focuses the research away from numerical data alone (and away from impacts on student outcomes or suggestions for improving diversity workforce initiatives, and more on the teacher perspectives and their perceived identity and human capital outcomes. By facilitating open-ended explorations of phenomena, the researcher will identify relevant lived experiences through anticipated and unanticipated themes (Moustakas, 1994). A qualitative design is expected to contribute to an empirical foundation for an improved understanding of how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers.

Practical Significance

The growing demand for education justifies the need for an effective and efficient teaching approach in the K-12 system that integrates more Black male teachers than ever U. S. Department of Education (2011). The findings in the study could provide information to guide education institutions to implement informed approaches that will encourage more Black males to be involved in this profession. The research is also an opportunity to address stereotypes and discrimination forwarded to the few Black male teachers in the industry (Wallace, 2020). Therefore, the findings of this study could also benefit Black male teachers and those pursuing a career in education. The improved shortage of Black male teachers in the K-12 system in the

United States could also help the local communities in South Carolina and enhance social stability.

Research Questions

The following research questions serve as guides for the proposed research study:

Central Research Question

What are Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system, and how do they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina?

Sub-Question One

What are the perceptions of the Black male teachers in South Carolina about the specific challenges affecting their educator careers?

Sub-Question Two

How do Black male teachers perceive their identity when working among other teachers on their campuses in South Carolina?

The rationale for proposing the main research question is grounded in theory and prompted by limited evidence-based research. For example, the research framed with BMIT has only begun to contribute to exploring Black male identity development as it might enhance or impede the likelihood of becoming willing participants in challenging academic and work contexts (Houston et al., 2020; Pitcan et al., 2018). The central R.Q. was developed to address both systemic challenges and individual perceptions of those challenges for Black male teachers that affect recruitment and retention of this population in the public school context.

The rationale for proposing SQ1 relates to BMIT (Delgado et al., 2017). SQ1 can directly address the specific problem. As Goings et al. (2018) and Maylor (2018) confirmed, there is an

opportunity to explore and expand existing research on how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers.

The rationale for proposing SQ2 is related to the BMIT theoretical context, which focuses on social sciences and examines society and culture in the context of the categorizations of race, law, and power (Delgado et al., 2017). In addition, SQ2 is related to the concepts underlying BMI centered on Black race identity. Answering SQ2 will also align with the literature focused on the contextualized impact of race deficit-thinking (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Maylor, 2018; Sandles, 2020), underrepresentation (N. Bryan & Williams, 2017; Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; White et al., 2020), institutional racism (Brooms, 2018; Gillborn, 2015; Sandles, 2020; Tichavakunda, 2019; Vallejo, 2020), micro-aggressions (Vallejo, 2020), and marginalization (Copur-Gencturk et al., 2020; Crenshaw, 2022; Vallejo, 2020; K. Williams et al., 2020) on Black male teacher identity and lived experience(s).

Definitions

The terms discussed in this section are meant to give the reader a better understanding of the specific terminologies included in the essay while avoiding misunderstandings and improving the clarity of the study:

1. *Black males*: Black males are African Americans (also commonly referred to as Afro Americans) who have partial or total ancestry to the enslaved Black people who lived during slavery in the United States (Humes et al., 2011)
2. *Black masculinity identity theory* (BMIT): BMIT indicates that Black men make meaning of their experience in a school environment implicitly tied to how they internalize and demonstrate their masculinity (Pelzer, 2016).
3. *Critical race theory* (CRT): CRT is a theoretical framework in social sciences that

- examines society and culture for categorizing race, law, and power in the United States (Delgado et al., 2017).
4. *Diversity* is the integration and tolerance of individuals from different ethnic and racial backgrounds (Thomas, 2020).
 5. *Implicit Bias*: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions unconsciously (Vallejo, 2020).
 6. *Institutionalized racism*: A form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions (Vallejo, 2020).
 7. *Job satisfaction*: The sense of contentment or accomplishment teachers associate with their jobs (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018).
 8. *K-12 system*: The K-12 education system comprises the primary-secondary phases of school life, covering learning between kindergarten and the 12th grade (Gaspard., 2019).
 9. *Racial awareness*: Racial awareness is the recognition and acceptance of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity around us and making informed decisions based on that diversity (Thomas, 2020).
 10. *Racism*: Racism is the belief that one race is superior to others, and as such, their claim in society must be justified by all means necessary (Thomas, 2020).
 11. *Self-efficacy*: Self-efficacy is the awareness of one's situation and how best individuals react and cope with moments in those situations (Frey, 2018).
 12. *Social minorities*: Social minorities refer to groups of people or individuals who are underprivileged, underrepresented, and limited social reach (Thomas, 2020).

13. *White males*: White males are individuals whose ancestry is primarily White, stemming from the indigenous people of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa (Humes et al., 2011).

Summary

Chapter One presented an overview of the chapter, the background of the study, the situation to self, the problem statement, the significance of the study, the research questions, and the definitions, and concluded with a summary. The problem associated with this qualitative research study is that it is unknown how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers. Therefore, this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study aims to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. One central research question and two sub-questions were developed to guide this study. Critical race theory and Black male identity theory frame the research. This study could advance knowledge, contribute to the scholarship, and have practical implications for positive social change.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Some researchers have started a discourse on the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in primary, secondary, and even tertiary education (Campoli, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; White et al., 2020). However, it is still unknown how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers. Correspondingly, this phenomenological study aims to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina.

Chapter 2 includes a review of current research on the centrality of the literature review in research preparation, including (a) the overview, (b) the theoretical framework, (c) the related literature, and (d) a summary. A literature review is a process by researchers to summarize and evaluate the literature and existing findings on the research problem under study (El Hussein et al., 2017). A literature review helps sensitize the knowledge and understanding of the researcher about relevant issues and sub-topics. It allows for considering the consensus and contradicting views of the existing literature (El Hussein et al., 2017). A literature review also situates the researcher in the current discourse (El Hussein et al., 2017).

A complete understanding of the existing literature will enable researchers to structure the study to mitigate potential bias. This literature review comprises in-depth information from various scholars regarding the purpose of the study. To build a foundation for the research and reveal the knowledge gap, the following topics will be reviewed:

1. Systemic racism in K-12 education.
2. Black male teacher shortage in the United States.

3. Black male teacher shortage affects student outcomes.
4. Factors influencing Black male teachers' career aspirations.
5. Initiatives to mitigate Black male teacher shortage.
6. Retaining Black male teachers to improve student outcomes.

A literature search that was peer-reviewed dissertations and referred journal articles began with the school library and academic databases such as ScienceDirect and SAGE journals. Literature was obtained by locating articles relevant to the identified themes, topics, and subtopics applying a variety of alternative search terms, such as African Americans, superintendents, phenomenology, critical race theory, Black male identity theory, race, teacher education, Black teachers, teacher retention, teacher attrition, notable education shortages, Black students, educational opportunity, social context, teacher turnover, education policy, role model, engagement, Black male special education teachers, special education Black males, Black males, discrimination, school, equity, gender studies, minorities, teacher-preparation minority recruitment, and teacher research.

Theoretical Framework

Black male identity theory (BMIT) was selected to frame this study theoretically. BMIT, originating as Black racial identity theory (Cross Jr., 1991), is an offshoot of social identity theory (Edge et al., 2017; Whitaker, 2020) that will be helpful in this study as it focuses on perceived racial differences in public school recruitment and retention of Black male teachers. A theoretical framework for Black male identity theory involves exploring how black males perceive and construct their identities within the context of their racial and gender experiences. This framework can incorporate various sociological, psychological, and cultural perspectives to understand the complexities of black male identity development.

Black male identity theory combines Cross's (1991) theory of Black racial identity and generic gender role identity theory. Cross's (1991) theory of Black racial identity is based on examining within-group differences in racial attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs among Black persons (Buckley, 2018). According to this position, Black racial identity attitudes are not fixed. Still, fluid, Black identity is developed concurrent with the development of the self (ego), is set in a social context, and can also be a function of age and resident location (Buckley, 2018). Similar in its prediction, gender role identity theory poses that gender is a characteristic contingent upon person, role, and social (group) identities and is expressed differently across different social situations (Carter, 2014).

Viewed through a social psychological lens, gender role identity is learned and is learned differently by males and females (Buckley, 2018; Carter, 2014) and is influenced by gender expectations and stereotypes (M.J. Carter, 2014), and is acquired by way of the cultural messages of family and society (Carter, 2014; Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Marks et al., 2009). Black male identity theory has informed the research literature by prompting a shift in the deficit narrative discourse regarding Black male success. It sees Black males creating narratives in contexts where culture, expectations, and -isms have previously framed their deficient identity (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Relevant to this study, Black male identity theory, combining Black racial identity theory and gender role identity theory, helps to extrapolate the gender interactions, gendered power dynamics, and overall institutional gender politics encountered by Black male teachers.

With BMIT, it allows analyzing the impact of educational and occupational environments on black male identity formation. Consider how experiences in school and the workplace can influence self-esteem, aspirations, and the perception of one's capabilities. (Harper, 2012)

Related Literature

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT), originating with Alan Freeman, is a theoretical framework typically applied in social sciences studies (Freeman, 1978). CRT examines society and culture as they relate to categorizing race, power, and law in the United States (Delgado et al., 2017). Delgado et al. (2017) defined the CRT movement as a group of activists and scholars keen on studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power.

Researchers of CRT aim to understand how cultural perceptions of race negatively impact victims of systemic racism. CRT scholars also aim to determine how victims of systemic racism can represent themselves to counter prejudice (Delgado et al., 2017). CRT originated with D. A. Bell (1995) and was further developed by several scholars (e.g., Crenshaw, 2022; Delgado et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Lawrence, 1987; Matsuda, 2018; Yosso et al., 2009), provides foundations for studying race as a construct viewed through an axiological lens and systemic racism as it challenges Black male teachers in K-12 public schools.

CRT was developed into its current form by outstanding scholars like Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado, who identified dangerously slow progress following Civil Rights in the 1960s (Delgado et al., 2017). CRT advances the discourse on race and racism and has since informed the literature on historically underrepresented or marginalized populations in several contexts, including social and institutional settings such as urban school settings with a racial equality gap. CRT is, therefore, an appropriate theoretical framework for this study since critical race theorists seek to explain the institutional or structural nature of racism (Gillborn, 2015; Sandles, 2020; Tichavakunda, 2019) and applying CRT to this study of challenges affecting the education careers of Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina will

help uncover the social and political inequalities implicated in the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in this region of the United States.

CRT uses race as an engagement point to analyze, deconstruct, and transform power. Social constructionism and critical theory are the foundations of CRT, and it combines these ideas with feminist theory, critical legal studies, and the civil rights movement. Basing research on CRT, Thomas (2020) explored teacher diversity efforts in one non-urban district through a qualitative case study; in particular, CRT tenets of interest convergence and the ubiquitous presence of racism in society clarify ways that incremental approaches served to reinforce the status quo. Like Thomas (2020), grounded in CRT, Sandles (2020) examined the shortage of Black men. Specifically, the precepts of CRT Sandles used were centered on race and racism in society, including meritocracy and color blindness. Sandles identified some existing challenges that prospective Black male educators confronted. The author further offered insight into forces that began an involuntary exodus of Black educators from the teaching profession.

Grounded in the CRT, Sandles (2020) suggested the Black male teacher shortage was based on racial considerations and was a patently nationwide epidemic. Thomas (2020) called for a radical rethinking of teacher diversity efforts by insisting on an integrated approach to teacher diversity that challenged norms and commonsense practices. Edwards (2020) urged more researchers studying youth homelessness to use a critical racial lens to address the current racial knowledge gap in the existing literature on student homelessness. Therefore, CRT provides an appropriate theoretical framework for studying the phenomenon under study, considering its relevance to the Black male teacher shortage.

Other Theories Considered

Other theories that could have been applied to the study's problem included Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and social identity theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory of motivation (Hammonds, 2017; Hopper, 2020). Maslow's hierarchy of needs states five categories of human requirements that dictate the behaviors of an individual. As Hopper (2020) indicated, those needs are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In Maslow's theory, higher needs in the hierarchy emerge when an individual feels they have sufficiently satisfied the former condition.

Although later research did not fully support the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this theory has impacted other psychologists (Hopper, 2020). Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been helpful in grounding research relevant to this study. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Hammonds (2017) explored the reasons for the decrease in the supply of teachers as school district leaders were concerned about the high percentage of teacher turnover in urban schools. With Maslow's framework, Hammonds also identified urban school leaders' strategies to retain teachers.

Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as the theoretical foundation, Rachell (2020) conducted a descriptive qualitative case study to explore how or why alternatively certified middle school mathematics and science teachers perceived the influence of needs factors on their choice to seek and retain positions through an alternative certification program within the North County School District located in the Southeastern United States. Rachell found reasonable evidence to support the research questions based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs in each of the five areas: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The findings of Hammonds (2017) emphasized the importance of supporting teachers. Rachell (2020) suggested that alternative certification programs should make a conscious effort to infuse each of

the levels in the hierarchy into their programs to ensure the successful production of highly qualified certified teachers. Subsequently, this effort will increase the likelihood of recruitment and retention rates of teachers at the local, state, and national levels (Rachell, 2020). Therefore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs helped study the research problem because of its applications to approaching teacher turnover, teaching recruitment and retention, and addressing teacher shortage.

Social identity theory has also helped ground research relevant to this study. Social identity refers to a person's identity based on their group membership (Tajfel, 1978). Tajfel proposed that the groups to which people belonged were an essential source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give a sense of social identity and belonging to the social world (Tajfel, 1978). Using social identity theory, organizational fit, and in-group prototypes to frame the explicit of school leaders, Edge et al. (2017) discussed race/ethnicity when reflecting on identity. Edge et al. also described the data-gathering process using the Professional Identity card-sort Tool, which guided leaders' reflections on identity. Edge et al. detailed how they extracted and interpreted evidence from leaders who were explicit about the interrelationship between their own personal racial/ethnic identification and the alignment or misalignment of this racial/ethnic identification with their school-level communities. Built on the social identity theory, Edge et al. also explored how different city contexts influenced leader experience of in-groups and out-groups and the related leadership challenges and opportunities.

Also, using social identity theory, Whitaker (2020) explained how and why White urban teachers often struggled to create living spaces in urban classrooms, mainly when their students were from social groups that were different from their own. Whitaker argued that social identity theories of intergroup behavior and organizational role theory explicated how the group norms of

teacher saviors described and prescribed pedagogical practices that created a hierarchy between teachers and students. This has left little room for warmth and caring (Whitaker, 2020). Whitaker suggested how teacher educators could help preservice teachers cultivate positive teacher-student relationships by knowing themselves, their students, and their practice.

Systemic Racism in K-12 Education

Kohli et al. (2017) and Vallejo (2020) indicated that more attention was needed to mechanisms of racial oppression in education. Conceptualizations that allude to racial differences but are disconnected from structural analyses continue to prevail in K–12 education research (Kohli et al., 2017). The researchers conducted research to challenge racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches to studying racial disparities. Kohli et al. centered existing research that made visible the normalized facets of racism in K-12 schools. After screening over 4,000 articles that studied racial inequity in education research, Kohli et al. reviewed 186 research articles that focused on K–12 schools and examined racism.

Kohli et al. (2017) built on a theory of the new racism and grouped the articles into several main sections. The main areas in Kohli et al.'s concept were researched that emphasized racism's permanence and significance in the lives of students of Color through manifestations of (a) evaded racism, (b) antiracist racism, and (c) everyday racism. Current literature reveals that there is underlying systemic racism deterring people of Color from pursuing a career in education for a variety of reasons, including social, financial, racial, and political barriers (Vallejo, 2020).

E. E. Bell (2017) conducted a study to understand how a Black male experienced the interview process while seeking a teaching position and explored how race and gender played a role in the experiences. Using a qualitative approach to interview an individual, Bell revealed

that racism played into the hiring process in subtle ways, and just because this candidate was prepared to teach, that preparation did not guarantee his employment. Using a large sample, Van Overschelde and López (2018) examined who would be denied admission to a teacher preparation program and the teaching profession if the admission criterion had been increased. Van Overschelde and López performed descriptive and inferential analyses to determine if expanded GPA criteria negatively impacted certain groups of students. The findings of Van Overschelde and López (2018) suggested that not only would it reduce the number of high-quality teachers, but students of Color and male students would be negatively impacted to a much greater degree.

In a randomized controlled study among a sample of 390 study participants, Copur-Gencturk et al. (2020) examined the evaluations of teachers over 18 mathematical solutions to which gender- and race-specific names had been randomly assigned. Teachers displayed no detectable bias when assessing the correctness of students' answers. Copur-Gencturk et al. found that biases against Black, Hispanic, and female students were revealed when assessing students' mathematical abilities. The findings further indicated that the estimations of students' mathematical ability of non-White teachers favored White students over students of Color. Applying CRT to critical studies of Whiteness and microaggressions, Vallejo (2020) analyzed the experiences of teachers of Color through their educator careers. Using a qualitative research method emphasizing a constructivist worldview and conducting interviews with teachers of Color across three campuses, Vallejo emerged a process of naming shared experiences, being dismissed, silenced, censored, and becoming exhausted in a colorblind workplace. Vallejo indicated that the findings could be used to further conversations concerning what deterred people of Color from the field of education.

Kohli et al. (2017) suggested future directions in education research that included a more direct acknowledgment of racism as attending to the experiences and needs of K–12 students of Color. E. E. Bell (2017) suggested that the findings from this narrative account might prove helpful in understanding why there was a shortage of Black male teachers. Copur-Gencturk et al. (2020) said teachers were not free of bias and that teachers from marginalized groups might be susceptible to bias that favored stereotype-advantaged groups. Vallejo (2020) proposed that to combat the lack of teachers of Color, all stakeholders would need to be talked to and educated about their experiences.

Black Male Teacher Shortage in the United States

Black teachers are disproportionately underrepresented in U.S. public schools (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). Over the past 50 years, the percentage of Black teachers has not surpassed 9% (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). Only 2% of teachers are Black males, of which most are middle and high school teachers (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In public schools in the United States, the shortage of teachers of African descent and teachers of Color worsens (Campoli, 2017). Less than two percent of Black male teachers work with young children in early childhood education (Meidl, 2018). While the enrollment of children of Color in K-12 public schools has held steady for over a decade, Black teachers continue to represent only a tiny percentage of classroom teachers and leave the classroom at higher rates than their White counterparts (Benson et al., 2020). As the K-12 student population becomes increasingly racially heterogeneous, the preponderance of its teachers remains White and female (Sandles, 2020).

Despite recent attention being given to the educational benefits to Black and other students from the presence and contributions of Black teachers, the K-12 teacher labor market in

the United States remains represented mainly by White teachers (Dantzler, 2018). Public schools have increasing numbers of teachers fitting into one demographic, White and female, while the number of Black/African American teachers decreases (Berry & Cook, 2018). This trend has remained the same since the publication of *Black-on-Black Education: Personally Engaged Pedagogy for/by African American Preservice Teachers* (Berry & Cook, 2018).

Nationwide, school districts struggle to recruit and retain Black males to the teaching profession (Creswell & Poth, 2017). University-based teacher education programs also struggle with recruiting and retaining Black teachers (Benson et al., 2020). Such recruitment and retention become even worse at the early childhood level, which explains the paucity of Black male teachers who are early childhood educators (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, clarion calls for Black males to become teachers do not often prioritize Black male teachers who are culturally relevant (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

N. Bryan and Williams (2017) focused on educational research regarding the lack of diversity of teachers among males in K-12 to provide recommendations for early childhood education, explicitly recruiting and retaining culturally relevant Black male teachers in early childhood education. Campoli (2017) analyzed data from approximately 1,600 Black teachers participating in the Schools and Staffing Survey. The Black teachers made implications about the role of supportive principals, which was necessary for how state education departments should use the Every Student Succeeds Act fund (Campoli, 2017).

Ingersoll et al. (2019) examined and compared the recruitment, employment, and retention of minority and nonminority schoolteachers over the quarter-century from the late 1980s to 2013; the purpose was to empirically ground the ongoing debate regarding minority teacher shortages and changes in the minority teaching force. Analyzing data from the National

Center for Education Statistics' nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey and its longitudinal supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey, Ingersoll et al. documented the persistence of a gap between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of minority teachers in the U.S. Ingersoll et al. also showed that this gap was not due to a failure to recruit new minority teachers.

Sandles (2020) examined the shortage of Black male teachers using CRT. The precepts of CRT used in this examination are the centrality of race and racism in society and the challenge to the dominant, including meritocracy and color blindness (Sandles, 2020). Sandles identified some challenges facing prospective Black male educators and offered insight into forces that began an involuntary exodus of Black educators from the profession.

Black teachers represent only a tiny percentage of classroom teachers in K-12 public schools in the United States (Benson et al., 2020; Sandles, 2020). As the K-12 student population becomes increasingly racially heterogeneous, the preponderance of its teachers remains White and female (Sandles, 2020). Despite recent attention being given to the educational benefits to Black and other students from the presence and contributions of Black teachers, the K-12 teacher labor market in the United States remains represented mainly by White teachers (Dantzler, 2018).

Meidl (2018) recommended increasing the number of Black males in early childhood education. Ingersoll et al. (2019) suggested that widespread efforts over the past several decades to recruit more minority teachers and employ them in disadvantaged schools had been very successful; however, these efforts had been undermined because minority teachers had significantly higher turnover than White teachers and this was strongly tied to poor working

conditions in their schools. Sandles (2020) suggested that the Black male teacher shortage was based on racial considerations and was a patently nationwide epidemic.

Black Male Teacher Shortage Affects Student Outcomes

Teachers of Color teaching students of Color benefit the learning outcomes of students of Color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). Black teachers bring to their work many skills (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Black teachers build relationships with students of Color that help those students feel connected to their schools (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Black teachers can enhance cultural understanding among teachers and administrators of differing races and backgrounds (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). The shortage of teachers of African descent has severe, detrimental effects on students (Campoli, 2017). Inadequate teacher preparation produces ineffective teachers, negatively influencing teachers' efficacy and intentions to remain in classrooms (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). This trend hinders classroom teaching and learning (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019).

The lack of Black male teachers in public schools also impacts the overall student outcomes for all children, particularly Black boys ((Creswell & Poth, 2017).). Historical research shows how Latinx and Black teachers have supported their Latinx and Black students' social and emotional development during state-sanctioned school segregation (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). This shortage of Black teachers is partly driven by high turnover, much of which is precipitated by the poor working conditions in their schools (Campoli, 2017). Job satisfaction may decrease teacher attrition (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018). Job satisfaction correlates with teacher retention, which may influence school-building climate and student achievement (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018). Potentially affecting students' progress and seeking to reduce attrition rates among Black teachers (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018).

The shortage of teachers of African descent has severe and detrimental effects on students (Campoli, 2017). Bristol and Martin-Fernandez (2019) suggested that given ongoing education debates, policymakers could use the evidence base to craft legislation to increase the ethnic-racial diversity of the U.S. educator workforce. Bristol and Martin-Fernandez highlighted that teachers of Color improved social and emotional development and learning for their students of Color. Carver-Thomas et al. (2020) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic would likely impact teacher supply, demand, shortages, and diversity.

Using a quantitative study with data from the Schools and Staffing Survey to examine Black female teachers' job satisfaction, Farinde-Wu and Fitchett (2018) suggested that Black female teachers had job satisfaction when they (a) were in an urban, non-charter school (b) receive administrative support; (c) experience positive student behavior, and (d) are committed to teaching. Carver-Thomas et al. (2020) indicated that teacher shortages most severely affected schools serving the least advantaged children. Carver-Thomas et al. described how key teacher supply and demand factors varied across California and provided potential policy solutions to mitigate ongoing shortages.

Factors Influencing Black Male Teachers' Career Aspirations

Black male collegiate students who decide to enter teaching may face a chilly climate because of their cultural and educational experiences as they encounter devaluation in the classroom (Berry & Cook, 2018). Bristol (2019) highlighted descriptive statistics from the 86 Black male teacher respondents participating in the Black Male Teacher Environment Survey. Bristol revealed that the participants' background characteristics and school-based experiences varied by the number of Black men on the faculty. Loners, schools with one Black male teacher on the faculty, reported different experiences when compared with Groupers, schools with four

or more Black male teachers on the faculty (Bristol, 2019). Bristol indicated that loners were more likely to receive alternative certification and reported that their White colleagues had a more significant influence on school policy than teachers of Color (Bristol, 2019).

Wiley et al. (2017) explored the lived experiences of African-American women superintendents in Texas, aiming to identify the challenges, supports, and personal background characteristics that participants believed influenced their ascension to superintendent positions. Using a phenomenological research approach and collecting data through individual interviews with superintendent participants, three major themes emerged from the research results: (a) desire to impact others at various levels, (b) sources of personal strength, and (c) external support systems.

Goings et al. (2018) explored the experiences of Frank, a Black male refugee health education major attending a historically Black college and university (HBCU). Theoretically grounded in the selected tenets of the African American male theory and the transition theory and using a qualitative approach, Goings et al. explored Frank's transition experiences when coming to America, attending college, and engaging in his student teaching experience. Goings et al. revealed that Frank experienced difficulty transitioning to America because he needed a solid financial foundation. During his college transition, Frank believed that the HBCU environment was nurturing; however, he encountered numerous ethnocentrically charged hostile confrontations from US-born Black students at his university because of his accent (Goings et al., 2018).

Griffin and Tackie (2017) indicated that Black teachers needed their school and district leaders to support them in developing a mature, respectful, and diverse working environment. Goings et al. (2018) suggested that African Americans were an asset during student teaching.

Neal-Jackson (2018) indicated that young Black women considered themselves highly ambitious and driven learners. Young Black women felt unfairly handicapped in their pursuit of educational and occupational success by school officials who misconstrued their identities and were given institutional policies that targeted them and failed to meet their needs (Neal-Jackson, 2018).

From a different perspective and drawing on critical race theory, Neal-Jackson (2018) conducted a meta-ethnographic literature review and synthesized what was currently known about the advantages and obstacles young Black women encountered within public schooling contexts given their marginalized racial and gender identities. With 37 sources for review, Neal-Jackson revealed that school officials positioned young Black women to be undisciplined in their academic habits and unequivocally misaligned with school norms; as such, they were viewed as unapproachable, unteachable, and ultimately fully responsible for the limited educational opportunities they experienced. Bristol (2019) suggested that being Black caused people to fear them in their schools and reported having a greater desire to leave their schools than White teachers.

According to White et al. (2020), Black teachers' annual retention rate was about 4% lower than White teachers in North Carolina elementary and secondary schools from 2004 to 2015. Sun (2018) indicated that this Black-White teacher retention gap could largely be explained by Black teachers' experience and education and the challenging school and community contexts in which these teachers worked. Compared with White teachers who had similar professional attributes and worked in identical school settings, Black teachers were likelier to stay in schools serving a more significant proportion of Black students (Sun, 2018).

Black teachers were also more likely to move to a school serving more Black students (Sun, 2018).

Maylor (2018) aimed to understand the preparation a group of Black male preservice students received during their course and its impact on their willingness to commit to the teaching profession. Drawing on findings from a small-scale qualitative study of Black and minority ethnic student teachers' experiences in one initial teacher education institution, Maylor raised questions as to whether Black preservice teachers' experiences of a lack of acceptance in schools during their preservice training contributed to the under-representation of Black male teachers in English schools.

Dantzler (2018) addressed one possible barrier to more African-American or Black males with learning disabilities moving through the educational pipeline: the dearth of African-American or Black teachers. Dantzler studied the notion of competitive labor markets eroding racial disparities over time to assess whether Black teachers are mistreated in this labor market. Dantzler built on prior work analyzing racial earnings and employment differences in the K-12 teaching labor market in the United States and examined the wage differential between Black and White teachers that remained after controlling for factors likely to affect wages in addition to race as well as attempted to understand employment probability disparities in the labor market, based on membership in a minority racial/ethnic group. Dantzler revealed non-trivial portions of differentials that differences in productive characteristics could not explain.

Bristol and Goings (2019) used a phenomenological approach to explore the organizational dynamic of boundary heightening for 27 Black male teachers across 14 schools in one urban school district. Bristol and Goings revealed that Black male teachers described being perceived by their colleagues as incompetent or overqualified to teach their subject matter; these

experiences created workplace environments in which participants felt alienated. In response, these Black male teachers strategically erected social boundaries to manage interactions with their colleagues (Bristol & Goings, 2019). Drawing on in-depth interviews with 25 Black Caribbean and Black African male teachers with five or more years of experience in London schools, Wallace (2020) deployed Bourdieusian conceptions of organizational habitus to explore how the national diversity shortage could lead to a local diversity trap in state schools that limited the range of roles Black male teachers were encouraged to pursue in schools. The findings of Wallace (2020) suggested that pressures for Black male teachers to serve in racialized roles as community liaisons, role models, and school-wide disciplinarians, particularly for ethno-racial minority students, have stymied the long-term progress of Black male teachers toward departmental and administrative leadership.

Thomas (2020) explored teacher diversity efforts in one non-urban district through a qualitative case study grounded in CRT; in particular, CRT tenets of interest convergence and the ubiquitous presence of racism in society clarify ways that incremental approaches served to reinforce the status quo. Edwards (2020) used structural racism as an analytic framework to examine the narratives of eight Black youths who successfully graduated high school while experiencing homelessness. The findings of Edwards (2020) showed that being Black and experiencing homelessness creates unique challenges for accessing resources under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Edwards revealed that participants identified hostile racial climates at school as a common deterrent from disclosing their homeless status to adults, thereby restricting their access to federal support.

Dantzler (2018) suggested one could not rule out the possibility of racial disparities in the K-12 teaching labor market or the need for targeted Black teacher recruitment and retention

strategies to enhance the capacity of schools to serve better students such as African-American males with learning disabilities. Bristol and Goings (2019) suggested that Black male teachers' school-based experiences should inform Black male teacher diversity campaigns in education preparation programs. Bristol and Goings showed how teacher education programs could redesign facets of their preparation to attend to the boundary-heightening and workplace experiences that Black male teachers might face in becoming teachers of record. The findings of Edwards (2020) suggest the need for race-conscious language and interventions to be included in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Black male teachers may face a chilly climate because of their cultural and educational experiences (Berry & Cook, 2018). A review of the factors influencing Black male teachers' career aspirations reveals limited discussion in the teacher education literature about the experiences of preservice Black male teachers generally and the ethnic diversity among Black male preservice teachers specifically (Goings et al., 2018). There is also limited research on the experiences of Black male student teachers (Maylor, 2018). Moreover, there has been a paucity of research on the educational experiences of young Black women in U.S. K–12 education (Neal-Jackson, 2018). Although both Black male and female students experience constrained opportunities to learn, the famous and academic conversation has almost unilaterally focused on the plight of Black boys and men (Neal-Jackson, 2018).

Wiley et al. (2017) suggested exposing aspiring African-American women administrators to the challenges and rewards of superintendent positions. Wiley et al. also recommended increasing mentorship opportunities and quality preparation programs. Goings et al. (2018) added to the burgeoning research that explored intersectional identities among preservice Black male teachers. Going et al. argued that policymakers and practitioners could not treat Black male

teachers as a monolithic group and must contemplate the unique supports needed to attend to the racial and ethnic needs of Black male teachers. Thomas (2020) made implications and called for a radical rethinking of teacher diversity efforts by insisting on a holistic approach to teacher diversity that challenged norms and commonsense practices.

Initiatives to Mitigate Black Male Teacher Shortage

Some initiatives and policy interventions have been developed to mitigate the Black male teacher shortage. Efforts to enhance Black males' academic performances and educational experiences in college have exploded since the 2000s, including institutional, state, system-level, and national programs, policies, and calls to action (Brooms, 2018). Key among these efforts is establishing Black Male Initiative programs, primarily structured as social cohesion programs and intended to increase students' retention and graduation rates (Brooms, 2018). Besides, the primary mission of the Call Me MiSTER (CMM) program, headquartered at Clemson University, was initially developed in collaboration with three private historically Black institutions to address the significant shortage of African American men teaching in K–8 public elementary school classrooms (Jones et al., 2019).

Once a political and cultural intervention, ethnic studies sought to create an education in which students' knowledge and experiences were valued (Curammeng, 2020). While research demonstrates how ethnic studies affect students' academic and social-emotional outcomes, the prowess of ethnic studies as a site for teacher preparation remains under-examined in empirical research (Curammeng, 2020). However, policies and programs intended to increase the racial diversity of the U.S. teaching population have failed to make meaningful inroads in an overwhelmingly White profession despite extensive research demonstrating the need for more teachers of Color (Thomas, 2020). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) used the

national data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Schools, and Staffing Survey, and Teacher Follow-up Survey to investigate attrition trends among Black teachers and Black female teachers in particular, to inform a qualitative analysis of proposed and adopted teacher retention policy interventions. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond found that Black teacher turnover rates were significantly higher than other teachers and that there were several substantive differences in their preparation, school characteristics, and reasons for leaving.

Using qualitative interview data from a convenience sample of 40 Black male students at two different institutions, Brooms (2018) explored their engagement and experiences in a Black Male Initiative program. Brooms also examined how employment in the Black Male Initiatives community helped enhance students' academic experiences and sense of self. Analyzing students' narratives regarding their participation and meaning-making of Black Male Initiatives, Brooms found that Black Male Initiatives played a critical role in supporting students through increased access to social and cultural capital while simultaneously honoring the cultural wealth students bring to campus. Jones et al. (2019) described the historical context of the program's origin and framework. They explained program strategies and experiences in the execution of the CMM model that had led to its sustained success in recruiting, developing, and retaining African-American men who had become effective teachers in multiple public elementary and middle schools in the state and beyond. Drawing from portraiture, critical race, and ethnic studies frameworks, Curammeng (2020) analyzed in-depth interviews, focus groups, and artifacts with Filipino American self-identified male teachers. Curammeng detailed how ethnic studies prepared these teachers in ways their formal teacher education did not.

White et al. (2020) examined interview responses from prominent education researchers who were asked to consider the role of significant educational policies in the underrepresentation

of Black teachers in public schools. Participants felt accountability and market reform policies, including testing, school choice, charter schools, and alternative teacher education (White et al., 2020). White et al. revealed that although participants agreed that Black teachers contributed significantly to academic achievement for students, their views differed about whether or how policies undermined the presence of Black teachers in schools. White et al. offered conceptual distinctions between participants' views, including those who described the approach as having a mixed impact on Black teachers, those who told the policy as having an unintended but harmful effect, and those who represented the policy as playing a tacit role in systemic marginalization of Black teachers and as a form of institutional racism.

Some initiatives and policy interventions took place to mitigate the Black male teacher shortage. Efforts to enhance Black males' academic performances and educational experiences in college have increased since the 2000s, including institutional, state, system-level, and national programs, policies, and calls to action (Brooms, 2018). However, policies and programs intended to increase the racial diversity of the U.S. teaching population have failed to make meaningful inroads in an overwhelmingly White profession despite extensive research demonstrating the need for more teachers of Color (Thomas, 2020).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) suggested policy interventions such as teacher residencies, loan forgiveness, mentoring and induction, and principal training programs. Van Overschelde and López (2018) said the policies to increase GPA for admittance to teacher preparation programs could dramatically reduce the number of future teachers with no consistent positive impact on the profession. These policies would likely hurt the very students these policies are designed to help (Van Overschelde & López, 2018). Curammeng (2020) recommended further exploring ethnic studies. Curammeng also implied that culturally

sustaining, critically conscious, and community-responsive learning was meaningful for students and teachers committed to justice. White et al. (2020) suggested that strengthening workforce diversity would be beneficial.

Retaining Black Male Teachers to Improve Student Outcomes

Given the challenging in and out-of-school outcomes that Black male teachers exhibit, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have advocated for increasing the number of Black male teachers (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). This strategy is predicated on the belief that having same-race and same-gender teachers can improve student learning (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). Historically, education research and practice have failed to accentuate the factors promoting Black student success; however, the study and practice have produced deficit-centered narratives focusing on Black students' academic underachievement and challenges (K. Williams et al., 2020). These dominant practices have negatively influenced Black students' experiences (K. Williams et al., 2020). In 2015, the National Goals Conference for and with people with intellectual disabilities encouraged special education to recruit and retain more Black teachers (Gillborn, 2015).

Haddix (2017) raised and explored questions about new teacher diversity initiatives and the call for more teachers of Color. Haddix also examined the historical conditions that influenced the presence and lack thereof of teachers of Color and the policy reforms that supported teacher diversity initiatives. Haddix offered solution-oriented ideas, including (a) the field needed research into the intersections of teacher education, increasing teacher diversity, and the experiences of literacy preservice teachers of Color; (b) teacher diversity initiatives provided an opportunity to restructure existing teacher education programs; (c) teacher diversity initiatives often emphasized culturally relevant and social justice-oriented curriculum and pedagogy; (d)

teacher diversity initiatives must include a plan to restructure leadership and positions of power; and I the texts used in teacher education programs should be reviewed to verify that they represent diverse perspectives and culturally relevant ideologies.

Drawing on Shedd's Universal Carceral Apparatus and Brown's Pedagogical Kind, Bristol and Mentor (Bristol & Mentor, 2018) used the qualitative phenomenological design to explore the school-based experiences of 27 Black male teachers across 14 schools in one urban school district. Participants perceived that their peers and school administrators positioned them to serve primarily as disciplinarians first and teachers second (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). The Black male teachers described how their colleagues expected them to redirect student misbehavior; they rejected the idea that they were magically constructed or that students deemed misbehaving responded to the teachers' redirection simply because they were Black men. Instead, Bristol and Mentor indicated that the participants described how they attended to students' social and emotional development, influencing their capacity to engage and manage perceived misbehavior.

Using a grounded theory study, Scott and Alexander (2019) interviewed 18 Black men to learn more about experiences surrounding recruitment and retention in special education teacher-preparation programs and for teaching careers in special education. The findings of Scott and Alexander (2019) led to the development of a theory based on three constructs:

1. Motivations for becoming a special education teacher.
2. Attractions to special education teacher-preparation programs.
3. Focused strategies for recruitment and retention indicated several strategies that special education teacher-preparation programs.

Employing a phenomenological study, Bristol (2019) drew on semi-structured interviews with 27 Black male teachers across 14 urban school districts, seven schools with three or more Black male teachers, and seven schools with one Black male teacher. Consistent with theories about teacher turnover, the findings of Bristol (2019) indicate a relationship between organizational characteristics, reasons participants cited for leaving, and participants' actual decisions to stay or go. Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) examined the teacher preparation experiences of 12 Black female teachers. Utilizing phenomenology as a theoretical lens, Farinde-Wu and Griffen identified four salient themes and engendered recommendations for teacher preparation programs.

Framed using queer theory and intersectionality theory, Msibi (2019) unpacked how Black South African male teachers who engaged in same-sex relations negotiated and managed their identities in a context deeply riddled by the history of apartheid. Msibi interviewed eight male teachers using a life history methodology. Consistent with many international studies on the work experiences of same-sex-identifying teachers, Msibi revealed that the interviewed male teachers drew on a passing act to manage their identities in school contexts characterized by a culture of heteronormativity. This adopted passing act mainly draws upon the enactment of hyper-professionalism, a localized form that safeguards same-sex desiring teachers against possible homophobia (Msibi, 2019).

Drawing from the experiences of 14 Black students participating in a structured undergraduate research program at either a historically Black university or a predominantly White institution, (Ortiz et al., 2020) conducted secondary data analysis on interview and journal prompt data using Yosso's community cultural wealth framework to identify sources of capital for, and challenges to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) identity

formation. Ortiz et al. aimed to explore what works regarding the practices and conduits that directly influenced the preparation and recruitment of Black students into STEM majors. Ortiz et al. indicated that the role of educators and other members of Black students' communities was significant, which could contribute to the acquisition of cultural capital and, subsequently, the development of STEM identities.

Scott et al. (2020) aimed to address the factors that might encourage the persistence of Black special education teachers, who faced numerous challenges frequently leading to attrition. Scott et al. conducted three focus groups with nine Black special education teachers and used the grounded theory analytic procedures to generate a preliminary grounded theory, Black Special Education Teacher Persistence in Schools, to explain Black special education teachers' persistence. Scott et al. revealed that participants were motivated to change unique education systems for students of Color with disabilities. The participants also described being inspired to change plans based on situational challenges, including a poor sense of belonging and bias toward qualifications distinctively experienced by Black special education teachers (Scott et al., 2020).

K. Williams et al. (2020) interrogated that question and examined how historical racial biases continued to afflict Black students. Williams et al. also studied research concerning Black student agency as a counter to marginalizing depictions. Williams et al. further offered conceptual guidance using the aftermath framework to identify, challenge, and disrupt the continuation of majoritarian narratives concerning Black students, which often restricted opportunity structures and Black students' overarching educational trajectories. Benson et al. (2020) drew from an in-depth interview sequence. They theorized one Black teacher's racialized lived experience with colleagues and institutions to explore the factors contributing to her early

exit from the profession. With a subject-object theory analytic framework, Benson et al. underscored how racially hostile encounters undermined the motivation and ability to enact change at the institutional level.

Given the challenging in and out-of-school outcomes that Black male teachers exhibit, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have advocated for increasing the number of Black male teachers (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). Education research and practice to date have failed to accentuate the factors that promote Black student success (Williams et al., 2020). Sun (2018) suggested that more vital school leadership and higher-quality professional development could predict a higher retention rate of more effective Black teachers.

Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) indicated that teacher education programs could be vital in retaining Black teachers. Scott and Alexander (2019) suggested that school divisions consider funding, distance education programs, and mentorship when recruiting and retaining Black males into training programs and for exceptional education careers. Msibi (2019) suggested that while the passing act granted teachers significant respect and power, leading at times to the disruption of homophobia, not all teachers enjoyed this power; some teachers were forced out of their schools by threatened managers. Msibi called for more interventionist work at both primary and higher education levels in South Africa to make schools more inclusive and welcoming for all students and teachers.

Benson et al. (2020) suggested focusing primarily on consciousness and awareness-raising in teacher education programs might fall short for Black educators. K. Williams et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of critically examining how existing education research and practice perpetuated narratives rooted in racist logic. Williams et al. argued that there was a need

for an alternate lens that did not reduce the Black academic experience to one of challenge and underperformance.

Summary

Current literature reveals that there is underlying systemic racism deterring Black males from pursuing a career in education for a variety of reasons, including social, financial, racial, and political barriers (Vallejo, 2020). Copur-Gencturk et al. (2020) suggested that teachers were not free of bias and that teachers from marginalized groups might be susceptible to bias that favored stereotype-advantaged groups. Vallejo (2020) proposed that to combat the lack of teachers of Color, all stakeholders need to be discussed and educated about their experiences. As the K-12 student population becomes increasingly racially heterogeneous, the preponderance of its teachers remains White and female (Sandles, 2020), and Black teachers continue to represent only a tiny percentage of classroom teachers in K-12 public schools in the United States (Benson et al., 2020; Sandles, 2020). Despite recent attention being given to the educational benefits to Black and other students from the presence and contributions of Black teachers, the K-12 teacher labor market in the United States remains represented mainly by White teachers (Dantzler, 2018).

Meidl (2018) recommended increasing the number of Black males in early childhood education. Ingersoll et al. (2019) suggested that widespread efforts over the past several decades to recruit more minority teachers and employ them in disadvantaged schools had been very successful; however, these efforts had been undermined because minority teachers had significantly higher turnover than White teachers. Sandles (2020) suggested that the Black male teacher shortage was based on racial considerations and was a patently nationwide epidemic.

The shortage of teachers of African descent has severe and detrimental effects on students ((Creswell & Poth, 2017).). Bristol and Martin-Fernandez highlighted that Black male teachers improved social and emotional development and learning for their students of Color. Carver-Thomas et al. (2020) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic would likely impact teacher supply, demand, shortages, and diversity. Black male teachers may face a chilly climate because of their cultural and educational experiences (Berry & Cook, 2018). Wiley et al. (2017) recommended increasing mentorship opportunities and quality preparation programs. Goings et al. (2018) added to the burgeoning research that explored intersectional identities among preservice Black male teachers.

Some initiatives and policy interventions took place to mitigate the Black male teacher shortage. Efforts to enhance Black males' academic performances and educational experiences in college have increased since the 2000s, including institutional, state, system-level, and national programs, policies, and calls to action (Brooms, 2018). However, policies and programs intended to increase the racial diversity of the U.S. teaching population have failed to make meaningful inroads in an overwhelmingly White profession despite extensive research demonstrating the need for more teachers of Color (Thomas, 2020).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) suggested policy interventions such as teacher residencies, loan forgiveness, mentoring and induction, and principal training programs. Van Overschelde and López (2018) said the policies to increase GPA for admittance to teacher preparation programs could dramatically reduce the number of future teachers with no consistent positive impact on the profession. Curammeng (2020) implied that culturally sustaining, critically conscious, and community-responsive learning was meaningful for students and

teachers committed to justice. White et al. (2020) suggested that strengthening workforce diversity would be beneficial.

Sun (2018) suggested that more vital school leadership and higher-quality professional development could predict a higher retention rate of more effective Black teachers. Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) indicated that teacher education programs could be vital in retaining Black teachers. Scott and Alexander (2019) suggested that school divisions consider funding, distance education programs, and mentorship when recruiting and retaining Black males into training programs and for exceptional education careers. Msibi (2019) suggested that while the passing act granted teachers significant respect and power, leading at times to the disruption of homophobia, not all teachers enjoyed this power. Benson et al. (2020) suggested focusing primarily on consciousness and awareness-raising in teacher education programs might fall short for Black educators.

Therefore, many researchers have attempted to explore the Black male teacher shortage in the United States, the impact of this phenomenon on student outcomes, and the initiatives and policy interventions implemented to mitigate or cope with the Black male teacher shortage. Meanwhile, many researchers have further pointed out the research efforts in this field and made practical implications. Kohli et al. (2017) suggested future directions in education research that included a more direct acknowledgment of racism as attending to the experiences and needs of K–12 students of Color. Wiley et al. (2017) suggested exposing aspiring African-American women administrators to the challenges and rewards of superintendent positions. Goings, Bristol & Walker. 4 could attend to the racial and ethnic needs of Black male teachers. Msibi (2019) called for more interventionist work at both primary education and higher education levels in South Africa to make schools more inclusive and welcoming for all students and teachers.

Bristol and Martin-Fernandez (2019) suggested that given ongoing education debates, policymakers could use the evidence base to craft legislation to increase the ethnic-racial diversity of the U.S. educator workforce. Thomas (2020) made implications and called for a radical rethinking of teacher diversity efforts by insisting on a holistic approach to teacher diversity that challenged norms and commonsense practices. Curammeng (2020) recommended further exploring Ethnic studies. K. Williams et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of critically examining how existing education research and practice perpetuated narratives rooted in racist logic. Williams et al. argued that there was a need for an alternate lens that did not reduce the Black academic experience to one of challenge and underperformance.

However, a review of the existing literature also reveals limited discussion in the teacher education literature about the experiences of preservice Black male teachers generally and the ethnic diversity among Black male preservice teachers specifically (Goings et al., 2018). There is also limited research on the experiences of Black male student teachers (Maylor, 2018). Moreover, there has been a paucity of research on the educational experiences of young Black women in U.S. K–12 education (Neal-Jackson, 2018). Furthermore, few attempts have examined how Black male teachers in the K-12 system perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers, mainly using CRT and BMIT as theoretical foundations. Therefore, this study could advance knowledge by filling the gap in the research and contributing to the scholarship.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study explores Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. Chapter 3 includes an overview and discussions of the design, the research questions, the setting, the participants, the procedures, the researcher's role, the data collection, the data analysis, the trustworthiness, the ethical considerations, and concludes with a summary. In establishing reliability, the researcher also details the procedures for ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This chapter concludes with a concise summary.

Research Design

The proposed study uses a qualitative research methodology, allowing researchers to explore phenomena and ask questions about how and why (Moustakas, 1994). The quantitative approach was not considered appropriate for this research, as quantitative studies collect and analyze numerical data to objectively answer strictly defined research questions and test pre-established hypotheses (Mertler, 2016). As such, a qualitative research method, subjective and not generalizable (Damaskinidis, 2017), supports the open-ended explorations of phenomena and allows a researcher to identify themes not anticipated by the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). Besides, a qualitative method provides a platform for inductive theorizing (Bansal et al., 2018). The process of inductive theorizing based on qualitative data can facilitate exploring new or understudied empirical contexts (Bansal et al., 2018). Therefore, a qualitative research method is appropriate for conducting this study because it can allow for considering the context of the

research phenomenon under investigation and the study participants' perceptions of their contextual influences (Moustakas, 1994).

The research design for this study was hermeneutic phenomenological research. A phenomenological study is used to understand study participants' lived experiences and perceptions of a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). A hermeneutic phenomenological study explores the subjective experiences of individuals or groups of people through their life stories (Kafle, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). The hermeneutic phenomenological research design is appropriate for this study because it aimed to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. Exist phenomenology was not selected for this study because existential-phenomenological research focuses on people's meanings and the choices reflected in their understandings and actions (Moustakas, 1994). There is an anticipated limitation in choosing a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research design. One weakness of a hermeneutic phenomenological research design is the subjectivity of the information to be collected (Kafle, 2013). Not as challenging as the subjective nature of injecting oneself into the study, the way ethnographic research does, the subjectivity of hermeneutic phenomenological analysis intended to be uncovered in the participants' personal experiences may be intrusive in the interpretation phase of the study. The findings of this study could be limited, and it may be difficult for the researcher to distinguish analyst-initiated predisposition (Kafle, 2013).

Research Questions

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study explores Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. One central research question and two sub-questions will guide this study:

Central Research Question

What are Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system, and how do they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina?

Sub-Question One

What are the perceptions of the Black male teachers in South Carolina about the specific challenges affecting their educator careers?

Sub-Question Two

How do Black male teachers perceive their identity when working among other teachers on their campuses in South Carolina?

Setting and Participants

In recent years, the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in the education system has drawn increasing attention. This study explores Black male teachers' experiences, challenges, and contributions within urban public schools in a central metropolitan area. By focusing on this specific setting and group of participants, we aim to shed light on the unique perspectives Black male educators bring to the teaching profession and explore how their presence impacts the educational landscape. When researching Black male teachers and developing a theoretical

framework, it is crucial to establish a precise setting and identify the participants involved. The location refers to the context or environment in which the research takes place, and the participants are the individuals who will be studied.

Setting

The geographic location of this study is South Carolina in the United States. South Carolina was selected considering the population of interest and the purpose of this study, which is to explore the experiences of Black male teachers in the K-12 system. In South Carolina, less than 1% of the teachers in the K-12 system were Black males ((Creswell & Poth, 2017).). The researcher will consider both rural and urban districts because this study's target population of interest is 10-12 Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. The researcher does not have a personal relationship with any of the study participants.

The researcher believes that by exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of the selected Black male teacher participants from South Carolina, the researcher could gain a deep understanding of this research phenomenon in the United States. In addition, collecting their responses will be insightful because of the potentially severe impact associated with the Black male teacher shortage in the K-12 system in the region. The research site permission will be sought from the Orangeburg County School District in Orangeburg, SC. Pseudonyms for the individuals will be PT1, PT2, PT3, and so forth. Pseudonyms for institutions will be Institution 1, Institution 2, Institution 3, and so on. The selected research area of South Carolina implies that the findings of this study could be limited to this region, which may only apply to some areas of the United States or across different countries.

Participants

The general population of interest will be Black male teachers in the K-12 system in the United States. The target population of interest was Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. The sample population will be 10-12 Black male teachers selected from the target population. Small sample sizes are typical in qualitative research to facilitate the in-depth case-oriented analysis central to this type of inquiry; for phenomenological study, the recommended sample size is between 5 and 25 (Vasileiou et al., 2018). To ensure data saturation, the researcher intends to recruit 10-12 members of the target population of interest.

For the study, after collecting the data and information from 10-12 study participants, the saturation point could be reached when no additional themes emerged. It has been recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2016) and others that qualitative research requires a minimum of 12 to reach data saturation. An anticipated limitation associated with the sampling will target 10-12 Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. This implies that the generalization of this study may be limited to this population, which may only apply to some people in the region (Clancy, 2019).

Once site permission (see Appendix B) is granted, the purposive sampling technique will be used to select the participants that meet these criteria. In a purposive sampling technique, the researcher calls about finding the participants for knowledge and experience sharing (Etikan et al., 2016). The purposive sampling technique is typically used in qualitative research; it allows a researcher to identify and select the most interested participants (Etikan et al., 2016).

The targeted research participants will be recruited through contacting the local school district. Once a potential participant reaches out to the researcher, the researcher will use purposive sampling with the recruiting criteria to confirm the participant's eligibility. This

process continues until the researcher can recruit 10-12 participants that meet the inclusion criteria specified in this study. Pseudonyms for the individuals will be PT1, PT2, PT3, and onward.

Researcher Positionality

As the author of this research study, I am a Black male teacher at an urban elementary school in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Undergraduate studies leading to a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Education with an emphasis on Education, as well as current teaching, have been accompanied by memberships in Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity, Golden Key Honor Society, Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; service on the Orangeburg County First Steps Board of Directors; and service as an Ella Baker Trainer for the Children's Defense Fund's summer reading literacy program, *Freedom Schools*.

Combined with a passion for Education and a focus on student success, identification with underrepresented and marginalized students and teachers has informed the commitment to serving the community through educational and social justice initiatives. This commitment extended to prompt this qualitative study. However, it is fully intended that background and passion for social justice will not interfere with the data collection or analysis and interpretation processes. Minimal influence on the study results and write-up will be attempted by maintaining the integrity of the data, transparency, and continued self-reflexivity.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework is a research technique focusing on a detailed understanding of a subject using observation, not hypothesis testing (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). The proposed qualitative study has an epistemological orientation of constructivism and an

ontological orientation of interpretivism. In addition, I will assume an axiological position in favor of social change for public Education in K-12 schools in South Carolina. The epistemological assumptions—beliefs about what can be known (Ang et al., 2016)—are based on the view that reality is constructed based on experiences and prior knowledge. The ontological assumptions—the ideas about the nature of social reality and what is knowable (Ang et al., 2016)—are based on the understanding that the overall character of reality is external to the researcher, is made up of multiple realities, and is relative to and dependent upon several external systems for meaning and therefore for interpretation. Thus, the proposed qualitative phenomenological study is epistemologically oriented in a social constructivist paradigm and ontologically introduced in a post-positivist interpretive framework.

Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions associated with the study and the researcher will examine three types of beliefs: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Each premise will be discussed in its applicability to the current research study.

Ontological Assumption

Ahmed (2008) described ontology as a concern with "what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such... what is there that can be known?" or "what is the nature of reality" (p. 2). I assume that the world investigated is populated by people who can express their thoughts, experiences, interpretations, and meanings. To analyze the participants' emotions and inner ideas, I utilize a variety of research procedures and methods of the phenomenological design that will enable the participants to share their perceptions and lived experiences.

Epistemological Assumption

Ahmed (2008) described an epistemological assumption as being: ". . . a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (p. 3). In alignment with this definition, this study was developed based on constructionism to answer the central research question: What are Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system, and how do they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina? Within a social context, Meidl emerging themes from his participants' experiences, including (a) challenges to recruitment, such as the presence, financial, and systematic obstacles in society; and (b) recommendations for change, such as recruitment, alternative approaches, encouraging educational paths, and valuing personal interaction; align with my epistemological assumptions associated with this study.

Axiological Assumption

Kulinska (2016) asserted that "axiological assumptions refer to the researcher's perception of the role of values in any given research study" (para. 1). Given the nature of the study as well as being a Black male teacher, there are personal biases that affect the study's findings. I will bracket my thoughts and feelings to mitigate this concern during the data collection and analysis. According to Chan et al. (2013), bracketing throughout the phenomenological investigation requires that the researcher suspends or sets aside one's beliefs about the phenomenon and what one might already know about the topic.

Researcher's Role

The role of the phenomenological researcher begins as being the primary investigative instrument or human instrument. As the interviewer of participants, the researcher may influence the data collection process as an interactive party in the interview as an entity characterized by social interaction (Pezalla et al., 2012). Such influence is manifested in the researcher's

perception during the observation process, in the contemplation and reflection processes, and the interpretation process. Especially relevant for the Black male researcher using the hermeneutic phenomenological research design to investigate experiences and perceptions of Black male educators, my observations, reflections, and interpretations are about the phenomena in and of themselves.

As the human instrument for the study, there may be a risk of researcher bias—the choice of one outcome over another in favor of the research goals (Braun & Clarke, 2016). To prevent potential bias, I intend to use rigorous criteria for sampling, standardize the interview questions, ask the same questions for every participant, use member checking for interview transcripts, and correctly categorize data during analysis. In addition, I will practice bracketing and self-reflexivity throughout the processes, suspending preconceptions and consistently self-checking throughout the entire research process (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Procedures

During the study, the data sources included face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. After obtaining site permission and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, there was the recruitment of participants and the presentation of the informed consent forms (Appendix C). The following procedures were followed in this study.

Permissions

Research permission will be obtained for approval from Liberty's IRB (see Appendix A) for conducting this research. Site permission will also be obtained from the Orangeburg County School District in Orangeburg, SC, for the necessary permissions (see Appendix B) to conduct the interviews at the study site.

Recruitment Plan

The researcher will start recruiting the study's participants who can meet the inclusion criteria with a purposive sampling technique. The targeted population of interest will be 10-12 Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. Purposive sampling will be used to select the research participants. Once study participants are identified, the researcher will distribute the informed consent form to each participant and aim to obtain their consent. The researcher will thoroughly explain the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any point of the study. After a participant grants consent, the researcher will present a written reflective exercise encouraging them to deeply explore the participant's perceptions and experiences. This written meditative exercise will create an awareness of the direction of the study and provide a focus for a later interview.

Data Collection Plan

Upon approval, the researcher will collaborate with an expert panel to review the semi-structured interview protocol and focus group protocol interview questions to determine the feasibility of the questions as well as consider their recommendations for additional questions. The researcher will conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus groups following each method's developed interview protocol or guidelines. The researcher will transcribe audio recordings during the interview sessions, document the inputs, and organize the data. In data analysis, the researcher will follow Braun and Clarke's (2016) thematic analysis approach and summarize the themes to emerge from the study. Lastly, the researcher will draft research findings and present the study's conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

Expert Panel

The expert panel will be used in this study, which includes a forum of experts in the field under investigation who will be invited to share their thoughts and experiences. They will be able

to review the data collection tools for this study to determine the feasibility of the questions. Individual semi-structured interviews with 3 Black male teachers in the K-12 system will be done. The identity of the experts will be protected. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face and will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The questions will cover the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. Experts will be consulted on themes from the analysis.

Demographic Data

The researcher will first collect demographic data of the selected 10-12 Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina. Demographics refers to the characteristics of a population (Salkind, 2010). Typical demographic data include age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, income, Education, homeownership, sexual orientation, marital status, family size, health and disability status, and psychiatric diagnosis (Salkind, 2010). Demographic data are essential for conducting this study because demographic data can provide researchers with information necessary for determining whether the participants can be a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes (Salkind, 2010). In this study, the researcher will collect the demographic data of age, years of experience, level of Education, and area of Education in elementary, middle, and high school, respectively.

Individual Interviews

This study's first data collection method will be face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), in an interview research setting, a researcher or researchers feel free to inquire about any facts, people's thinking and perceptions, and their opinions about any phenomenon or behavior. I will conduct the interviews using ZOOM to mitigate COVID-related concerns for the study. Please share their perceptions and experiences

about the phenomenon under investigation with the participants. In qualitative research, a face-to-face semi-structured interview tends to be informal and friendly (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

Data collection will start only after each study participant consents to attend the interview. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews will collect the data on the research question and sub-questions. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Per the participant's informed consent form, the session will be recorded using ZOOM audio technology. The information will then be sent through MAXQDA software, which has a transcription mode, to convert the interview data into transcripts. However, there is a limitation related to the interviews as the selected face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus groups as instruments for data collection. While developing interview questions, the researcher may develop leading questions, which could bias the discussions (Kallio et al., 2016).

Individual Interview Questions

The researcher developed a list of interview questions based on the themes and sub-topics that emerged from the review of the literature:

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we had just met.
2. Please walk me through your experiences as a Black male teacher in the K-12 system in South Carolina. SQ1
3. Of the formative experiences you identified, which were the most significant? SQ1
4. What made them significant? SQ1
5. What social challenges can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 Education? SQ2
6. What financial challenges can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 Education? SQ2

7. What racial challenges can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 Education?
SQ2
8. What political challenges can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12
Education? SQ2
9. What would you like to add to the topic of the study? SQ1 and SQ2

These developed interview questions will support addressing the research questions.

Specifically, these interview questions will help answer (SQ1): What have been the lived experiences of the Black male teachers in the K-12 system in South Carolina? Moreover, (SQ2) What are the perceptions of the Black male teachers in South Carolina about the challenges affecting their educator careers? Moreover, these developed interview questions will help the researcher explore Black male teachers' experiences in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. Interview question #1 is an introduction and will help the researcher recall the study participant's background and the study's relevancy. Interview questions #2, #3, and #4 are related to SQ1. Interview questions #5, #6, #7, and #8 are related to SQ2. Interview question #9 will elicit any data not covered in questions #1-#8 and will accommodate either SQ1, SQ2, or both RQ and SQ2 and sub-questions.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan (Data Analysis Plan #1)

As (Zhong, 2018) indicated, a researcher can comprehensively understand a phenomenon by identifying the themes related to participants' experiences in data analysis. The researcher will analyze the interview responses collected from each participant. Moreover, the researcher in this study will prepare and organize interview data and perform member checking. Precisely, the researcher will transcribe the audio-recorded interview verbatim using transcribe software. The researcher will also email the transcripts to the respective interviewees for member checking and

to ensure the completeness and accuracy of their responses. Then, the researcher will import the verified transcripts into NVivo software for coding development.

The data analysis of this study will follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, which contains six steps:

Step 1: Familiarizing Self with the Data: The researcher will read and reread the data collected to ensure the researcher is thoroughly familiar with the data. The transcripts will be in Appendix D.

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes: Then, the researcher will code the collected data by grouping the responses or descriptions that convey the same ideas, perceptions of participants, or experiences.

Step 3: Searching for Themes Once themes are identified, the researcher will email each interviewee with the identified themes to ensure the researcher understands the data correctly. The researcher will also check with each interviewee for any critical omissions.

Step 4: Reviewing Themes: In the next step, the researcher will review and refine the themes and ensure they represent the collected data patterns.

Step 5: Defining Themes: Following this process, the researcher will name and define the themes that emerged from the interview data.

Step 6: Presenting the Write-up: The researcher will present the findings based on the interview data. The results will be delivered using appropriate figures and tables.

Focus Groups

Data will also be collected using one focus group with all study participants. Using focus groups is a strategy that will enable the researcher to cover all the interview questions with multiple participants in the dialogue, which may reveal further information (beyond that derived from the individual interviews) essential to understanding the challenges affecting the education

careers of Black male teachers in South Carolina. Any such data can then contribute to data triangulation to reinforce the proposed study's trustworthiness (Cope, 2014).

Focus groups allow the researcher to interact with multiple participants simultaneously while encouraging dialogue among participants about the area being researched (Nyumba et al., 2018). Focus groups are beneficial for exploring complex, multi-layered concepts from the participants' perspectives. Focus groups are an excellent means to create triangulation using varied sources of evidence in your study when needing to conserve time rather than conducting follow-up interviews of all participants or when collective responses are as good as, or superior to, individual interview evidence.

Focus group questions must be developed and reported using the same format as interview questions and should avoid re-asking questions already asked during individual interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, researchers should remember that when using a focus group as a source of triangulation for personal interviews, the focus group protocol may need to be modified after the study is underway to follow up most effectively on initial data findings of individual interviews.

Focus Group Questions

The focus group questions (FGQs) will be as follows:

1. Please share your experiences regarding what you, as a Black male, perceive to be the key challenges to **becoming** a teacher in South Carolina. CRQ
2. Please share your experiences regarding what you, as a Black male, perceive to be the key challenges to **remaining** a teacher in South Carolina. CRQ
3. To what extent do you believe individual or group micro-aggressions (verbal/behavioral slights) at a particular school play/ played a part in the challenges you have experienced? SQ1

4. To what extent do you believe institutional racism plays/played a part in the challenges you have experienced? SQ1
5. Of these experienced challenges, did/do you attribute the pressure you experienced to being because of your race, your gender, or because of both race and gender? SQ2
6. How would you sum up what it means to be male or Black or male and Black in the context of the teaching profession? SQ2
7. What might be changes made in efforts toward racial and ethnic diversity in Education? SQ2
8. Please add anything I may need to address with these questions.

The focus group questions were designed to enable the participants to share their perceptions, opinions, and experiences regarding what they, as Black males, perceive to be the challenges to becoming and remaining a teacher in South Carolina. The focus group questions follow a semi-structured interview format that contributes to answering the research questions guiding this study. FGQs 1 and 2 will help answer the central research question. FGQs 3, 4, and 5 (in addition to FGQs 1 and 2) help provide specifics regarding the challenges of getting or remaining in teaching positions and help to answer SQ1. FGQ 6-8 helps to align with research following CRT and BMIT and support SQ2. In these respects, the focus group data can be joined with the interview data and findings from the literature review for data triangulation.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan (Data Analysis Plan #3)

Qualitative data derived from the focus group will be analyzed and coded using a multi-stage, iterative process following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis six-step approach:

1. The researcher will read and reread the data collected to ensure the researcher is thoroughly familiar with the data (See Appendix F).

2. The researcher will code the data collected by grouping the responses or descriptions that convey the same ideas, perceptions of participants, or experiences of participants.
3. Once themes are identified, the researcher will email each focus group participant with the identified themes to ensure the researcher understands the data correctly. The researcher will also check with each focus group participant if there are any critical omissions.
4. The researcher will review and refine the themes and ensure they represent the collected data patterns.
5. The researcher will name and define the themes from the focus group data.
6. The researcher will present the findings based on the focus group data.

Document Review

Each participant will be asked to bring to their interviews a document they feel relates to their role in the profession. This document could be yet not limited to (a) a job advertisement, (b) instructional evaluation, (c) notes from parents or students, or (d) an article about Black male teachers. They will be asked to answer questions about their perceptions of the document's significance in their career. According to Morgan (2022), "analyzing documents, such as books and journal articles, can be beneficial also because of the stability of the data" (p. 5).

Recommendations may be issued in Chapter 5.

Document Review Questions

1. Looking at the document, how does it relate to challenges K-12 Black male teachers face in Education? (CRQ)
2. How has the document informed you on strategies to help you excel in the profession within the classroom and beyond? (SQ1)

3. How does the document reflect the benefits or challenges related to identity as a Black male teacher on your campus? (SQ2)

4. Based on the document you have presented, what recommendations would you make to educational leaders to improve the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in South Carolina? (CRQ)

Questions 1 and 4 align with the central research question. Question 1 allows the participants should consider how the document reflects Black male teachers' challenges in K-12 settings. Question 4 allows the participants to view the document's implications and offer recommendations to educational leaders on improving the recruitment and retention of K-12 Black male teachers. Question 2 is more specific to the participants and aligns with the SQ1 as they consider strategies to help them excel in the profession. Question 3 aligns with SQ2 as each participant can reflect on the effects of their Black male identity and relationships on campus.

Document Review Analysis

A transcript will be developed because the document review involves discussing with the participants. This would allow the use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis six-step approach. The steps associated with this process have been described in the individual interview and focus group data analysis process sections.

Data Synthesis

His proposed study explores perceptions and lived experiences of challenges K-12 Black male teachers face. Three sources will be used to collect and analyze data: individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews during the personal interview process. Drisko (2019) asserted: "Qualitative research synthesis is a diverse set of methods for combining the data or the

results of multiple studies on a topic to generate new knowledge, theory and applications" (abstract). Garside (2015) asserted that data synthesis is a: "Combination of two or more items into a new whole" (slide 5).

All the data collected will be read carefully and initially coded based on Braun and Clarke's six-step data analysis process; the same method will be applied when reviewing initial transcript themes to determine the emergence of overarching themes related to the research question and subordinate question. As noted by Creswell and Guetterman (2020), as the study's researcher, I will need to immerse myself in the transcripts so that they are read in their entirety. Hence, notes will be written on each transcript to organize the data to make sense of the letters and create a new range of knowledge related to the phenomenon (Saldaña, 2021).

Following Braun and Clarke (2006), after identifying the themes, I will review and refine them to ensure they represent the patterns of data collected from each source. Given the nature of the thematic coding process, there will be a review of the many repetitive themes that could emerge from the 3 data sources to determine if common themes can be grouped. Collectively, there will be another review and refinement of the pieces so they can be named and defined; hence, this will lead to the meaning of the data.

Based on the overarching themes that emerge from the analysis of the three data sources, a narrative will be developed to consider the implications of the perceptions and lived experiences of K 12 Black male teachers within the historical, social, and theoretical contexts, especially given Black male teachers make up only 2% of the overall public school teacher population (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, the descriptions provided by the participants will be examined to determine whether the findings add to the literature related to critical race

theory and Black male identity theory. The overall goal of this data analysis will be to understand the challenges Black male teachers face within the K-12 public education system.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the quality of research findings, a researcher establishes the reliability and validity of a study, the goal of which is to reduce biases (Yin, 2014). Trustworthiness of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods the researcher uses to ensure the quality of a survey (Connelly, 2016). Establishing trustworthiness regarding the concepts of validity and reliability is a crucial concern in ensuring the quality of qualitative research (Ang et al., 2016). To enhance the study's trustworthiness, the researcher will apply criteria for measuring the quality of qualitative research methods and specific criteria for each process (Zhong, 2018). The researcher will use the strategies and techniques in the following discussion to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

Credibility

The study's credibility is confidence in the truth of the study and, thus, the findings; therefore, credibility is the most crucial criterion (Connelly, 2016). To ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher will (a) adopt a well-established data collection plan and conduct an expert panel before data collection; (b) conduct the research in natural settings where the participating Black male teachers are relevant to the phenomenon under study; (c) give sufficient time to listen, document, and achieve saturation of data; (d) perform member checking; (e) pay attention to researcher reflexivity, which will remind the researcher to maintain awareness about how the research results unfold, and documents emerging patterns (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Palaganas et al., 2017); and (f) use triangulation. The researcher will have three sources for

triangulation, including semi-structured interviews, online information on Black male teachers in the K-12 system, and a comprehensive review of the existing literature.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which research procedures are documented and reliable (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Trustworthiness includes the aspect of consistency (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Corrections are necessary to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected (Zhong, 2018). Therefore, the researcher will check whether the analysis process aligns with the accepted standards for the research design. As suggested by Korstjens and Moser (2018), the researcher will use the strategy of an audit trail and document the inquiry process. This will provide a complete set of notes on decisions made during the research process, reflective thoughts, sampling, research instruments, the emergence of the findings, and information about data management. Adopting an audit trail enables the auditor to study the transparency of the research path (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the neutrality of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher will secure the intersubjectivity of the data and ensure the interpretation is not based on the preferences and viewpoints of the researcher but is grounded in the data. Like the process to ensure dependability, the researcher will use an audit trail to ensure confirmability. In addition to data triangulation, using an audit trail strategy and providing transparent, in-depth descriptions of how the data were collected and analyzed (Leung, 2015) will help to establish the confirmability of findings, will bolster research rigor, and will demonstrate research findings are directly based on participant interview and focus group responses rather than on researcher preconceptions or biases.

Epoché

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research approaches can be used when the researcher seeks to explain a process or phenomenon using the participant's experience and perspectives. Before data collection, a phenomenological researcher needs to do epoché (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) described the epoché as a method of acknowledging with transparency any previous experiences or perceptions related to the study to separate the researcher's experience from the participants' as much as theoretically possible. This allows the researcher to look at the topic from a new perspective and attempts to limit past experiences' impact on one's judgment (Moustakas, 1994).

Bracketing allows the researcher to identify their personal experience or relationship to the topic to understand participants' experiences objectively and create a new perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The researcher established trustworthiness and credibility by exploring how to bracket from the presuppositions to the topic. Through bracketing, the researcher will put away any previous experiences or perceptions related to the study and look at the issue from a new perspective to ensure that the past experiences of the researcher will not impact their judgment.

Transferability

Transferability concerns the applicability of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher will describe the participants and the research process, enabling the audience to assess whether the research findings are transferable to their setting (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Besides, the researcher will also ensure the sufficiency and appropriateness of the sample size. A sufficient sample size for qualitative research for interview studies is 15 ± 10 (Kvale, 2007). The sample size of 8-10 participants for this study falls within this normal range. To reach data saturation, the researcher may continue the recruiting process and carefully assess the eligibility of each participant until data saturation is reached or when no additional themes emerge.

Ethical Considerations

The Belmont Report provides essential and valuable guidelines to ensure ethical research. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Behavioral Research Belmont Report protocol provides the basic ethical requirements for researchers to adhere to when they conduct studies that involve human subjects. The principles outlined in the Belmont Report posit that a researcher must meet the participant's right to privacy and treat the participants with dignity (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. Besides, as required by the Belmont Report, a researcher must ensure justice by establishing the purpose of the study and the selection and considering the appropriateness of the research design without burdening the human subjects under investigation (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The researcher will secure institutional approval by the requirement of the IRB. After IRB permission is granted, the researcher will seek informed consent from each participant and inform them of any anticipated risks and consequences of participating in the study. Each participant's signature will be required to indicate they agree to experience and understand how the research will be conducted. The researcher will also inform the participants of the extent to which the results will be kept confidential. The researcher will further notify the participants that

they can withdraw from the study at any point. The participants' data, including contact information, will be saved in an encrypted file on the researcher's computer for at least three years. Then, the researcher will destroy the data. The researcher does not anticipate any ethical issues in the study.

Summary

Chapter 3 focuses on methods. Chapter 3 covered the sections and discussions of an overview, the design, the research questions, the setting, the participants, the procedures, the researcher's role, the data collection, the data analysis, the trustworthiness, the ethical considerations, and concludes with a summary. In introducing how to establish the reliability of the study, the researcher also detailed the procedures for ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The research method and design for this study was qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research. One central research question and two sub-questions guided the development of this study. The targeted population of interest was 10-12 Black male teachers in the K-12 system from South Carolina. The research instruments for data collection will be face-to-face semi-structured interviews, a focus group, questionnaires, and a document review. The data collected will be integrated with the literature review findings to triangulate data and ensure a more valid and robust study. In data analysis, the researcher followed a thematic analysis approach as specified by Braun and Clarke for coding and analysis. Chapter 4 will focus on the data analysis and the study results.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. In particular, the study focused on what factors motivated this select group of Black males to enter, stay, or leave the teaching profession. By looking at what can be accomplished by capturing their personal experiences about the paths that led them to become K-12 public education teachers, their statements support the development of innovative programs to attract more Black males to the teaching profession.

Participants

The demographic characteristics were diverse in age, colleges attended, and years of teaching experience. Of the ten participants contacted, 10 (or 100%) agreed to participate. All seven participants currently teach in an urban school district. The participants' years in teaching by category, school level, and content area led are visually displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Participant Demographic

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Content Area	Grade Level
Teacher 1	5	Masters	English Language Arts	3 rd
Teacher 2	3	Masters	Mathematics and Science	4 th
Teacher 3	15	Bachelors	Physical Education	PK - 5 th

Teacher 4	3	Bachelors	Science	6 th
Teacher 5	15	Masters	Special Education – All Contents Areas	3 rd – 5 th
Teacher 6	1	Bachelors	Physical Education	PK-5 th
Teacher 7	5	Masters	Mathematics and Science	5 th
Teacher 8	12	Masters	Mathematics	8 th
Teacher 9	4	Bachelors	Social Studies	6 th
Teacher 10	16	Educational Specialist	Secondary English	9 th – 12 th

In Table 1, Teacher 1 teaches elementary school English language arts and social studies. He has been teaching for five years. Teacher 2 teaches mathematics and science and has less than five years of teaching experience. Teacher 3 teaches elementary physical education and has been teaching for over 15 years. Teacher 4 teaches middle school science and has been teaching for three years. Teacher 5 has been teaching special education for over 15 years. Teacher 6 has been teaching physical education for two years. Teacher 7 has been teaching mathematics and science for over five years. Teacher 8 has been teaching mathematics for eight years. Teacher 9 has been conducting social studies for four years. Teacher 10 has been teaching secondary English for sixteen years.

Results

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Black male teachers and why they chose teaching as a career. The study focused on what factors affected this select group of Black male teachers to enter, stay, or disaffiliate from the teaching

profession. By capturing their personal experiences about the various roads that led them to grow to be K-12 teachers, I was able to identify theories and strategies that can facilitate the improvement of recent and progressive programs to entice more Black males into the teaching profession. A qualitative study using a phenomenological technique became appropriate for apprehending Black teachers' psycho-social world.

The Braun and Clarke data analysis is a qualitative process used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data. The data analysis of the current study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, which contains six steps: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming pieces, and writing up. While it is a general analysis technique applicable to various research areas, it can be particularly beneficial in understanding the experiences and challenges faced by Black male teachers in the education system. Braun and Clarke's analysis can provide valuable insights into Black male teachers' experiences, challenges, and contributions in K-12 education. By understanding their unique perspectives, the education system can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable.

By employing the strategies associated with Braun and Clarke, researchers can capture the richness and complexity of the diverse experiences of Black males, which will lead to a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of their lived realities. This knowledge can help inform policies and practices that promote equity, inclusivity, and positive change for Black males and their communities. The discussion and results from the three data sources used to collect and analyze data can be found in Appendix D.

Themes

The themes related to the research on Black male teachers brings attention to their pivotal role within the realm of education. These dedicated educators bring a unique and enriching

Better	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Understanding											
Trust Factor		x			x			x		x	4/10
Different	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Viewpoint											
Sense of Culture	x		x		x	x			x	x	6/10

As noted in Table 2, two sub-themes emerged to support the dominant theme of value as a Black teacher: better understanding and different viewpoints. As presented in Table 2, summarizing the data collected showed that participants believed having Black male teachers in the K-12 school system was beneficial. When looking at the data between all the participants with the value of being an educator, it showed that having a different viewpoint can be vital. It helps better understand current Black males in the school system. The theme is critical of valuing all Black male educators.

Better Understanding

Teacher 10 shared, "The trust factor between Black male teachers and their students is a crucial aspect of the educational experience. It influences student engagement, academic achievement, and overall well-being." Teacher 3 agreed, "Seeing someone who looks like them in a position of authority can be empowering and motivating." As I thought on this topic, Black teachers may have a deeper understanding of Black students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, which can lead to more culturally responsive teaching practices. This can enhance the educational experience for Black students, but it can also be undervalued or misunderstood by others.

Trust Factor

Teacher 10 shared, “The trust factor between Black male teachers and their students is a crucial aspect of the educational experience. It influences student engagement, academic achievement, and overall well-being.” Teacher 2 agreed by stating, “We often incorporate our style into our teaching practices, which can strengthen trust by demonstrating understanding and respect.”. Listening to the focus group, I thought that trust is vital to the overall perception of value for Black teachers. Building and maintaining trust involves creating an inclusive and supportive environment, addressing biases and discrimination, and recognizing the critical contributions of Black educators. When trust is nurtured and upheld, it can lead to more positive outcomes for Black teachers, their students, and the education system.

Different Viewpoint

Teacher 2 shared, "You give them a different perspective. I often talk to the Youth; I have a one-of-a-kind point of view, and being a veteran teacher and coming through an era in which I did give me a variety of views." Teacher 8 agreed by stating “It’s a new day and age, a lot of veteran teachers don’t want to change to meet the need of our students.” While in this focus group this topic was what every one agreed on.

Sense of Culture

Teacher 6 shared, "Black male teachers can demonstrate cultural competence by incorporating culturally relevant content, acknowledging students' experiences, and adapting their teaching approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners." Teacher 9 stated “I agree with Teacher 6, because black teachers often incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices, which can strengthen trust by demonstrating an understanding and respect for the diverse

Positive Role Model	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Someone that they can look up to	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Offer a different perspective	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	7/10

As presented in Table 3, summarizing the data collected showed that it is necessary to have Black male teachers be represented in schools. All participants agreed that being a part of this bond of being a Black male in education, they could not imagine themselves doing anything else.

They Can Relate to Students

Teacher 2 stated that it is essential to have Black male teachers because of the large population of public schools that have Black male students. Many Black male students want to trust someone they can relate to, someone who can understand certain situations and backgrounds they come from. Teacher 4 also stated, “This ability to relate can profoundly impact the educational experience of Black students and is often seen as a valuable asset.” When in the focus group, the participants agreed that the ability of Black teachers to relate to Black students is widely perceived as a valuable asset within the educational system. It can lead to stronger connections, increased trust, and enhanced academic and personal development for Black students.

Positive Role Model

Teacher 8 believes that Black males need a positive Black male role model. "Many of our students do not have that influence in their lives, and I believe it is needed. They need someone who can relate and identify their experiences." Teacher 4 stated, seeing educators who share their racial and gender identity can inspire students to believe in their potential and set high aspirations." When in the focus group, the need for Black male teachers as positive role models is based on the understanding that representation, cultural awareness, trust, and mentorship play pivotal roles in Black male students' educational experiences and success.

Someone To Look Up To

Teacher 1 shared that he feels that having somebody positive that they can relate to and look up to. "Having the students see someone that looks like them, and they feel that can relate to their experiences." Teacher 7 also shared that, "Black male teachers can serve as powerful sources of inspiration and motivation for Black students. Their accomplishments and dedication to education can ignite a desire for learning, personal growth, and future success among their students." All the participants from the focus group agreed that Black male teachers as role models is grounded in the belief that representation, inspiration, mentorship, and a sense of belonging are vital components of a positive and empowering educational experience for Black students.

Offer a Different Perspective

Teacher 6 indicated a need for Black male teachers in education. "And with, not just for the Black children, but for kids in general. Turning the television on or even picking up a newspaper often characterizes Black males in a manner that may not always be the case. Having a Black male teacher in the classroom gives students a different view and perspective than what

Not looked at as	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7/10
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being an Ideal

Teacher

They are Feeling Silenced

Teacher 5 said, "What I hear from Black male teachers who are leaving is that their voice is not centered or honored. They do not feel like their leadership or colleagues appreciate their voice. They have this deep calling within them to stay, give back, and teach and educate, but they must deal with the minutia that surrounds them, that is not culturally competent and does not push themselves to see it through their perspective. It gets tiring." Teacher 8 stated, "Feeling silenced can have a detrimental impact on diversity and inclusion efforts." As I listened to the focus group it had thinking that addressing perceptions of burnout and feeling silenced is crucial for creating healthy and inclusive environments that promote well-being, collaboration, and diversity of thought.

They are not Looked at as being an Ideal Teacher

Teacher 9 shared that Black male teachers may not be widely perceived as the ideal teacher archetype in some educational contexts, which often stems from deep-seated biases and systemic barriers. This perception overlooks the valuable contributions, perspectives, and skills that Black male teachers bring to the classroom. However, it is essential to challenge and disrupt these preconceived notions. Black male teachers offer unique insights and experiences that can enhance the educational experiences of all students. Teacher 9 stated They are powerful role models, challenging stereotypes and positively representing Black boys and young men. Moreover, their ability to foster culturally responsive pedagogies creates inclusive learning

environments where students from diverse backgrounds can thrive. By acknowledging and embracing the strengths and talents of Black male teachers, we can dismantle biased perceptions and work towards a more equitable and inclusive education system that benefits all students.

The Feeling of Being Burn Out

Teacher 1 said, "I was frustrated at some things; I simply did not recognize what that something changed into. As I became more experienced, I started identifying with culturally unresponsive teaching. Teaching responds to the needs of something other than the way of life of the scholars. Teacher 6 stated, I became upset and stressed by this expectation that I needed to take on the "worst-behaved students." I am placing that in quotes because I would not define them as such, but as scholars, we all love. I was expected to control the classroom and be the behavior interventionist, but my ability to deliver the content material needed to be honored or evolved.

They were Isolated in Schools with only a few Black Males

Teacher 3 shared that the isolation experienced by Black male teachers in schools where they are in the minority is a significant challenge that deserves attention and understanding. Being one of only a few Black males in the educational setting can create feelings of being out of place, disconnected, and even tokenized. The lack of representation and limited collaboration opportunities with colleagues with similar backgrounds and experiences can contribute to professional isolation. Teacher 8 stated, it is crucial to recognize and address this issue, as Black male teachers' unique perspectives and contributions are essential for fostering inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. By creating support networks, providing mentorship opportunities, and fostering a sense of belonging, schools can empower Black male teachers to thrive professionally, encourage their growth, and enable them to make a lasting

impact on their students' lives. Through intentional efforts to address Black male teachers' isolation, we can truly build a more inclusive and equitable educational system for all.

Outlier Data and Findings

In any dataset, outliers can significantly impact the accuracy and reliability of statistical analyses and models (Filzmoser et al., 2018). However, with no outliers in the data, researchers and analysts can derive more robust and meaningful insights. Without outliers, the data distribution becomes more representative of the studied population or phenomenon. This allows for more accurate measures of central tendency, such as the mean or median, and more precise estimates of variability, such as the standard deviation. With a clean dataset free from outliers, researchers can have increased confidence in their findings and make more informed decisions based on the data's integrity (Aggarwal & Yu, 2001).

Research Question Responses

The initial start of data analysis revealed several similar subject matters from the open-ended to one-on-one interviews. Upon further evaluation, it has become pretty apparent that the information accumulated recognized four essential topics:

1. Most participants agreed that Black male teachers are scarce.
2. Serving as a mentor and constructing relationships is vital.
3. A former teacher, coach, or family member prompted the members' choice to go into the profession.
4. Low pay is a significant reason Black males do not want to become teachers.

Most participants agreed that Black male teachers are scarce. The scarcity of Black male teachers is a well-documented issue that has been studied and discussed by researchers and educators. A report by The Education Trust titled *The State of Teacher Diversity in American*

Education, Averett and George (2019) examined teacher demographics across several states. The report revealed a significant underrepresentation of Black male teachers, suggesting a scarcity of their presence in schools.

All participants indicated that serving as a mentor and constructing relationships are vital additives for being effective teachers. The significance of mentorship and connections in teaching has been widely recognized in educational research and literature. Scott and Alexander (2019) found that solid teacher-student relationships positively influenced various aspects of teaching and learning, including student motivation, engagement, academic achievement, and overall classroom climate.

A former teacher, coach, or family member prompted the members' choice to go into the profession. The influence of mentors and family members on career choices, including teaching, has been explored in research and literature, and a qualitative study examined pre-service teachers' experiences. They found that former teachers, coaches, and family members played a significant role in their decision to pursue a career in teaching, providing encouragement and positive experiences that motivated their choice. However, all individuals indicated low pay as a significant reason Black males do not want to become teachers. While recording data and interviews, it was revealed that no outliers within the participants were found.

Central Research Question

What are Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system, and how do they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina?

According to the data, several comparable elements impact Black male teachers' challenges, no matter their content areas or years in teaching. Studies have shown that teachers prefer this profession to be more lucrative to deal with years of racial inequities (Pabon & Basile,

2019). All participants indicated they would like more support, enjoy sharing their experiences with students, and would not change anything about their profession. Seven of the ten participants said they see themselves as mentors.

Sub-Question One

What are the perceptions of the Black male teachers in South Carolina about the specific challenges affecting their educator careers?

When asked about the problem of dealing with Black teachers, the participant additionally asserts a shortage of mentors inside the Black network. Teacher Two felt that the education system sets unrealistic expectations for students and teachers. He thought that this hindered their experiences and dampened societal development. He believed that teachers need to be empowered through the education structures so that they will play their many roles. In particular, the teacher felt that there had been an opening between what the educational system affords and what students revel in.

Teacher 4 is concerned about discipline in schools. As a disciplinarian himself, the teacher believed that teachers must be allowed to enforce discipline in schools. Discipline is a vital aspect of most schools. Discipline is a critical element of educational achievement and student growth.

Teacher 6 stated, "I feel that lack of support is one of the main reasons Black males do not pursue teaching now. I make this argument because professional development is one of the key elements of development for teachers. Without professional development, people can also lack the academic qualifications required to enter a particular profession."

Sub-Question Two

How do Black male teachers perceive their identity when working among other teachers on their campuses in South Carolina?

Another critical factor during the conversation with Teacher 7 was the importance of accountability among teachers. The participant believed Black teachers had to make other teachers accountable for any adverse action toward Black students. Overall, the thinking of the participant demonstrated his appreciation of integrity. The main themes in this interview were discipline, mentorship, cultural support, cultivation, and being a role model. The participants also spoke about cultural support. This was one of the major themes of the conversation. He emphasized the importance of student support from families and Black teachers. He highlighted the fact that some students may need more help from home.

Summary

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was an exploration of Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. The results indicated that the elements listed in this study's purpose impacted why Black males chose teaching as a career. With only two percent of teachers in the profession being Black males, there was a deeper examination of the data. The data from the focus group showed that each Black male participant came from a different background; however, they all viewed each other as brothers of the same calling because they shared many of the hardships and experiences—highs and lows. These men felt that the struggles every day for Black men would be understood fully by other Black men and that they must come together excellently to help with more representation of Black male teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. At this stage in the research, the experiences are defined as the challenges experienced by Black male teachers in the K-12 system. This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to explore Black male teachers' perceptions and lived experiences in the K-12 system concerning the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. In this chapter, information is provided related to: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This study supported five factors for the study. These factors helped readers obtain a better understanding of (a) perceptions and lived experiences of Black male teachers in the K-12 system and how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina, (b) perceptions of the Black male teachers in South Carolina about the specific challenges affecting their educator careers, (c) Black male teachers perceive their identity when working among other teachers at their schools, (d) perception of the need for Black male teachers, and (e) close the gap in the research by investigating the experiences of Black male teachers to look at what motivational factors motivated them to select being a teacher as a profession. In this final chapter, I used the five factors of the study as a framework for providing answers to the

significant questions the study tried to address. These new findings served as a basis for further inquiry as it is presented for further research.

Summary of Thematic Findings

In chapter 4 and after synthesizing the outcomes from the synthesis from the three data sources noted in Appendix D—interviews, focus group, and document review--three dominant themes emerged. Those themes included (a) value as a Black teacher, (b) need for Black male teachers in K-12, and (c) feeling of being burnt out. The following section contains an interpretation of the findings.

Interpretation of Findings

This phenomenological study relied upon personal interviews and a focus group session with the seven Black instructors who taught in a rural southern county with three districts that have now been consolidated into one section. Of the seven Black instructors working in this school district, seven (or 100%) agreed to participate in this study. This study attempted to offer solutions to the principal purposes examined in this study. In this regard, every purpose statement was restated, and a corresponding key was supplied to present information suggesting how this study's findings guide or contradict the relevant literature. This study brought an awareness of new findings that previous studies still need to analyze.

These findings support the current literature about the perception of Black male instructors in a rural Southern County. They are consistent with the beliefs of different Black male instructors in the state. The participants in this study supplied valuable and eye-opening information on why they entered the K-12 teaching profession and chose to stay in it. They shared information that may benefit how teacher education programs and administrators can lay out, promote, and maintain Black men within the teaching profession. Harris (2015) stated that

education was once a respectable profession for African Americans. However, three elements have converged to lessen their participation. These perceptions are grounded on the following notions:

Fewer Black Adult Males are Attending College

The perception that fewer Black adult males are attending college is shaped by statistical disparities, economic barriers, educational inequalities, societal stereotypes, and individual motivations. Empirical data often indicate that Black males historically have lower college enrollment rates than other demographic groups, contributing to this perception (Osler & Starkey, 2017). Economic disparities, including tuition costs and student loan debt, can limit access to higher education for many Black individuals. Unequal access to quality K-12 education, differences in discipline, and harmful stereotypes can hinder academic preparation and motivation to attend college. Additionally, societal expectations and biases can influence the choices and aspirations of Black male students.

Passing Certification Test

The perception of potential Black male teachers passing assessments like the Praxis Core, Praxis 2, and PLT (Principles of Learning and Teaching) at the same rate as other groups can be influenced by a complex interplay of historical disparities, societal biases, access to resources, and educational support systems (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Historically, disparities in educational opportunities and systemic inequalities have posed challenges for Black students, potentially affecting their readiness to excel in standardized tests. Perceptions are shaped by the belief that these assessments may not be entirely objective or culturally inclusive, potentially disadvantaging Black male candidates.

Implications for Practice

The study showed that Black men are exiting education for many reasons. Low starting salaries, a lack of promotion, not feeling respected, not being offered the same possibilities within the profession as other groups, and horrid educational experiences are just a few issues affecting Black male teacher retention. My findings do not mean that Black adult males cannot and do not succeed within the teaching profession, given their challenges. My research revealed that Black adult males pursuing education accomplish that due to an intrinsic desire to help others and the joy of seeing others emerge victorious. The data showed Black male teachers' ideas of their competencies to improve the educational success of Black male students (Kohli et al., 2017). What is of incredible fear to specialists is why so few Black adult males can triumph over the regulations that save them from turning into instructors. More research may be done to do away with the vicinity of this observer's inconclusiveness.

Participants were asked a survey question to think and reflect on what would be needed to recruit and retain Black male teachers. Their responses provide a framework for present-day administrators and district-level recruiters to observe. Teaching once was a significant career for Black males; it was seen as an honor, distinction, and being a trailblazer for their generation, according to my veteran participants (Pabon & Basile, 2019). Younger participants remembered teaching as a mocked vocation and had a poor social position at their age. The older participants wanted the profession to revert to its more senior status, while the younger wanted financial security and growth opportunities.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The presence and experiences of Black male teachers in K-12 education have significant theoretical and empirical implications that can influence educational outcomes and the broader society. The theoretical and empirical implications of Black males teachers in K-12 education

are vast and multifaceted. Their presence can positively impact students' academic outcomes, teacher-student relationships, and education culture. Understanding and supporting Black male teachers is essential for fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments and achieving improved student outcomes.

Empirical Implications

The presence and experiences of Black male teachers in the education system have garnered increasing attention in recent years, both in academic research and public discourse. Empirical research on this subject provides valuable insights into the challenges, contributions, and impacts of Black male educators within the educational landscape. This exploration delves into the empirical implications that arise from studying Black male teachers, shedding light on the practical and observable outcomes that emerge from their presence in classrooms and schools.

Representation and Role Modeling. The presence of Black male teachers serves as positive role models for Black students, challenging negative stereotypes and providing aspirational figures for academic and personal success. This representation can increase Black students' motivation, self-esteem, and engagement, potentially narrowing the achievement gap (Howard, 2010). Research has shown that having teachers with the same racial or ethnic background can positively influence academic performance, particularly for students of color. Black male teachers can have a direct impact on student achievement (Bristol & Goings, 2019).

They Improved Teacher-Student Relationships. Black male teachers may form stronger connections with Black students due to shared cultural backgrounds and experiences. Positive teacher-student relationships have been linked to better academic outcomes and reduced disciplinary issues (Osler & Starkey, 2017). Establish positive and trusting relationships with

Black male students. Take the time to know their interests, aspirations, and challenges, and be attentive to their emotional well-being.

Diversification of the Teaching Workforce. The presence of Black male teachers contributes to diversifying the teaching profession, which is crucial for creating more inclusive learning environments. A diverse teaching workforce can enhance understanding, empathy, and responsiveness to the needs of diverse student populations (Howard, 2010).

Teacher Retention and Job Satisfaction. Encouraging and supporting Black males to enter and remain in the teaching profession can increase teacher retention rates and job satisfaction (Jackson, 2018). Addressing teacher retention and job satisfaction for Black male teachers requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort from school administrators, policymakers, and the broader educational community. By acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by Black male teachers and implementing supportive strategies, schools can create an environment that promotes retention and job satisfaction, benefiting both educators and students alike.

They are Addressing Discipline Disparities. Research suggests that Black male students are disproportionately subjected to disciplinary actions (Schuler, 2009). Having Black male teachers may help mitigate these disparities by implementing restorative justice practices and understanding cultural contexts better. By incorporating culturally responsive and healthy techniques, black male teachers can be crucial in reducing disciplinary actions against Black male students.

Broader Educational Policy Implications. Empirical studies on Black male teachers can inform educational policies to increase diversity within the teaching workforce, provide targeted professional development, and address systemic barriers that hinder Black male

teachers' progress. Another action includes implementing policies and initiatives to increase the representation of Black male teachers in schools. This can be achieved through targeted recruitment efforts, scholarships, and support programs to encourage Black males to pursue careers in education, requiring schools and districts to collect and report data on discipline, academic achievement, graduation rates, and other outcomes that are disaggregated by race and gender. This data will help identify disparities and inform evidence-based interventions. (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020)

Social and Community Impact. The presence of Black male teachers can extend beyond the classroom, contributing to community engagement and empowerment. These teachers can become advocates for social change and educational equity; inspiring future generations by having them encourage policies that promote family and community engagement in the education process will be very beneficial. Schools should partner with families and community organizations to support Black male students' academic and social-emotional development. (Lewis & Toldson, 2013).

Theoretical Implications

In this exploration, we will delve into the theoretical implications arising from the convergence of CRT and Black Masculine Identity Theory. These implications encompass issues of intersectionality, structural racism and gender, narratives and counter-narratives, racialized gender performance, educational and pedagogical considerations, the criminal justice system, policy analysis, health disparities, activism and empowerment, and the global perspective. Each of these dimensions provides a distinct angle for comprehending the multifaceted experiences and identities of Black men in a world characterized by racial and gender complexities.

Black male teachers are more likely to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices, integrating their students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum. This approach can enhance students' learning experiences and foster a sense of belonging in the classroom. McKinley and Conrad (2019) recognize that Black male students have diverse learning styles and needs. Provide differentiated instruction and learning opportunities to accommodate individual strengths and challenges.

Limitations and Delimitations

The presence and role of Black male teachers in the education system have been a subject of growing interest and importance. As educators, they offer unique perspectives, serve as positive role models, and play a crucial role in addressing the needs of Black male students. However, like any aspect of the education system, some limitations and delimitations influence their impact and experiences.

In this context, "limitations" refer to the inherent challenges and barriers that Black male teachers may face in their roles. These limitations can affect their effectiveness, job satisfaction, and overall contributions to the educational environment. On the other hand, "delimitations" refer to the positive and empowering aspects of having Black male teachers in the classroom. Delimitations highlight the potential benefits and opportunities that arise from their representation and engagement within the education system.

Limitations

The scarcity of Black male teachers within the education system can limit the availability of participants, potentially resulting in a smaller sample size. This scarcity may also make it challenging to capture a diverse range of experiences and perspectives (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Even within the demographic of Black male teachers, there is likely significant heterogeneity in

teaching levels, subjects taught, years of experience, personal backgrounds, and teaching styles. It is essential to account for these differences to avoid oversimplified or inaccurate conclusions (Howard, 2010). The adventures of Black male teachers can vary widely depending on the school climate, administrative support, student demographics, and community dynamics. It is essential to account for these variations to ensure the study's applicability (Bhopal, 2015).

Sampling and Sampling Strategy. The population of interest is Black male teachers in public schools within the specific urban district. In this study, we are targeting a sample size of 10 Black male teachers. The population was based on grade levels and years of teaching experience. This was to ensure representation across different grade levels and years of teaching. Once initial participants are identified, I asked them to refer other Black male teachers they know who meet the study's criteria. This was achieved through snowball sampling, expanding the sample, and increasing diversity. Then, I obtained ethical approval for the research and sought informed consent from the participants, emphasizing their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their responses.

Research Design. The research objective was to explore the lived experiences and meanings attributed to teaching by Black Male teachers in an urban school district. Hermeneutic phenomenology was employed to gain a deep understanding of Black Male teachers' subjective experiences and interpretations in their teaching roles. Conduct open-ended, in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of Black Male teachers. The conversational interviews allowed participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and meanings associated with their teaching practice. Probing questions were used to delve into specific themes, such as their background, motivations, student relationships, interactions with colleagues, and experiences of cultural identity.

Data Collection and Analysis. The research instruments for data collection were face-to-face semi-structured interviews, a focus group, questionnaires, and a document review. The data collected was integrated with the literature review findings to triangulate data and ensure a more valid and robust study. Once the data is collected, researchers employ various methods to analyze the information gathered and derive meaningful insights. Data analysis used the Braun and Clarke analysis, also known as thematic analysis, a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data. While it is a general analysis technique applicable to various research areas, it can be particularly beneficial in understanding the experiences and challenges faced by Black male teachers in the education system.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to the boundaries or limitations that researchers set for their studies. When studying Black male teachers, researchers may encounter various delimitations that could impact the scope and generalizability of their findings (Fenwick, 2019). A small sample size and representation in the study also could draw broad conclusions. While the perceptions of Black teachers had been highly beneficial in helping me develop this study, their experiences will not be indicative of all Black K-12 public school teachers. Therefore, these findings look at our honest best to instructors within the districts who participated. Finally, this looks at and assumes the responses furnished with the aid of the contributors are correct and constitute a valid representation of their perceptions.

The current qualitative study was limited to the school districts placed in one southern county within the South, wherein ten Black male instructors taught in that county. Consequently, this study was limited to Black male teachers in one school district. It became similarly constrained to the ten Black male teachers who agreed to participate in this study voluntarily.

The study was restricted to Black male teachers in the Southern school district, and no generalizations are made or inferred beyond this population. While this look becomes limited to the people of Black male teachers, the facts and the literature recommend that similar developments had been discovered in previous studies dealing with this population. (Averett & George, 2019)

Recommendations for Future Research

This study demonstrates that Black male instructors desire to contribute to educating all children, mainly those who look like them and have similar cultural and familiar backgrounds. While the studies are replete with the declining representation of Black male teachers in public education schools, I offer several recommendations so one can, with any luck, ward off this debilitating trend.

It is recommended that future research investigating the shortage of Black male teachers does not forget the position universities take to become aware of and recruit Black male teachers. A study of this nature must provide applicable findings about the choice and aim of higher education colleges and universities to help grow the underrepresentation of Black male instructors in the teaching profession. According to Ingersoll et al. (2019), numerous minority college students want to pursue a career in teaching; however, colleges and universities fail to show college students a thrilling, attractive, and multicultural curriculum.

Future studies are also encouraged to consider the role professional organizations play in improving learning opportunities for ethnic groups who are underrepresented within the teaching profession. In this unique case, similar studies can also reveal that professional organizations can also want to show growth by getting to know and professional development opportunities for Black teachers who are about to enter the teaching field. There is a want for professional

organizations to be extra proactive with the training of all instructors who are working in school settings where a vast proportion of students come from culturally challenging environments. The research is replete with data that advocates that many Black male teachers will get training via their professional organizations. However, there is a want for those institutions to do more. Working carefully with teachers' education institutions, expert groups, and nearby school districts will ensure that, through the proper training, these people are more likely to be successful once they receive these positions. Thus, local communities must provide applicable professional development and allow staff members, particularly underrepresented people, to participate in a ramification of educational training and professional organizations that assist this purpose.

It is further encouraged that southern faculty districts look at their coverage and techniques for recruiting underrepresented populations. In this unique case, further studies can also reveal that school districts take a more significant duty in recruiting underrepresented groups, Black male teachers. It is similarly advised that school districts should take greater ownership of teachers' recruitment and location in classrooms that are more relatable to students that they are responsible for imparting culturally enriched learning experiences. To this, school districts ought to include the collective reports of these people to ensure that their collective stories are covered in ways that might enhance and improve the teaching and learning experiences of all college students, particularly the reports of Black students.

Finally, it is recommended that school districts make a better all-around effort to involve underrepresented populations in their existing teaching programs. In this specific case, further studies may additionally advise that teacher education programs need to offer possibilities for Black male instructors to interact in vital discourses that enable them to combine their very own

experiences and views with applicable educational theories and practices that could offer a relevant and encompassing level into their teacher training.

Conclusion

The participants in this study indicated a need for Black male instructors in K-12 school settings. As diagnosed through participants in this take look, one of the foremost motives for Black male teachers is to change into those Black male teachers who serve as superb role models and mentors. There is a strong alliance among the participants and the elements that may have supported their decision to enter the teaching profession. These factors (lived reports, values, and accomplishments) align with the conceptual framework diagnosed in this observation. The examination revealed that every participant had no unusual stories, which probably predestined them for achievement, based on the supportive measures furnished for them for their lives. Thus, if great additives are popular in a man's or woman's youth lifestyles, the propensity for success is more significant.

As interest is given to the need for more Black male teachers, it will become apparent that the difficulty influences the sociopolitical realities of African American youth, particularly males, in frequently left-out methods. This change was evident through the numerous statements given with the aid of the participants in this study. What must be figured out because of this is looking at parallel research is the want for increased representation of Black male teachers that are compassionate and committed to providing a positive environment and influence in the classroom and society.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

February 8, 2023

David Williams
Sharon Michael-Chadwell

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY22-23-628 CHALLENGES AFFECTING EDUCATOR CAREERS OF BLACK MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 SYSTEM IN SOUTH CAROLINA: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear David Williams, Sharon Michael-Chadwell,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: February 8, 2023. If you need to change the methodology for human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Improvements can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which applies to specific, minimal-risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

I appreciate your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: SITE PERMISSION

Dear Management,

My name is David Williams from Liberty University. I am conducting my doctoral research in [major] under the supervision of Dr. [instructor name]. I am running a research study to explore the experiences of Black male teachers in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University. I am requesting permission to post the recruitment flier in your establishment to solicit potentially interested study participants for data collection. Your support and approval are greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

For additional information, you may contact me:

David Williams at [email]

Or my Dissertation Chair, Dr. [chair's name], at [phone] or [email].

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Study Participants,

My name is David Williams, Jr., from Liberty University. I am conducting my doctoral research in [major] under the supervision of Dr. [instructor name]. I am running a research study to explore the experiences of Black male teachers in the K-12 system and understand how they perceive the challenges affecting their educator careers in South Carolina. Chapter 3 will focus on the research method for this study. To investigate this phenomenon, I am using interviews for data collection and asking you to participate as interviewees. Your opinions and feedback are critical.

If you decide to volunteer, you must indicate your consent in this Informed Consent Form.

Essential highlights of the support include:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- There are no known or anticipated risks from participating in this study.
- Any information that you provide will remain confidential.
- Declining to participate or withdrawing from the study will not impact you.

The study has received ethical clearance from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you agree to participate, please indicate your full name and provide your

Signature.

David Williams

APPENDIX D: RESULTS DISCUSSION FROM THREE DATA SOURCES

Table 5

Lived Experiences and Influences on Wanting to be a Teacher

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Group Totals
Being a Role Model	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Wanting to work with Youth	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Family Members as Educators	x		x		X		x		x	x	6/10
Wanting to Make an Impact	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	10/10

Table 5 displays a lot of different influences for the participants. This question showed that all participants wanted to work with the Youth. Being a role model for the child was also a significant driving factor for all participants.

Family Members as Educators. Teacher 7 shared, "I come from a family of educators; I have been playing teacher with my cousins since I was 7," Teacher 3 said, "The one aspect about it I became guided that manner through my head football coach in college, due to the fact he saw

something in me stated we want to go into education and could become a coach as well, so because of that was my best route is to go through the educational program."

The third interview question is: *What social challenges do you perceive can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 education?* Table 6 provides answers from each participant and what social challenges they think could discourage pursuing teaching.

Table 6

Social Challenges of Wanting to Be a Teacher

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Group Totals
Lack of Parent Involvement	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Overcrowded Classrooms	x	x		x	x		x		x	x	7/10
Lack of Support	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Lack of Effective Communication		x	x		x		x	x	x		6/10

Table 7 displays what financial challenges teachers tend to go through. This question showed that all participants went through similar economic challenges during their teaching careers. Low start-off salary and lack of school funding for supplies were two areas all participants agreed on.

Lack of School Funding on Supplies. Teacher 9 stated, “Every teacher at my school spends money on supplies and other items their students need to succeed. As a teacher, we are already underpaid, and having to spend our money to ensure our students are prepared for class adds to my educator fatigue.”

The fifth interview question is: *What racial challenges do you perceive can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 education?* Table 8 provides answers from each participant and what racial challenges they think could discourage pursuing teaching.

Table 8

Racial Challenges on Wanting to Be a Teacher

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Group Totals
Being a Minority Educator	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Overcoming Stereotypes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Equal Opportunity	x		x		x		x		x	x	6/10

Table 8 displays what financial challenges teachers tend to go through. This question showed that all participants went through similar economic challenges during their teaching careers. Low start-off salary and lack of school funding for supplies were two areas all participants agreed on.

Being a Minority Educator Teacher 5 shared, "You may be hip, educated and relate with the students by way of being actual to improve the fee and respect for instructors." Being able to be relatable is critical. Teacher 6 stated, "Having more minority teachers will help with minority students; having someone in the class that looks like you and has overcome stereotypes can help kids tremendously."

The sixth interview question is: *What political challenges do you perceive can deter Black males from pursuing a career in K-12 education?* Table 9 provides answers from each participant and what political challenges they think could discourage pursuing teaching.

Table 9

Political Challenges on Wanting to be a Teacher

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Group Totals
Micromanaged	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10/10
Curriculum											
Staff Political		x		x			x	x		x	5/10
Standpoints											
Lack of Training/Experience	x		x				x		x	x	5/10

 Addressing

 Controversial Issues

Table 9 displays what political challenges teachers tend to go through. This question showed that all participants went through similar political challenges during their teaching careers. Micromanaged Curriculum was one area all participants agreed on.

Lack of Training/Experience Addressing Controversial Issues. Teacher 3 stated, "As a teacher, I try my best to avoid discussions about triggering classroom issues. I know this may lead to loss of classroom control, different standpoints from the administrative team, and even calls from parents to name a few. However, as an educator, sometimes you cannot avoid those conversations, and how could we effectively address those situations if they happen?"

Results from Interview Questions

In this section, I will restate each question and then provide summative records in table form to provide answers to each question. The first interview question is: *What beliefs may have contributed to the underrepresentation of Black male teachers?* Table 2 provides solutions to this first question.

Table 10

Belief About Underrepresentation

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Group totals
Low pay	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	X	X	X	10/10
Not valued	x		x		x	x	x	X	X	X	8/10

Lack of Current Black Teachers	x	x	x	x	x		x	X	X	8/10	
Lack of Support	x	x	x	x		x		X	X	X	8/10
Feel Disrespected		x		x	x	x	x	X		X	7/10
Lack of Patience	x	x		x			x		X	X	6/10

When analyzing Table 10, it seems that the participants held similar beliefs about why Black male teacher representation is so low regardless of the years in the career. Some firm answers at some point in their responses to this question had needed more support, low pay, and feeling disrespected. Furthermore, there appears to be an underlying theme from the participants' responses that shows the lack of feeling "valued" and the current lack of Black male teachers as to why they do not want to pick teaching as a career.

Lack of Support. Teacher 5 shared, "Sometimes I feel as if I only have myself to rely on because I am a male. They feel that I automatically should come in with all the tools needed to control a classroom."

Low Pay. All participants stated that low pay is a significant reason Black males do not want to be in teaching. Teacher 2 shared: "I truly believe they feel the pay is low. That is the status quo with being a teacher. Let us just be completely honest. I think once they leave the Education field, they want to experience that they are doing something that makes more money."

Feel disrespected. Teacher 1 shared, "As educators, we feel disrespected now by the district we work for and the parents. Sometimes, they forget that we are humans and have lives outside of the classroom. We go through life and have issues just like you do."

The second interview question is: *What are your experiences and influences of wanting to be a Black male teacher in the K-12 system in South Carolina?* Table 3 provides answers to the second question.

Results from Focus Group Questions

The focus group questions evolved with the cause of getting in-depth information concerning Black male teachers and the motivational factors that motivated them to choose education as a profession. The following is an assessment of the participant's responses to each focus group question observed with a summary of the information.

Focus Group Question 1

Share your experiences regarding what you, as a Black male, perceive to be the key challenges to becoming a teacher in South Carolina.

The participants considered that scholars must realize what they must do after growing up. They said students are nonetheless attempting to find out who they are. They accept that students are already growing to dislike teachers and suppose, "I am now not going into education because I am not going to have students talk to me the manner they do today," in line with Teacher 5.

The participants agreed that administrators and leaders must support and defend their staff for respect to be shown toward the profession. They also indicated that, as educators, they need to make connections with their students. Teacher 6 shared, "You may be hip, educated, and relate with the students by way of being actual to improve the fee and respect for instructors." Being able to be relatable is critical.

Focus Group Question 2

Share your experiences regarding what you, as a Black male, perceive to be the key challenges to remaining a teacher in South Carolina.

Teacher 1 states, "The largest hassle is that Black male teachers are outnumbered. This is a huge problem all around the United States. The truth is that the populace of Black male teachers is low, which may lead to their experience not being as expected. Most researchers see the hassle of a low Black male teacher population as an unavoidable populace trouble. The low Black population has an extensive bad effect on the cultural perception of most Black Americans. There is a well-known perception that the cultural diversity of Black Americans is negatively impacted."

Teacher 1 stated, "The contributing factors to last in education were also contemplated inside the two themes of transform transference and double recognition. Participants preferred to transfer their role model experiences to students and offer validation to counter the stereotypes that may be experienced by using many scholars, specifically Black boys. Through using storytelling, look at participants' shared stories of racial pride, breaking down stereotypes for all students, and teaching applicable life lessons so one can preserve students out of the cradle to the prison pipeline." This question aligns with the second interview question, in which responses are in Table 3.

Focus Group Question 3

To what extent do you believe individual or group micro-aggressions (verbal/behavioral slights) at a particular school play/played a part in the challenges you have experienced?

Teacher 9 stated, "Being a Black male, you are expected to go through these experiences and be able to "take it like a grown-up. It is not right or fair to us, but that is the expectation."

Teacher 10 stated, "Micro-aggressions are something we tend to deal with daily, having to be the "bigger person" to situations because responding will never go as planned for us."

Focus Group Question 4

To what extent do you believe institutional racism plays/played a part in the challenges you have experienced?

Teacher 2 stated, "As a Black male, sometimes people see us for what they hear and not for who we generally are. Stereotypes, I think, play a big role; I want to be one to help break the image people may have of Black males." I found that every one of the participants had dealt with a race-related incident at one time in their teaching careers. Whether it came from a colleague's perceived notions or not being considered for possible positions, race's difficulty remains within the teaching profession. While experiencing racism, these teachers said they did not note their colleagues' unique comments, kept their heads up, and focused on educating the students.

While this trouble of race became a finding, it was a tremendous contribution to this study. The Black male presence is targeted across the categories of race and gender. What mattered to the participants was how race functioned in the school.

Focus Group Question 5

Of these experienced challenges, did/do you attribute the pressure you experienced to be because of your race, because of your gender, or because of both race and gender?

Teacher 10 stated, "I feel that being an African American male educator, I came into the profession with pressure. We are automatically considered disciplinary for my class and the entire school." Teacher 8 stated, "Being a male, we already must ensure we come in with classroom management based on gender. We have to come into the classroom with some traits or skills that most teachers learn while being a teacher."

Focus Group Question 6

How would you sum up what it means to be male or Black or male and Black in the context of the teaching profession?

Being a Black male in the teaching profession, the participants learned they had to build relationships to succeed—some evolved relationships transferred to the outdoor school room. Teacher 6 would see some of his former students in their work environments while going to the store or a drive-thru. Those students were thrilled to see him and appreciated having him as their teacher. The participants said that some students admitted they were like a father figure to them. The participants have been devoted to constructing relationships. Participants build relationships by attending student extracurricular activities, including sports, performances, and competitions outdoors during the school day. The literature states that building relationships between teachers, students, and the community is essential (J. Bryan, 2005). Some of the participants greeted students in the halls before the beginning of class. They also said they could open more to students by seeing them outside of the school setting.

Focus Group Question 7

What might be changes made in efforts toward racial and ethnic diversity in education?

Teacher 8 stated, "Everyone should be trained and treated equally regardless of race. The stereotypical mindset that many people have towards Black Male teachers should be used for all teachers." Teacher 1 stated, "With Black male teachers only accounting for two percent of the entire teacher population, I see more programs offered to help get more representation in the field. Students need to see more of themselves in teachers in the classroom.

Results from Document Review Questions

Data collection is a process of gathering recollections, mind, feelings, and personal observations from the angle of the participant, as felt through a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The data evaluation procedure used descriptive and comparative phenomenological techniques. The descriptive approach to analysis allowed me to find issues, patterns, context, and the means of every dimension. I became wholly immersed in the records by accomplishing a focus group, accompanied by a verbatim transcription of the audio-recorded meeting, coding the information, and carefully reading the transcript.

Document Review Question 1

Looking at the document, how does it relate to challenges K-12 Black male teachers face in education?

Teacher 8 brought a news article to help answer this question; he stated, "We are in a profession that is predominantly female and lacks the Black male teacher; there is less than two percent of Black male teachers in the entire United States." Teacher 2 also stated, "We do not feel supported in our school buildings; some of us tend to return to schools we were enrolled in. We try to be that change but need guidance, professional development, and support as everyone else." Teacher 5 stated, "We are looked to take on more duties than just being a "teacher," being the one to help discipline students that are not ours to serving as a liaison for families of color."

Document Review Question 2

How has the document informed you on strategies to implement that would help you to excel in the profession within the classroom and beyond?

Teacher 10 said, "It informed me not to be afraid to ask for help; as a male, we tend to think that asking for help shows weakness. That is not the case; it helps us to grow and learn about areas or things we may need to gain the most experience. After reading this article, I felt throughout it

that, as the saying goes, "You never know until you ask." Signing up for professional development in areas you want to learn more about or even transition to in your educational career can be very beneficial. A new textbook or new technology is incorporated every year into school systems. Having that background knowledge on these things will help throughout the school tremendously and lead to less stress."

Document Review 3

How does the document reflect the benefits or challenges related to identity as a Black male teacher on your campus?

Teacher 3 said, "The benefit of being a Black male teacher is that we do not have as many behavioral problems with students. Once you set that classroom culture with your students, it makes teaching them a lot easier." Teacher 6 said, "One of the challenges as a Black male teacher is you are looked to be the teacher that may not come in with the knowledge or background needed to be effective. You must prove yourself every day you come into work."

Document Review 4

Based on the document you have presented, what recommendations would you make to educational leaders to improve the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in South Carolina?

Teacher 1 said, "Reading the document I have with me, one way to recruit more Black male teachers into the education field is to make them feel seen. We are letting them know that they are needed and valuable to impact our students' lives. Pouring into them from current teachers in the field will help with recruitment as well. Allowing us to give the prospective teacher the "real" will help tremendously. Allowing a veteran Black male teacher to pair with a young Black male teacher can help with retainment in a big way."

