AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES: DO THEY PERFORM BETTER ON STANDARDIZED READING AND MATHEMATICS TESTS IN TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OR NON-TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS?

by

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ABSTRACT

SONY ANDERSON. African-American Males: Do they perform better on standardized reading and mathematics tests in Title I elementary schools or Non-Title I elementary schools. (Under the direction of DR. CHUANG WANG)

African-American males continue to slip through the cracks of the Education System in the United States. McSpadden McNeil et al. (2008) report that district officials continue to focus on school scores as if they are the only way to assess student progress. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a difference between third, fourth, and fifth grade African-American male's academic achievement in both Title I and non-Title I Schools within a large suburban school district in the southeastern United States during the 2016-2017 school year. In an attempt to determine whether Title I elementary schools or non-Title I elementary schools were assisting with closing the achievement gap for African-American males, an ex post facto study design was used to investigate the academic achievement of African-American males during the 2016-2017 school year based on the End-of-Grade Assessments in reading comprehension and mathematics. The results of the multivariate analysis of variance (MONAVA) indicated that there was a significant difference between African-American males who attended Title I elementary schools and those who attended non-Title I elementary schools. The implications for this large urban school district in the southeastern United States should be to collectively plan ways to increase academic achievement for African-American males in both Title I and

non-Title I elementary schools across the district based on No Child Left Behind Legislation by evaluating how money is spent on resources, staff, and professional development.

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The race is not given to the swift nor the strong, but to the one who endures until the end. —Ecclesiastes 9:11

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCR	College and Career Readiness
CEP	Community Eligibility Provision
CMS	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
EC	Exceptional Children
EOG	End-of-Grade Assessment
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Act
FRL	Free and Reduced Lunch
GLP	Grade Level Proficiency
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
TRC	Text Reading and Comprehension

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

African-American students, specifically males, continue to perform at increasingly lower rates than other subgroups of students based on standardized assessments. There appears to be a disconnection between assessments and teaching strategies (Donnor & Shockley, 2010). This continues to affect the achievement gap, making it even more significant. Donnor and Shockley (2010) believe that there is an increasingly large number of African-American males who attend Title I schools. Their livelihood is dependent on the school's ability to break down barriers such as achievement mandates and state testing norms. Title I school designation is determined by the percentage of students who live in poverty that are currently enrolled in a school. Additional funding comes from the federal government based on the Elementary and Secondary Act, which was designed to help increase academic achievement.

African-American students, specifically males, have been misunderstood in the classroom. There have been a large number of students who have been placed in exceptional children's programs, have multiple behavior referrals and continue to drop out of school (Dunbar, 1999). Society has its perception of African-Americans, but is it empathetic to the conditions that many African-American male students endure daily? There are many African-American male students who live in poverty, whose parents are unemployed, who endure poor living conditions, who have been exposed to domestic violence, whose family life is unstable, or they or someone in their family may suffer from a form of mental illness, yet they come to school each day expecting the best from educators. Often the media portrays African-American males as

lethargic, unskilled, and violent. Such a negative outlook on any culture could be deemed unfair and cruel. (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006).

The overall goal of this research was to identify whether African-American males were more successful in Title I schools or non-Title I schools. During this research, End-of-Grade Test scores of African-American males were compared between Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools in order to identify which school setting best met the needs of African-American male students.

1.2 Educational Reform

Imagine being beaten, whipped, or losing your life because you were caught reading a book. Africans who were enslaved in the US lost their political freedom, and their social, economic, and educational entitlements. The *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 brought about endless possibilities for African-American schools and its students because it offered equal education. Unfortunately, school board members did not have the interests of African-American students at heart and most European-American parents decided to take their students to more affluent suburban schools along with their financial resources (Morris, 2004).

Morris (2004) declared that African-Americans believed schools were suitable during segregation because they were rooted in the African-American community. They were deemed suitable because African-American educators were employed, and they were responsible for not only teaching the academic curriculum but also ensuring African-American students were adequately exposed to social, cultural, and political experiences that impacted African-Americans. African-American educators were also responsible for ensuring that students knew how to behave in school as well as in

public. It was only after desegregation that the closing of African-American schools harmed the African-American student through the disparate bussing of African-American students to all-white schools and the dismissal and devaluation of African-American educators.

Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education was a Supreme Court case that played a significant role in integrating Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) in 1970. The federal court overturned the Swann court decision in 2002. This impacted the CMS school system; it allowed schools to become re-segregated and left parents with an option to choose another school other than their home school. Many African-American leaders were disappointed in the change because students who lived in more affluent neighborhoods had newer schools, while those who did not were forced to attend older neighborhood schools if they did not get their first choice. This also meant that there would be a significant chance that the affluent neighborhood schools would be overcapacity and there would be lower enrollment at the older neighborhood schools (Morris, 2004).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was created to assist underperforming schools, such as Title I schools, by establishing a criterion for educators and administrators to follow on select subjects like math and reading. Underperforming schools received additional financial support from the district, and the district was responsible for implementing interventions. There was a decrease of time allotted to the arts and sciences because the focus was on math and reading content. States were asked to create their assessments, which created a problem: each state utilized different curriculum. States could also decide how much money they would spend on their

assessments and this created yet another issue as both states and the sizes of individual districts varied because of per-pupil capital along with economic disparities. Erskine (2014) shares that while the initial purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act was to assist low performing students, who scored significantly lower than their peers on standardized assessments, educators had a different point of view. From the beginning, educators were set against one another, when it came to student test scores. Erskine (2014) reveals that teachers often did not collaborate on lesson plans but competed to have the best test scores amongst their peers. Students were looked at as a test score, rather than as individual learners. Unethical practices were being implemented, and educators often cheated in order to get higher test scores on assessments.

Erskine (2014) also suggests that educators began teaching to the test, instead of ensuring that students learned the entire curriculum. Educators began over assessing students. The creativity of teaching concepts was lost. Educators realized that assessments were not intended for minorities in their classes, but rather European-American middle- and upper-class students (Erskine, 2014). Groen (2012) suggests that once state designated assessments were given to assess student's academic success and the data were analyzed, the data was publicly published with the educator's name attached to the student's academic success. Educators were rated low on their evaluations or even lost their jobs based on the proficiency of their students.

1.3 African-American Male Learners

Clotfelter (2009) shared that there is still an increasingly large gap in student achievement between African-American males and their peers. It was reported that black students are below the median in both math and reading. Superville (2015)

collected national data on the success of African-American males compared to their peers, and their findings reveal that during the 2012-2013 school year, the national graduation rate for African-American males was 59%, while the graduation rate of European-American males was 80%. The findings also revealed that based on the 2010-2011 school year, the national graduation rate for African-American males was 51%, which showed a slight increase. The findings also revealed that the national graduation rate gap between African-American males and European-American males increased from 19% in 2009-2010 to 21% in 2012-2013. During the 2012-2013 school year in North Carolina, the graduation rate for African-Americans was 61% compared to 77% of European-Americans, which was a 16% gap. During the 2011-2012 school year in a large urban district in the southeastern United States, there was a 21% or more gap in graduation rates between African-American males and European-American male students. In the report in 2015, Superville reported that a large urban district in the southeastern United States had one of the highest African-American male populations during the 2011-2012 school year of more than 30,035 students. The graduation rate for African-American males was 41% while 71% European-American males graduated, revealing a 29% graduation rate gap.

Currently, there is a large number of African-American males being placed in special education classes (Gill, 2014). Finkel (2010) noticed a trend in African-American males who were assigned to special education classes for being behind two to three years in reading who later developed conduct problems because they were misdiagnosed. African-American males, who were earning their Ph.Ds in Education at

the University of Pennsylvania Grad Prep Academy, shared that their former educators attempted to place them in special education classes (Harper & Davis, 2012).

African-American males consistently receive more disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions than their peers (Gill, 2014). Henfield (2012) believes that some African-American male misbehavior may be attributed to boredom in class but believes the solution should be to give students more challenging and rigorous work. Mendez and Knoff (2003) convey the idea that African-American males are suspended more than any other subgroup due to "cultural and social misunderstandings (p. 44)." They also believe that educators should seek professional development on diversity and that often there may be some form of educator bias during these incidents. This could be addressed by creating a prevention plan to address repeat offenders by incorporating a counseling section, strategically involving parents, and including support services. Livingston and Nahimana (2006) shared startling information that one in four African-American males is expelled each school year.

Toldson et al. (2009) warned that nearly 3.2% of African-American male students are retained in 1st and 4th grades. This same study found that African-American males are three times more likely to be retained by 11th grade than their European-American counterparts. Rodney and Crafter's 1999 study informed researchers that there is a "positive association" between students who were continuously suspended and those being retained (p. 188). Since there is a connection between suspensions and retentions, African-American males who are repeatedly suspended should be offered another option other than out-of-school suspensions, such as in-school suspension or detention. Educators and administrators should also take

into consideration other options instead of retaining students to provide alternative methods of support, such as tutoring or remediation.

African-American males are more likely to drop out of high school than their peers (Gill, 2014). According to Toldson et al. (2009) in 1940, only 6.7% of African-American males had a high school diploma compared to 25% of European-American males. However, the gap doubled in 1950 with more than 50% of European-American males receiving their high school diploma than 18% of African-American males. Bell (2014) provides valuable explanations as to why African-American males drop out of school, which include educator bias, educator's unwillingness to assist in learning new skills, student difficulty with new concepts, dislike of educators, issues at home, peer pressure, lack of focus, prioritizing, and medical attention. He also claims that African-American male students often feel like no one cares about them. African-American males earning their PhDs in Education who participated in a study at the University of Pennsylvania Grad Prep Academy also shared that they received limited communication from their counselors about college and career readiness (Harper & Davis, 2012).

African-American males are typically not included in rigorous courses that involve math and science coursework (Gill, 2014). Educators are not referring African-American males to the Gifted and Talented or Advanced Placement programs (Gill, 2014). Educators must seek giftedness in all socioeconomic groups (Henfield, 2012).

Hargrove and Seay (2011) suggested that educator's prejudices dilute the curriculum for African-American males instead of holding them accountable like their peers. Educators based non-school related concerns as reasons why African-American

males do not test into the Gifted and Talented Program: language experience, home setting, how their cultural group identifies with giftedness, and the use of non-standard English. While there continues to be a focus on African-American males and low student performance, there are African-American males who do qualify for the Talent Development program and Advanced Placement courses. With high scholastics come high demands and stressful environments. With the high demands of rigorous courses and the stress to close the achievement gap, African-American males may feel they are being held to stricter levels of "accountability" as opposed to students from other cultures (Henfield, 2012).

1.4 Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study was to identify whether enrollment at a Title I School or Non-Title I School in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States impacted the academic achievement of African-American males on the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. The findings from this research will provide information to the large urban school district in the southeastern United States as it relates to the academic achievement of African-American males in both Title I and non-Title I Schools.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Was there a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?
2. When controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) were there differences in academic achievement as measured by

End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?

1.6 Delimitations

This study did not address the teaching strategies or curriculum which teachers used to instruct students for academic success. It focused on the students' classification, attendance, retention, and discipline. This study focused on African-American males who were in 3rd, 4th or 5th grade during the 2016-2017 school year. Academic achievement was based on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test scores in reading comprehension and mathematics. The study focused on African-American male students who were enrolled in schools within a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. African-American male's academic success on additional assessments such as Measures of Academic Process (MAP), Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC), or classroom common assessments were not utilized to triangulate data.

1.7 Limitations

1. African-American male students who participated in the End-of-Grade Tests administered during the 2016-2017 school year may have transferred at any time during any given school year from another school within the same district, a charter or public school, or from out of state.
2. Information on any traumatic situations (divorce, death, etc.) that may have occurred and impacted the student's achievement on the End-of-Grade Test during the 2016-2017 school year were not taken into consideration.

3. Whether students received testing accommodations such as separate setting, read aloud, multiple testing sessions (i.e., 3-minute break every 30 minutes), extended time, or any other testing accommodation were not taken into consideration.
4. The validity of test scores should be questioned with consideration of day and time of test administration, the temperature of the environment, the amount of test preparation, medication, etc.
5. Whether students were in the Exceptional Children's Program or Academically Gifted Program is unknown.

1.8 Assumptions

There are two assumptions for this research study. First, it was assumed that students who attend Title I elementary schools perform lower than Non-Title I elementary school students because of their low socioeconomic status (SES) based on standardized assessments. The second assumption was that all student data collected during any End-of-Grade test during the 2016-2017 school year were reliable and valid and could be used in comparison to other schools within the same district or in the same state.

1.9 Definitions

In this study, for consistency, the following terms and definitions were provided:

1. No Child Left Behind - legislation to guarantee that students in all public schools learn specific goals by highly qualified educators.
2. Achievement Gap - a continuing gap of educational measures between groups of students based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and gender.

3. End-of-Grade test - normed assessment given to elementary students at the end of the school year.
4. Student Achievement - grading process that utilizes standardized measurement, which may include GPA.
5. Title I School - federal funding implemented for elementary and secondary schools in order to give equal access to schools with low socioeconomic students and to hold districts accountable for student's success. Its purpose is to close the achievement gap among all socioeconomic groups by assisting with funding for professional development, learning materials, and parent involvement activities.
6. Socioeconomic Status (SES) - individual economic and social position in relation to others based on income, education, and occupation.
7. Students with Disabilities (SWD) - someone with a physical or mental impairment that may require an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
8. Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) - students who show evidence of high academic achievement through creativity, artistic or leadership skills in a specific academic area.
9. Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - a plan created by a team to help a student who is in the Exceptional Children's Program.
10. Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) - utilized for No Child Left Behind Legislature to determine the academic performance on standardized tests by the U.S. Department of Education.

Chapter Summary

Rodney et al. (1999) found that African-American males typically score three times lower on standardized assessments than their peers. They also found that African-American males were more likely to be placed in special education programs and retained. Amber Jones (2014) of Emory University revealed that while there may never be a definite answer as to whether African-American males need separate schools to thrive academically, there will always be a need to critically review the effectiveness of academic professionals and their learning institutions. In order to prevent high levels of incarceration of African-American males and higher rates of high school graduation, Mendez and Knoff (2003) suggested assessing student, staff, and school environment characteristics to determine which incentives and consequences would be most effective.

In order to increase the academic achievement and graduation rate of African-American males, Toldson et al. (2009) believe that the educational system needs to be reformed. They shared that the curriculum should be measured in order to identify the connection between it and an African-American male's academic success. They were hopeful that the reform and measurement of the educational system and curriculum would lead African-American males to develop a curiosity for learning and increased academic achievement and graduation rates.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Emdin (2012) claims that educators often shy away from the realization that African-American students differ from their peers. He identifies media as the mode that has negatively portrayed African-American males in society as violent and academically unsuccessful. Emdin (2012) suggests that an unfortunate negative portrayal of African-American males in the media has impacted their experiences at school and suggests that African-Americans are frequently judged based on myths and stereotypes, that allow some individuals to view African-Americans as inferior to other ethnic groups and races. The success of African-American males relies heavily on their experiences in school; this will later determine whether they are employed and whether their wages will be aligned with their colleagues (Guy, 2015).

Though there is currently a negative perception that African-American males do not want to achieve academic success in school or want access to a rigorous curriculum, this is not the case. Schools must find ways to stimulate and persuade African-American learners to share their abilities and talents in the learning environment (Garibaldi, 1993). Often school administrators label African-American males as at-risk students. Shearin (2002) defines at-risk students as those whose environmental surroundings include "drugs, mental disorders, sexual activity, family- related issues, and juvenile delinquency" (p.62).

2.1 Educational Legislature

President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve the quality of education for the unfortunate. Its main focus was to create an educational organization that focused on educating

disadvantaged children. One of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's main components is Title I. Preventing students from dropping out of school, financially supporting students with disabilities, building over three-thousand libraries, and supporting the English learners are some programs (Gamson et al., 2015).

2.1.1 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka allowed parents in low socioeconomic conditions to select schools with additional resources and supplies that could better assist their child to learn. *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* impacted African-American educators because they no longer had employment in predominately African-American schools. While *Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka* was implemented to desegregate segregated schools, it also had negative effects on African-American learners. It negatively impacted the number of African-Americans who had interest in becoming educators as well as increasing the number of educators who could not relate to African-American learners. Classroom educators no longer resembled the ethnicity of their class (Marbley et al., 2007). Green (2008) insists that the Equal Protection Clause protects African-American males from forms of discrimination, while Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures funding is available to anyone no matter their race.

2.1.2 No Child Left Behind

Jennings and Rentner (2006) share that the No Child Left Behind Act was implemented to raise student academic achievement in reading and math. Although schools are focusing on raising proficiency levels in reading, math, and science, they have often placed subjects such as social studies on the back burner. Educators are

strategically supporting assessment and instructional alignment to increase student academic achievement. Schools who have not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are being restructured to help increase student academic success and must employ teachers who are deemed highly qualified. While students may be given more assessments, educators are using this data to help close the achievement gap. While many schools are receiving federal aid to help improve student achievement, the list of schools that were on the "needs improvement" list has consistently declined.

Marbley et al. (2007) believe that teacher preparation programs are being criticized for not preparing teachers to work in diverse schools. A negative aspect of the No Child Left Behind Act is that it focuses on standardized assessments that don't adequately assess student's ability, teacher impact, or school effectiveness (Thompson & Allen, 2012). Though the No Child Left Behind Act was created to improve test scores and lessen the number of high school dropouts, it has increased student apathy and created an alarming rise in school discipline problems. Thompson and Allen (2012) suggest that instead of comparing US students to students around the world, there should be a focus on early childhood learning, parental involvement initiatives, and closing the achievement gap by implementing strategies to help African-American students specifically. There should also be a discussion about changing assessment practices.

Green (2008) advocated that the No Child Left Behind Act ensures that students in the third, fifth, sixth, ninth, tenth and twelfth grades are successfully learning reading, math and science curriculum. Schools that have failed for two years must complete an improvement plan. After the third year without growth in academic

achievement, students are then able to pursue schools that are performing adequately, and the school must offer to tutor students who choose to remain. The fourth year without success presents an opportunity for the staff to be replaced with more qualified staff that is deemed capable of promoting learning and parents are allowed to select another school for their children. After the fifth year with no increases in academic achievement the state takes over the school and has the option to turn the school into a charter school or restructure the entire staff to increase academic achievement.

Au (2009) claims that standardized assessments were utilized to assist students and staff meets No Child Left Behind goals by identifying deficits in the curriculum and instruction. We must be cautious as some of the No Child Left Behind regulations cause low performing African-American males to be placed in special education classrooms (Finkel, 2010). But it is critical that standardized tests are utilized to gather data on what students do not know, so that teachers may review content for mastery (Roediger III, 2011).

2.2 African-American Male Learners

African-American learners come to school with their own biases, often wondering what perceptions their educators possess. Students, specifically African-Americans, believe that educators do not think they are intelligent enough to complete complex tasks and are not treated the same as their peers (Stevenson, 2008). There is a misconception about African-American male students, who tend to be seen as though they are not taking their learning seriously because they are joking and playing with peers. Thomas et al. (2009) suggest that African-American males are coping with uncomfortable situations that they may be dealing with in and out of class. Rejection

early in childhood could make it difficult for children to later deal with rejection during their schooling.

Fenzel et al. (1997) identified three major factors that impact African-American male learning: peer relations, teacher relations, and school demands. Failure in any element could contribute to the failure of the African-American males academically and burdens the student with unwanted stress, which also contributes to academic failure. Claims are made that African-American male students consistently seek autonomy amongst their peers and educators, decision-making opportunities during school, and desire meaningful relationships with educators. It may prove to be difficult to learn while in school when you face daily challenges such as living in poverty, biases, and schools that don't know how to work with students like you (Gardner and Mayes, 2013). Monroe (2005) suggests that schools' impact African-American learners with more than just academic achievement, students who encounter a negative experience while in school often end up in the penitentiary system.

Palmer and Maramba (2011) share several reasons why African-American males struggle with academic achievement during their tenure in school. One contribution to academic failure is the perception of "acting white (Palmer & Maramba, 2011, p. 436)." Townsend (2002) states that some African-American students are capable of achieving higher on standardized assessments but assess poorly because they do not want to be tormented by their peers for achieving high scores on standardized assessments or perceived as "acting white (Palmer & Maramba, 2011, p.436)." African-American students who are capable of achieving high scores may dumb down their ability so that they are not perceived as "acting white (Palmer & Maramba, 2011,

p.436)." This theory allows intellectual students an opportunity to blend in with their lower-performing peers (Stinson, 2011). There is a perception that doing well academically means African-American students are "acting white (Palmer & Maramba, 2011, p. 436)" which causes high academic achieving students to become defiant against school authority and to disobey school rules (Townsend, 2000). Garibaldi (1992) suggests that educators teach African-American learners how to cope with peer pressure associated with academic success in school.

Ford (2012) states that it is critical that educators build a positive relationship with students and realize that African-American students express their emotions in different ways than non-African-Americans. Thomas et al. (2009) shares that African-American males have to hide their anger and emotions during stressful situations so as not to be described as aggressive. African-American male students need not be rejected by their teachers, administrators, and other members of the learning community.

Ford (2012) shares that African-American students need to socialize throughout the school day, so creating opportunities to work cooperatively would assist with learning. He believes that creating engaging lessons with opportunities to move also aid in education and that lessons should connect text to their real-world experiences for retention of information, but more importantly, to help them engage in their work. Ford (2012) also believes that educators should be aware that African-American students have a need to verbalize their opinions and that expressing themselves is not a sign of disrespect, but rather a way to communicate and learn.

African-American learners thrive in educational environments where teachers assign activities that allow them to multi-task and socialize, yet many educators do not

associate student engagement and student achievement to active participation in clubs, organizations, and other extracurricular activities (Townsend, 2000). Milner et al. (2008) suggest that educators consider teaching African-American males in alternative ways that engage them in what they find essential, an example would include teaching poetry through the use of rap music lyrics. Mahiri (1998) suggests teaching students using content that students can relate to, such as hip hop and rap. Every so often students are not receptive to discussing content with teachers because they view the songs as referring to their real life and they would rather focus on school life while at school. Townsend (2000) suggests that educators find what interests the students and use that as a conduit for educating. If a student has an interest in cars, the educator should find resources on vehicles as a way to teach educational concepts.

Davis and Jordan (1994) suggest that African-American males are often perceived as prey, though they are also viewed as contributors to their academic success. Kinzer and Taft (2012) recommend students take part in increasing their academic achievement in school by setting attainable goals and tracking their progress while expressing their academic concerns to stakeholders. Maton et al. (1998) believes that there are high achieving African-American males who are successful because their parents (1)sent them to preschool, (2) have high expectations of their child, (3) ensured that their child was placed in the appropriate setting in school, (4) they assist with homework daily, (5) actively participate in school activities and parent conferences, and (6) enroll children in summer camps and other learning activities.

African-American males can be successful in elementary schools when positive role models assigned focus on guiding students towards a positive path and structures

are provided (Kafele, 2012). The author also mentions academic success of African-American male students who participate in small-group sessions and have a one-on-one mentor. African-American males who exhibit self-respect are more likely to succeed in the classroom setting. Emdin (2012) suggests that educators accept the differences between African-American males and other students. The author suggests that educators allow time for students to engage in collaborative dialogue as well as opportunities to assist their peers. An example would include a student being responsible for passing out classroom materials to their peers. Emdin (2012) recommends educators utilize student interests to support educational goals within the classroom.

2.3 Contributions to African-American Male Academic Achievement

Jencks and Phillips (1998) reveal that the achievement gap for African-American males occurs before students attend Kindergarten and often lasts well into adulthood. Palmer and Maramba (2011) cite Blake and Darling (1994) stated "more than 44% of black men are functionally illiterate (p. 434)." The average seventeen-year-old African-American male is performing on the same level as a thirteen-year-old European-American male (Almond, 2012). Davis and Jordan (1994) state that the following circumstances in the educational environment influence African-American male achievement: attendance for both students and teachers, lack of African-American educators, discipline referrals and consequences, and teacher efficacy or ability to effectively teach African-American males.

Educators can impact achievement based on their preparation, experience, and avoidance of absences (Ford & Moore, 2013). Davis and Jordan (1994) state that

teacher absences negatively impact African-American male's academic success. Fantuzzo et al. (2012) suggest that attendance also plays a significant role in the academic achievement of African-American males. Unfortunately, students are often not able to control their attendance because of parental irresponsibility or neglect.

Gardner and Mayer (2013) express concern that in past years African-American educators served as role models to low performing African-American students. Unfortunately, there is a decreasing number of African-American educators teaching students in schools today. There has been a consistent waning of African-American educators, specifically males, in the past years (Donnelly, 2015). Miller Dyce (2013) cites that the lack of presence of African-American males in the educational system takes away from positive role models for African-American students that may not have access to at home or in their immediate community. Howard (2012) believes African-American male students could better relate to African-American male educators because they take an interest in student's personal lives.

Townsend (2000) suggests that the lack of African-American educators and administrators in schools takes away positive role models for African-American students to look up to and seek assistance from. The lack of African-American educators and administrators in schools leaves students without an advocate as well as someone who understands the language in which they speak.

Institutions of higher education are being criticized for not preparing educators from other ethnic groups to educate African-American students (Gardner and Mayer, 2013) and schools are currently in need of African-American educators who can work with students of all ethnic backgrounds (King, 1993). There are numerous benefits of

African-American educators, which include being able to relate to both parents and students.

African-American males are unjustly disciplined at higher rates than their peers (Fitzgerald, 2009) and African-American students who academically struggle are punished by being assigned detention, in-school-suspension and out-of-school suspension (Monroe, 2005). African-American males are regularly given more severe consequences for their behavior than their counterparts (Monroe, 2005).

Davis and Jordan (1994) support the notion that African-American students perform below academic expectations on standardized assessments when there are discipline issues, and when teachers are unable to motivate African-American males to learn. Administrators and teachers believe that negative classroom behaviors impact the student achievement of other students in the classroom, however, administrators and teachers feel that suspending difficult students for incidents can improve the teacher's ability to teach their peers while they are absent (Cuellar & Makowitz, 2015).

School suspensions are assigned to students who are more likely to live in poverty and demonstrate low academic achievement than their peers. Alternate discipline measures must be taken to ensure that students are consistently in school to learn or educators must ensure that students who are suspended are given an opportunity to complete missed school assignments. Most students who are suspended spend their suspension time participating in activities that do not correct the behavior which caused the initial suspension and may participate in activities that have more extreme consequences.

Suspension rates could decrease if educators implement a plan to educate students about what their desired behavior for school should resemble (Townsend, 2000). African-American learners need classroom environments that have well-defined behavior management procedures where teachers build positive classroom environments and foster relationships with students in their classrooms (Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008).

Class size and the number taken are based on the district's decision. However, this has always been a concern for teachers, administrators, and parents (Mosteller, 1995). Classrooms with smaller numbers of students tend to help aid in African-American academic success (Davis & Jordan, 1994). Both Konstantopoulos and Chung (2009) and Mosteller (1995) claim that when reducing class size in early grades (Kindergarten through third grade) student achievement increases. Mosteller (1995) shared that decreasing classes from twenty-three to fifteen students allowed for fewer distractions in the classroom as well as allowing the teacher adequate time to engage with each student. With smaller class sizes minority students were able to increase student achievement drastically within the first two years of school. Konstantopoulos and Chung (2009) shared results from Project Star, claiming that students in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade who were in smaller classes continued to see academic success between 4th and 8th Grade.

Mosteller (1995) shared the benefits of smaller class size from Project Prime, stating that not only did smaller classes increase student scores on standardized tests but promoted fewer behavior concerns and left teachers feeling more productive in their classrooms. Teachers reported that they were able to consistently complete lessons and

advance through curriculum quicker and had better classroom management, which allowed more individual attention to students. Students were more attentive in class and waited less time to receive assistance from the teacher (Zyngier, 2014).

Ford and Moore (2013) claim that educators play a critical role in closing the achievement gap as the gap continues to widen, educators are charged with solving two problems The first, providing enrichment learning opportunities for students who are performing on or above grade levels that are testing well against others in their district or state on standardized assessments. The second, providing remediation to students who are performing years below grade level (Childress, 2009). Dobbie and Fryer (2011) credit educators who have created initiative programs such as Head Start, bussing students to high-performing schools, and school choice to close the achievement gap.

Today many schools face the issue of teacher turnover. Norman (2010) claims that schools that are in low socioeconomic areas have the lowest teacher retention due to increasingly low staff morale because of low student academic success. Most teachers who leave are new with little knowledge of the field and they do not possess enough strategies to work with struggling students (Morris, 2004). Many educators decide to leave the teaching profession within their first through fifth year. Educators who endure urban schools and high school educators are more likely to leave the field of education (King, 1993). Teacher turnover is becoming a consistent problem in education; educators are leaving education making it difficult for administrators to adequately staff schools (Achinstein et al., 2010). Rashid (2009) suggests that school

districts focus on heavily recruiting African-American male teachers to directly address the low academic achievement of African-American males.

Almond (2012) suggests that African-American success or failure can be attributed to poor health, parent involvement, and socioeconomic status. Galster et al. (2016) shares that environment and health can impact the learning of students, an example would be a student who lives in a place where smog is present, causing the student to be diagnosed with asthma. Their asthma may be so severe that they miss many days of school. Parental medication may also decrease the academic success of students. Parents lack of taking their medication can negatively impact the student' success. Violence and social disorders also affect African-American students; a diagnosis of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) could hinder a student's learning (Galster et al., 2016).

Parents may significantly impact student success by actively participating in learning (Ford and Moore, 2013). Garibaldi (1992) suggests that schools prepare for parents who may need assistance with educational concepts that may not be understood because of a lack of education or new curriculum and strategies. Although parents may often find themselves struggling with homework concepts themselves, this should not discourage them from ensuring that their child completes their homework. Parents should consistently celebrate their child's academic success and continuously share the importance of education with their child. Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) note that parents who do not attend to the needs of their children contribute to their poor academic success.

Morris (2004) indicated that most educators are unaware of their student's life experiences beyond the school day. Both parents and educators can interpret parent involvement as different things. We typically think that it means parents were attending conferences, volunteering, or maybe participating in after-school activities; however, Garibaldi (1992) lets us know that parents can be just as involved from home. Parents should consistently encourage their children to do their best in school each day.

Unfortunately, schools frequently cause parents to be uninvolved in their child's learning. Until schools implement a strategy that allows both students and parents to see the relevance of what students are learning in school and how they can apply it in society, parent involvement will continue to suffer (Lynn, 2006). Because so many parents have had adverse experiences in schools themselves, they are less likely to participate in school activities for their children, which makes others perceive them as uninvolved parents (Morris, 2004).

Becker (2003) suggests that more than 50% of African-American children live with a single parent, which impacts African-American achievement. He claims that the absence of fathers in the African-American home negatively affects the African-American male's academic success in school. It is more likely that African-American homes will consist of a single parent structure. Students who live at home with one parent are considered at-risk students in school. This may be attributed to lower socioeconomic status because of one income. Students from single-parent households tend to perform worse academically and are more likely to drop out of school. The longer a child has lived in a single parent home, the more likely this will impact their academic success. Males are more affected by single-parent homes than females.

Students who live with the opposite sex parent have a better chance of achieving academically (Bateman & Kennedy, 1997).

Dobbie and Fryer (2011) claim that students come to school already behind because of outside factors that significantly affect achievements, such as their parent's socioeconomic status and race. African-American learners often have no choice but to attend low performing schools because of their parent's socioeconomic status. It is essential that we remember that students from low socioeconomic homes may not have the same exposure to experiences as students who come from middle and high socioeconomic homes (Gardner & Mayes, 2013). Chu et al. (2014) share that there is a strong correlation between socioeconomic status and student achievement. Students with higher socioeconomic status tend to do better than students who come from lower socioeconomic status. King (1993) suggests that parents may struggle because of their socioeconomic status and this may attribute to their lack of success with their own educational experiences. Murray and Zvoch (2011) suggest that for students who live in low socioeconomic situations to be successful there must be positive relationships between the student and educators. The authors also share the need to conduct ongoing interventions to promote academic success among African-American students in disadvantaged situations. Closing the achievement gap will increase college graduation rates (Jencks and Phillips, 1998).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are fundamental in supporting the results of this research. In this section, two theories will be introduced to reinforce the purpose of this research critical race theory and African-American male theory.

2.4.1 Critical Race Theory

Hiraldo (2010) shares how Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman introduced critical race theory in the 1970s due to lack of racial reform in America. Disproportionality amongst majority and minority racial groups created a purpose for critical race theory to intentionally define the role that both race and racism play among both groups. As it relates to education, critical race theory should be included in daily conversations about its purpose in creating racial equality and addressing its inequities.

School organizations should utilize critical race theory to introduce cultural proficiency and create inclusive and non-threatening work environments (Hiraldo, 2010). A focus of critical race theory is to avoid stereotyping African-American males, but rather restore the African-American males' image. Howard (2008) suggests that we focus on the social and emotional well-being of African-American males in educational institutions to aid in productive school experiences that lead to productive citizens. Unfortunately, a student's gender, class, disability or culture, to name a few, can impact the quality of education they receive.

Critical race theory encourages education stakeholders to carefully look at the relationship between race, racism, and power as it relates to schools identified as low performing schools based on standardized assessments to determine the best course of action to increase student academic achievement by asking critical questions that deal with racism and inequities (Howard, 2008). While critical race theory conversations are already occurring in the African-American community, district leaders need to join in the dialogue as it relates to critical race theory in the education of specifically African-American males. District leaders should also scrutinize curriculum, instructional

practices, and standardized assessments to ensure that all materials are culturally relevant to all students.

Howard (2008) suggests critically reviewing standardized assessments and discipline utilizing critical race theory. Standardized assessments have been identified explicitly because educators believe that students who perform poorly are not as intelligent as their peers and will not be successful citizens. He also selected discipline due to the zero-tolerance policy which impacts African-American males more than any other ethnic group.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) advise that educators must make connections between critical race theory and education. They believe that *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* increased segregation within schools. Segregated schools include higher levels of concentrations of poverty, which lead to unequal educational practices. In order for schools to meet the needs of African-American males, educators must be intentional about making connections between legislature and critical race theory as it applies to education.

2.4.2 African-American Male Theory

Bush and Bush (2013) introduce the African-American male theory, with six tenets, as a theory that focuses on the treatment of African-American males and its relation to their success in their environment. The principles focus on beliefs that African-American males are complex beings who have several layers to understand due to their African descent. The focus is also on their spiritual and cultural connection to Africa which supports their ability to survive in an ever-changing world. The tenets

also validate African-American males struggle as they navigate classism, racism, and sexism while seeking social justice.

2.5 Title I Schools/ Low Performing Schools

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018) Title I schools are public institutions that are regulated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). They are given additional funding to provide additional academic support to students who come from low-socioeconomic households. The large urban school district in the southeastern United States considers Title I status as having a student percentage of at least 38.75% based on Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) guidelines. The Community Eligibility Provision has taken the place of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), which identifies poverty, to label a school Title I.

School districts should consider strategically identifying schools that have large pockets of low achieving African-American male students and focus on providing community support and any other educational services needed. This will allow schools to create preventive measures and interventions to support struggling students. There needs to be intentional outreach to parents to help increase parental involvement. Support is required to provide parents with educational strategies, parental assistance, and guidance (Fantuzzo et al., 2012).

Stichter et al. (2009) suggest that Title I elementary schools are successful based on instructional strategies that include small group and independent work sessions along with classroom management that is effectively implemented. The authors believe that research-based strategies should be implemented in order to achieve academic success for all students. They caution the amount of time that educators spend engaged

in non-instructional talk, providing negative feedback to students, or students who miss core instruction due to pull out services. Stichter et al. (2009) focus on increasing levels of positive feedback provided to students during independent work time in the classroom. The authors suggest that educators focus on providing small group instruction and offer peer tutoring in order to increase student's academic achievement. Administrators should provide professional development that supports these instructional strategies.

2.6 Standardized Assessments

Statewide testing began in 1970, and North Carolina started to design its assessments in 1993. In 1996, North Carolina initiated the ABCs of Education where students in grades 3 through 8 were assessed (Clotfelter, 2009). The State of the State (1998) specifies that the ABCs of Public Education was introduced during the 1996-1997 school year. The purpose was to focus on accountability, learn the basics, and instill local control. Standardized test data were used for growth standards, which tracked the gains in achievement scores and performance standards tracked the percent of students who were proficient (level 3 and 4). Schools were designated as schools of excellence, schools of distinction, schools making exemplary growth, schools making expected growth and schools having adequate performance to share student academic achievement (State of the State, 1998).

Tests that are given to the entire state or district are known as large-scale assessments, which are used to check teacher accountability. Large-scale assessments came about in 1983, based on the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The purpose was to implement interventions for struggling students, provide acceleration learning for those

who were performing above grade level on standardized assessments, and provide a baseline for the student (DePascale, 2003) The North Carolina End-of-Grade tests are criterion-referenced tests. Criterion-referenced tests are tests that allow testers to show mastery on designated curriculum goal (Bond, 1996). Criterion-referenced tests help school leaders select standards and goals based on how students perform on each standard assessed on the test (Bond, 1996). The End-of-Grade tests in reading comprehension and mathematics were mandated by the North Carolina General Assembly to measure individual student skills for purposes of reporting to the school, district, and state (State of the State, 1998).

Academic achievement is usually based on standardized assessments given once a year (Rogers et al., 2009). Report cards are sent at least four times a year. Report cards can be subjective and are not standardized like state assessments, but they do tell how well students are improving.

While it is wise to test instruction, it is unwise to make as much of testing as instructing.

---Ezra Carr, 1879

Czubaj (1995) claims that standardized assessments are used to collect data on student's intelligence, language development, and reading readiness. Assessors create assessments and utilize them to manage data on students in multiple grade levels with the assumption that students have mastered concepts from previous grades. Townsend (2002) suggests that standardized assessments do not accurately assess student learning or a teacher's ability to teach. Standardized assessments are one way to evaluate the achievement of students; however, educators should consider administering multiple assessments to gauge the academic progress that students have acquired. Frequently,

students may do poorly on state tests, classwork, and may not achieve up to teacher standards; however, they outperform their peers and excel in the community and at home based on specific tasks (Boutte & Hill, 2006). Townsend (2002) shares that some students may have testing anxiety, which causes them to perform poorly on their assessments. Consistent failure on evaluations may negatively impact student efficacy. Repeated failures on an outcome cause the individual to doubt their success on other related issues (Brown and Inouye (1978) cited in Bandura (1978)). Townsend describes how our expected success on an outcome and the actual progress on the task are connected.

Because there is so much pressure placed on educators and administrators to achieve high assessment scores, the pressure to achieve high scores trickles down to students and can negatively impact student efficacy. Due to assessment anxiety, African-American students have dropped out of school before taking a standardized assessment and after failing a standardized assessment, which affects their potential to graduate (Townsend, 2002).

As educators continue to give normed assessments, it's important to remember that evaluations should not be used to give students a score, but rather inform educators on what skills students have not mastered and to assist with planning re-teaching lessons. To increase student academic achievement, school leaders should consider the impact of school climate. The climate reflects interactions between students and educators. Educators can build positive relationships with students by helping them set attainable goals. Educators must remember that a student's enthusiasm about school changes as they progress through grades. Leaders must recognize that students have to

adjust each year to new teachers and their teaching style, new curriculum and skills, and other adjustments such as playing sports, band performances, and club activities. (Gordon Pershey, 2011).

Williams (2011) speculates that teachers feel added stress to ensure that students are performing well on assessments based on monetary incentives. While most education stakeholders rely on the results from state assessments, many believe that teachers may be "teaching to the test" and often leave out critical components of the curriculum (Au, 2009, p.66). Often teachers may "teach to the test" while others cheat by providing additional time to students who do not have IEP accommodations for testing so that they can complete the test, some change student's answers, or even help students by providing answers when they are taking the test (Wright, 2009).

Parents have become a part of the testing scandal as well by allowing students to be "academically redshirted." Parents are keeping Kindergarten aged students home an extra year before sending them to school in hopes that they will be academically prepared and mature enough to pass tests in upper grades (Wright, 2009, p.119). Wallace (2016) suggests that parents opt out of extremely tedious testing of reading and math concepts and rely on performance-based assessments that depend on student performance on projects, papers, and presentations.

Although standardized assessments may not be going anywhere any time soon, it would be wise to utilize student data such as previous scores and attendance to identify and intervene on behalf of students who may not do well (Wright, 2009). To close the achievement gap, school leaders are encouraged to provide professional development on best teaching practices, value planning, and collaborate to create

meaningful lessons and allow teachers and students to build collaborative relationships (Williams, 2011).

2.7 Special Education

Student placement into a Special Education program initially begins with a referral to the Exceptional Children's team (EC). A referral requires a member of the Exceptional Children's team to administer a psychological assessment to the referred student. It is highly likely that a student who has been referred for testing is eventually placed in the Exceptional Children's program. It is ideal that educators implement academic and behavior interventions before submitting a referral for placement of a student in the Special Education program; however, this is not always the case. Interventions can assist with identifying areas of strengths, weaknesses, and research-based strategies that can support behavior and academic deficits. Seldom do teachers consider referring African-American students for Special Education as being biased. Students who receive educational and behavioral interventions may make progress, however, every so often those students are still tested for placement in a Special Education program (Watkins & Kurtz, 2001).

Students who have a medical diagnosis such as autism or ADD/ADHD are typically placed in Special Education programs. Though students may be diagnosed with autism or ADD/ADHD, they can still be productive students. With the right support, students can learn to control the symptoms of their disability to become successful students (Toldson, 2011). On average, African-American students are placed in special education programs more than their peers. Special Education classifications are often determined by a student's behavior, which leads to an

emotional disability label or developmentally delayed label (Gardner & Mayes, 2013). Most African-American students who are placed in special education programs are receiving services due to their negatively perceived behavior. Not only are students given unfit labels for special education services, but those who do not test into Special Education are often medicated for behavior concerns. It is often the perception that once students are placed in Special Education programs, they are not appropriately instructed, educators focus more on students who do not have labels since schools were intended for students who are not in Special Education programs (Fitzgerald, 2009).

Toldson (2011) reveals that students who are placed in Special Education programs are more likely to be retained, will be suspended at some point in their school tenure, and receive a phone call home about either inappropriate behavior or low academics. A student's discipline record can assist with placement for African-American males in Special Education programs (Ford, 2012). While suspensions play a critical role in student performance, previous learning experiences also impact student learning (Davis and Jordan, 1994). Webb-Johnson (2002) suggests that teachers do not know how to cope with behaviors that differ from their expectations. African-American males who exhibit high levels of energy are often referred to Special Education programs under the category of behaviorally and emotionally disturbed.

Interventions for behavior and emotional concerns can include holding students responsible for their actions, teaching management strategies to monitor oneself, and showing students strategies for working together with adults in the school (Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008). Ford (2012) explains that disproportionate numbers of African-

American males who are placed in Special Education programs based on their perceived behaviors are less likely to be accepted into college.

Davis and Jordan (1994) attribute retention and poor attendance as critical factors that influence why African-American males perform below expectations academically on standardized assessments. Webb-Johnson (2002) claims, "Some African-American children accept their special education label and do the very best they can academically and behaviorally. There are also African-American children who learn to "play the special education label game" and are passed on from grade to grade. Such children learn various coping strategies (657)." Patterson (2005) suggests that African-American males can achieve in the special education program with the use of guided notes as a learning strategy. Green (2008) shares that while large numbers of African-American males are in special education programs, even fewer have access to gifted and talented programs or access to Advanced Placement courses.

Both Ford (2012) and Toldson (2011) believe that African-Americans are overrepresented in Special Education programs and are frequently classified in Special Education Programs as students who have emotional or behavioral labels, rather than learning or cognitive delays, but are not represented as much in gifted and talented programs or honor classes offered in High Schools.

2.8 Gifted and Talented

While there are a disproportionate number of African-American students placed in Special Education programs, there is a shortage of African-American students represented in gifted classes. Milner et al. (2008) suggest that educators regularly play a minimal role in the selection of students who participate in gifted programs; however,

some African-American students are academically successful and can participate in additional activities after school while maintaining appropriate grades.

For students to be placed in gifted programs they must have high academic grades, high scores on normed assessments, and have support from their classroom teacher; often African-American males are overlooked for a chance to participate in gifted programs because of teacher biases (Milner et al., 2008). Educators are seldom tasked with identifying students who have potential to succeed in gifted programs, but when they do, they rarely recognize African-American males as capable of participating in gifted programs. Social media has distorted the perception of African-American learners, leaving educators to believe that African-American students are incapable of performing at high levels of success, but instead consistently need additional academic support.

While the focus may be on students who are not performing academically, some African-American students are high achieving. Higher achieving students don't believe that standardized assessments are a true testimony of their intelligence or achievement. Instead they think that meeting their growth, personal, and parental expectations and keeping up with the school norms were the true determinants of academic success (Wiggan, 2014). Students who are considered high achievers seem to be self-motivated and want to do what it takes to achieve academically (Rogers et al., 2009).

2.9 Student Retention

Students who are retained during their school tenure are characteristically retained due to their lack of cultural competency, which may be attributed to the predominately European-American workforce (Toldson et al., 2009). Stearns et al.

(2007) suggest that educators retain students who have not learned instructional content from a previous grade and will repeat a grade to gain access to the content. Not only are students who are retained older and more substantial than their peers, but they also begin to develop low self-esteem because of the stigma associated with retention. Though many students drop out of school before entering high school, this trend is observed when African-American male students are retained in primary school and are assigned out of school suspensions (Townsend, 2012). Stearns et al. (2007) suggest that a student's retention causes both parents and students to question whether the school has failed the child. They also advise that students who are engaged in extracurricular activities are more likely to remain in school.

Whiting (2009) shares that half of the African-American student population will not graduate from high school. There are several reasons why African-American students drop out of school, which include lack of interest in classes, unprepared for high school courses, and a belief that they cannot meet high school standards. Gwaltney (1993) communicates that African-American males who dropped out of school stated they would have remained in school if they felt engaged with instruction and content, if they had good teachers who were supportive and helped with difficult learning concepts while providing consistent affirmations and needed attention.

Chapter Summary

Davis and Jordan (1994) express that the purpose of school is to provide learners with an organized environment that emphasizes students learning, who they are, and the teaching content. Several educators believe that schools are failing African-American students, specifically males. Effective schools should consistently

stimulate student academic achievement and prepare students to become productive citizens. Stevenson (2008) suggests that schools should be viewed as places where fairness is always at the forefront, and individual learners are taught how to be competent citizens in an ever-changing world.

Berger (2012) considers that educators are supposed to teach content; however, their job entails much more. Schools were created to instill the love of learning into students while they are learning to become inquiry-based learners and critical thinkers. Bifulco (2012) shares that "many teachers who believe their job is to teach skills, such as math or science" (p. 24) is indeed to "help the students of today become the productive adults of tomorrow" (p. 25).

This study is necessary because there needs to be a clear understanding of whether or not African-American males perform better academically in Title I elementary schools or in non-Title I elementary schools based on standardized assessments. To continue to close the achievement gap, it is essential that we gather information on how to achieve this task.

Cronin (2017) conducted a nonexperimental quantitative research study in South Dakota's school system utilizing data between 2008-2013 for over one hundred fifty-six schoolwide designated Title I schools. Students were assessed on the South Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (Dakota STEP). The research questions attempted to address whether there was a significant difference in academic achievement in reading and math based on standardized tests administered over five years. The findings revealed that reading scores remained the same, while math scores increased the first three years then decreased the last two years of the research period.

A similar research study was conducted by Headen (2014) utilizing quantitative research with an ex post facto design using fifty schools in North Alabama. Students were assessed on the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT). The research questions attempted to address whether ethnicity or gender impacted 4th-grade math and reading scores of Title I and Non-Title I students during the 2004, 2008, and 2012 school years. The findings revealed that students who did not attend Title I schools performed significantly higher on standardized assessments than those who attended a Title I school.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

An ex post facto design was used because archival data were provided by a large school district in the southeastern United States. The study was designed to determine if enrollment at a Title I school or non-Title I school in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States impacted the academic achievement of African-American males on the End-of-Grade (EOG) tests in reading comprehension and mathematics of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Academic achievement in this study is defined by student success on the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics. This chapter introduces the methodological procedures used to explain African-American male achievement in Title I and non-Title I elementary schools. For this study, two essential questions were posed.

1. Was there a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attended Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?
2. When controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) were there differences in academic achievement as measured by End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attended Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?

3.1 Research Design

A ex post facto design, also known as causal-comparative research, is quasi-experimental because there are no treatment or control groups and it is “after the fact” research (Mills and Gay, 2012). The purpose of this type of design is to determine the cause or reason for existing differences between groups of individuals concerning their

behavior or performance. In this study, the ex post facto design was used to examine the difference in state-mandated standardized tests (i.e., End-of-Grade) in reading and mathematics of African American males in Title I and non-Title I schools. Specifically, the following variables were used from the archival data provided by the accountability department in the school district: student absences, retention, and discipline.

3.1.1 Participants

The research participants in the study included 7,614 3rd, 4th and 5th grade African-American males from fifty-three Title I elementary schools and sixty non-Title I schools that assessed students on the End-of-Grade Test in reading comprehension and mathematics during the 2016-2017 school year. The participants attended varying elementary schools in the large urban school district in the southeastern United States which included Kindergarten through 5th grade, Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, Kindergarten through 8th grade and Kindergarten through 12th grade schools. The accountability department in the large urban school district in the southeastern United States provided the student's achievement data. All students who had valid data from the End-of-Grade Tests on reading comprehension and mathematics during the 2016-2017 school year were selected for this study. There were 4,880 African-American males in grades 3, 4, and 5 who attended Title I schools during the 2016-2017 school year and 2,734 African-American males in grades 3, 4, and 5 who attended non-Title I schools during the 2016-2017 school year (see Figure 1).

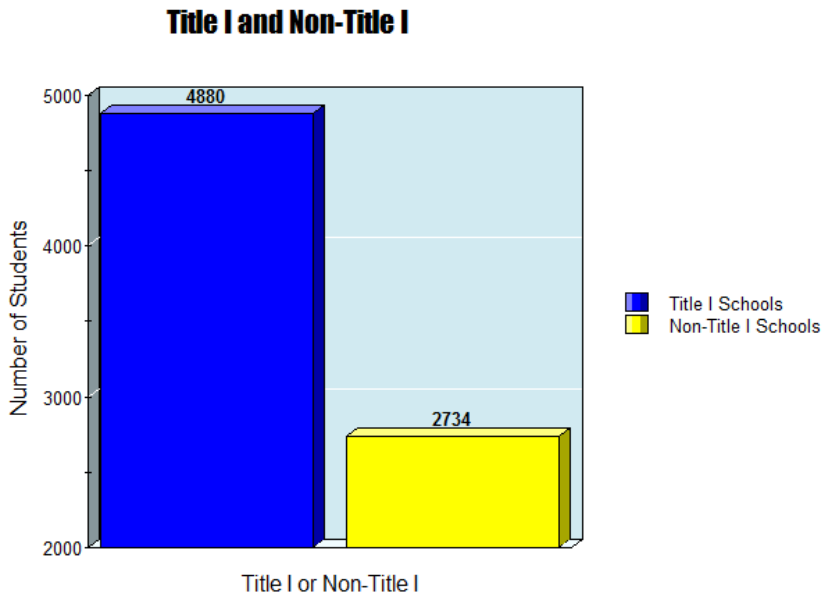

Figure 1: African-American male students who attend Title I and Non-Title I Schools

Collectively there was a total of 2,461 3rd graders, 2,566 4th graders and 2,587 5th graders who took the End-of-Grade test in both Title I and Non-Title I schools during the 2016-2017 school year (see Figure 2).

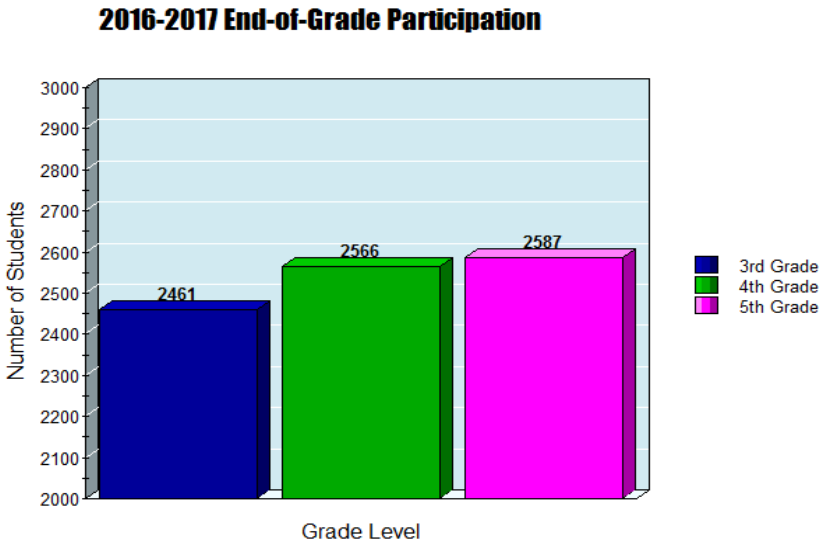

Figure 2: African-American male students who took the EOG by grade level

3.1.2 Selection Procedures

Data from all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade African-American male students in both Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools who took the End-of-Grade Test in reading comprehension and mathematics during the 2016-2017 school year was collected from the accountability department of a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. Data was compiled from 103 traditional and non-traditional schools. These included four year-round schools and forty-three magnet elementary schools.

3.1.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in a large urban metropolitan area which consists of seven surrounding cities. In 2017 the area population was more than 1,000,000 people. European-Americans made up 57.8% of the population, while African-Americans made up 32.8% of the population, other races and cultures included Hispanics were 13.3% of the population and Asians 6.1%. The median household income was $61,695 while 11.4% of the population lived below the poverty level. The poverty level was calculated based on whether the family's total income was less than the family's threshold. 89.9% of the population graduated high school or higher.

The large urban school district in the southeastern United States had an operating budget of $1.4 billion during the 2016-2017 school year. The district employed more than 19,000 employees during the 2016-2017 school year, which included educators, administrators and support staff. During the 2016-2017 school year, there were 9,360 certified teachers in the district. Of the 9,360 certified teachers, 4,511 of them had advanced degrees, and 1,199 were National Board-Certified Teachers. The average number of years teaching was eleven.

There were one hundred seventy schools that accommodated over 147,000 students from Kindergarten through 12th grade during the 2016-2017 school year. There were 91 traditional elementary schools, 30 middle schools, 33 high schools, eight Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade schools, one Kindergarten through eighth grade School, one Kindergarten through 12th grade School, one sixth through twelfth grade school and three alternative schools.

There were 47 partial and full magnet schools, which encompassed nine different magnet programs, seven were in elementary schools. Magnet programs offered in elementary schools during the 2016-2017 school year included nine International Baccalaureate (IB), eight Talent Development/Learning Immersion, four Montessori, twelve Science Technology Engineer and Math (STEM), three Leadership, three Visual and Performing Arts and four World Language schools.

The student demographic population during the 2016-2017 school year was compromised of 39% African-American, 29% Caucasian, 23% Hispanic and 6% Asian. There were over 187 languages spoken and 165 countries represented. The graduation rate was 89.6%.

3.2 Validity and Reliability of End-of-Grade Tests

"The North Carolina End-of-Grade tests were designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study" (NCDPI). The North Carolina Standard Course of Study is now called Common Core State Standards. All students received a raw score after taking the End-of-Grade test. The raw score was then changed to a developmental scale score, which represented the amount of growth a student makes

from year to year. Achievement levels ranged from scale scores of 431 to 464 in reading comprehension (see Table 1). Scale scores ranged from 439 to 460 in mathematics (see Table 2). A large urban school district in the southeastern United States Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) consists of Levels III, IV and V. College and Career Readiness (CCR) consists of Levels IV and V.

Table 1
End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension 3rd-5th Achievement Level Ranges

Grade	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V
3	≤431	432-438	439-441	442-451	≥452
4	≤438	439-444	445-447	448-459	≥460
5	≤442	443-449	450-452	453-463	≥464

Table 2
End-of-Grade Mathematics 3rd-5th Achievement Level Ranges

Grade	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V
3	≤439	440-447	448-450	451-459	≥460
4	≤440	441-448	449-450	451-459	≥460
5	≤440	441-448	449-450	451-459	≥460

3rd and 5th-grade End-of-Grade assessments were considered gateway assessments, which means students must have passed their reading comprehension and athematics End-of-Grade Assessments in order to be promoted to the next grade. Students who took the End-of-Grade reading comprehension assessment were given reading passages that assessed reading skills and vocabulary. The reading passages were from different genres such as fiction, nonfiction, and poetry and were accompanied by approximately fifty-two questions. The questions for each passage required the learner to complete a task or increase knowledge in literary experience.

The End-of-Grade Assessment in mathematics encompassed the five strands from the Common Core State Standards, which included Number and Operations,

Measurement, Geometry, Probability, and Algebra math problems. There were approximately eighty-two problems on the math assessment, which were given in two sections, Calculator Active (54) and Calculator Inactive (28). All students were given a maximum of four hours with three-minute breaks every hour to complete each assessment (NCDPI, 2014).

In order to determine test reliability and validity on the reading comprehension and mathematics End-of-Grade Assessments administered during the 2012-2013 school year, the Cronbach coefficient alpha was utilized to ensure consistency. In order to determine the tests reliability alternate form coefficients, test-retest coefficients, and internal consistency coefficients were utilized. In order to track the relation to test questions, internal-consistency reliability was used. This process utilized the coefficient alpha (a), which helped determine the test scores reliability (see Table 3). Belland et al. support the notion that those who give assessments should consider test administration, student engagement, and scoring procedures in order to validate tests.

Table 3
End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Reliabilities Form

Grade	Subject	Form A	Form B	Form C
3	Reading	0.91	0.92	0.91
	Math	0.91	0.92	0.91
4	Reading	0.89	0.90	0.88
	Math	0.92	0.92	0.92
5	Reading	0.90	0.88	0.89
	Math	0.91	0.92	0.91

3.3 Title I Designation

In 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) was replaced by the Community Eligibility Provision in order to measure poverty for Title I indication. Title I classification in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States is

determined by a 38.75% designation using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) guidelines. Once a school has been identified as a Title I school, the school must follow several guidelines to track its student's academic success. The administrative team must complete a comprehensive needs assessment and plan which should identify specific goals and specific strategies to address student academic success. Some strategies to address the school's needs may include hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers, yearlong professional development for school stakeholders, and providing research-based learning materials for staff and students. At the end of each year the Title I department conducts an annual review to ensure that financial support was explicitly used to help meet goals identified in the comprehensive plan.

3.4 Procedures

Two procedures were performed in order to review African-American male achievement in Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools: 1) school-level measures identified and 2) data analysis. These procedures identified the relationship between African-American male achievement, and End-of-Grade Tests results in reading comprehension and mathematics for students who attended a Title I or non-Title I elementary school. School-level measures included identifying African-American males in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade who either attended a Title I school or Non-Title I school, had recorded absences and behavior incidents.

3.5 Quantitative Data Analysis using Descriptive Statistics

Gay et al. (2012) describe statistics as a way to critically review quantitative data by investigating and clarifying information. They encourage researchers to prepare data for analysis by identifying the measures of variability through standard

deviation. Multivariate analysis of variance (MONAVA) was used to examine the differences in African American male students' performance in reading and mathematics standardized tests from Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools (Research Question 1). Hierarchical linear regression was employed to see what additional variance can result from the school environment (Title 1 school versus non-title 1 school) and can explain African American male students' performance in reading and mathematics standardized tests after consideration of the absence, school discipline, and grade levels (Research Question 2).

Summary

During this chapter, the researcher shared information about the research design, participants, selection procedures, and study area. The researcher also shared information about EOG test validity and reliability, and Title I school guidelines within a large urban district in the southeastern United States. The unit of analysis for the research was conducted within the large urban school district in the outheastern United States. The purpose of the research was to examine whether African-American males in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades had higher academic success in Title I elementary schools or non-Title I elementary schools as it relates to the administration of the End-of-Grade assessments in reading comprehension and mathematics. Two research questions were analyzed during this study. This study anticipated identifying critical information about African-American males in Title I schools as it relates to EOG assessments in reading comprehension and mathematics.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This quantitative, ex post facto design was used to analyze archival data provided by a large urban district in the southeastern United States, to determine if enrollment in a Title I or non-Title I school impacted the academic achievement of African-American males on the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. The first research question posed was whether there was a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools. There was a statistical difference in academic achievement. The second research question posed addressed, when controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline), were there differences in academic achievement as measured by the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I and non-Title I schools. There was an 18.1% variability for reading comprehension and 7% variability for mathematics.

There were two research questions that the research attempted to interpret. The research questions are as follows:

1. Was there a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?
2. When controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) were there differences in academic achievement as measured by End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between

African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?

In an attempt to address the research questions mentioned above, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade End-of-Grade Test scores for reading comprehension and mathematics were collected for African-American males who attended a Title I or non-Title I school during the 2016-2017 school year. For the sake of validity, in-school suspension was not analyzed during the research because it is not executed the same way at each school. The researcher selected to analyze unexcused absences over excused absences because unexcused absences are more problematic. Gottfried (2013) suggests that unexcused absences lead to low academic achievement, retention, and possible high school dropout. The author infers that students who have excessive absences tend to show behavior concerns and are not actively engaged in class. Excessive absences may impact future employment. Gottfried (2009) suggests that students with excused absences have parents who understand that in order for students to be successful in school they should be present, so these parents are less likely to bring students to school late and the students have fewer absences.

The End-of-Grade reading comprehension and mathematics data were analyzed for African-American male students who attended Title I or non-Title I elementary schools during the 2016-2017 school year by a multivariate analysis of variance. The fixed factor was whether the school was a Title I school or a non-Title I school, and the dependent variables were the End-of-Grade reading comprehension and End-of-Grade mathematics tests. African-American males were the target population for this study.

The descriptive statistics in Table 4 suggests that African-American male students who attended non-Title I schools performed slightly better than African-American male students who attended Title I elementary schools on standardized assessments.

Means and standard deviations of student academic achievement on both reading comprehension and mathematics by Title I and non-Title I schools were presented previously in Table 1. Between-subjects analysis of variance was performed on the End-of-Grade Test in reading comprehension (Title I and non-Title I schools) and the End-of-Grade Test in mathematics (Title I and non-Title I schools). The pattern of differences on the End-of-Grade Test among Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools was significantly different, especially between 4th grade African-American males in reading. 3rd and 5th grade African-American males performed lower on the End-of-Grade reading comprehension test.

Table 4
The Mean and Standard Deviation of EOG Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics

		M	(SD)	Number
Non-Title I				
3rd Grade	Reading	438.99	9.31	869
	Math	449.93	8.75	869
4th Grade	Reading	443.80	9.70	900
	Math	448.92	9.28	900
5th Grade	Reading	448.03	9.71	965
	Math	449.05	9.49	965
Total	Reading	443.76	10.27	2734
	Math	449.29	9.20	2734
Title I				
3rd Grade	Reading	434.71	9.75	1592
	Math	446.99	9.237	1592
4th Grade	Reading	439.26	10.08	1666
	Math	445.17	9.37	1666
5th Grade	Reading	443.53	9.61	1622
	Math	445.42	9.23	1622
Total	Reading	439.19	10.42	4880
	Math	445.85	9.31	4880
Non-Title I and Title I				
3rd Grade	Reading	436.22	9.81	2461
	Math	448.03	9.17	2461
4th Grade	Reading	440.85	10.13	2566
	Math	446.48	9.51	2566
5th Grade	Reading	445.21	9.89	2587
	Math	446.77	9.49	2587
Total	Reading	440.83	10.59	7614
	Math	447.08	9.42	7614

In order to determine whether the observed differences are statistically significant a MANOVA was completed (see Table 5). The first research question presented was whether there was a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I schools and non-Title I elementary schools. There was a statistically significant difference on academic achievement based on Title I or Non-Title I status, $F(2,7607)=187.45$, $\rho<.001$; Wilk's $\Lambda=0.953$, partial $\eta^2=.47$.

Table 5
Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Effects	F	df Between	Df Within	ρ	η^2
MANOVA	Title I School	187.445	2.00	7607.00	<.001	.047
	Grade Level	547.815	4.00	15214.00	<.001	.126
Math	Title I School	241.94	1	7608	<.001	.03
	Grade Level	15.83	2	7608	<.001	.004
Reading	Title I School	364.81	1	7608	<.001	.05
	Grade Level	492.25	2	7608	<.001	.12
Interaction	Math	1.28	2	7608	.28	< .001
	Reading	0.12	2	7608	.89	<.001

A three-step hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the relationship between the set of independent variables: absences, incidents, 4th and 5th grade, and Title I school. From Table 6, the R^2 value was .181, suggesting that student absences and student discipline incidents contributed significantly to student achievement on the End-of-Grade reading comprehension test of African-American males in Title I elementary schools.

Table 6
Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Reading Comprehension

	Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1	Absences	-.264	.022	-.135		
	Incidents	-.491	.052	-.107		
					.034	.034
Step 2	Absences	-.246	.021	-11.730		
	Incidents	-.505	.049	-10.318		
	4th Grade	4.656	.276	16.887		
	5th Grade	8.921	.275	32.424		
					0.151	.117
Step 3	Absences	-.195	.021	-.100		
	Incidents	-.448	.048	-.098		
	4th Grade	4.667	.271	.208		
	5th Grade	8.859	.270	.396		
	Title I	-3.893	.233	-.176		
					.181	.030

A three-step hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the relationship between the set of independent variables; absences, student discipline incidents, 4th and 5th grade and Title I school. From Table 7, the R^2 value was .071, suggesting that student absences and student discipline incidents contributed significantly to student achievement on the End-of-Grade Mathematics test of African-American males in Title I schools.

Table 7
Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Math

	Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1	Absences	-.287	.020	-.164		
	Incidents	-.460	.046	-.113		
					.045	.045
Step 2	Absences	-.290	.020	-.166		
	Incidents	-.453	.046	-.111		
	4th Grade	-1.538	.259	-.077		
	5th Grade	-1.344	.259	-.068		
					0.51	.005
Step 3	Absences	-.253	.020	-.145		
	Incidents	-.412	.046	-.101		
	4th Grade	-1.530	.257	-.077		
	5th Grade	-1.389	.256	-.070		
	Title I	-2.815	.220	-.143		
					.071	.020

The second research question asked, when controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline), were there differences in academic achievement as measured by End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools? Hierarchical linear regression, also known as stepwise linear regression, was used to answer this question. The following information (see Table 8) confirms the variables utilized for this study and the percent of variability accounted for by all the predictors together (R^2). The change in R^2 is a way to evaluate

how much predictive power was added to the model by the addition of another variable in model 2. In this case, 3% variability accounted for absences and student discipline incidents only, when adding grade 4 and grade 5, it increased to 15% and increased to 18% when adding Title I schools.

Table 8
Model Summary for End-of-Grade Reading Achievement (N=7, 614)

Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	F Change	df1
Model 1 Absences Incidents	.034	.034	133.750	2
Model 2 Absences Incidents Grade 4 Grade 5	.151	.117	525.705	2
Model 3 Absences Incidents Grade 4 Grade 5 Title I School	.181	.030	279.899	1

Looking at the model summary, we see that the R^2 is .181, which means that there is approximately 18.1% variability in End-of-Grade reading comprehension explained by the variables used in the model. In reviewing the Coefficients Table (see Table 9) the constant is -3.893, and this is the predicted value of the academic achievement for African-American males on the End-of-Grade Test in reading comprehension. Note that $(-16.730)^2 = -279.8929$, which is the same as the F statistic. From the standardized coefficient beta, a one standard deviation increase in academic achievement leads to a -.176 standard deviation decrease in academic achievement.

Table 9
The Coefficient Table for End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension (N=7, 614)

Variable	B	SEB	β	t	ρ
Model 1					
Absences	-.264	.022	-.135	-11.803	.000
Incidents	-.491	.052	-.107	-9.405	.000
Model 2					
Absences	-.246	.021	-.125	-11.730	.000
Incidents	-.505	.049	-.110	-10.318	.000
Grade 4	4.656	.276	.208	16.887	.000
Grade 5	8.921	.275	.399	32.424	.000
Model 3					
Absences	-.195	.021	-.100	-9.381	.000
Incidents	-.448	.048	-.098	-9.289	.000
Grade 4	4.667	.271	.208	17.234	.000
Grade 5	8.859	.270	.396	32.780	.000
Title I School	-3.893	.233	-.176	-16.730	.000

The following information (see Table 10) confirms the variables utilized for this study and the percent of variability accounted for by all the predictors together (R^2). The change in R^2 is a way to evaluate how much predictive power was added to the model by the addition of another variable in model 2. In this case, 4% variability accounted for absences and student discipline incidents only, when adding grade 4 and grade 5 it increased to 5% and increased to 7% when adding Title I schools.

Table 10
Model Summary for End-of-Grade Mathematics Achievement (N=7, 614)

Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	F Change	df1
Model 1	.045	.045	181.218	2
Absences				
Incidents				
	.050	.117	.005	2
Model 2				
Absences				
Incidents				
Grade 4				
Grade 5				
Model 3	.070	.020	163.094	1
Absences				
Incidents				
Grade 4				
Grade 5				
Title I School				

Looking at the model summary, we see that the R^2 is .070, which means that there is approximately 7% variability in End-of-Grade Mathematics explained by the model. In reviewing the coefficients table (see Table 11) the constant is -2.815, and this is the predicted value of the academic achievement for African-American males on the End-of-Grade test in Mathematics. Note that $(-12.77)^2 = -163.09$, which is the same as the F statistic. From the standardized coefficient beta, a one standard deviation increase in academic achievement leads to a -.143 standard deviation decrease in academic achievement.

Table 11
The Coefficient Table for End-of-Grade Mathematics (N=7, 614)

Variable	B	SEB	β	t	ρ
Model 1					
Absences	-.287	.020	-.164	-14.514	.000
Incidents	-.460	.046	-.113	-9.982	.000
Model 2					
Absences	-.290	.020	-.166	-14.707	.000
Incidents	-.453	.046	-.111	-9.855	.000
Grade 4	-1.538	.259	-.077	-5.933	.000
Grade 5	-1.344	.259	-.068	-5.195	.000
Model 3					
Absences	-.1253	.020	-.145	-12.846	.000
Incidents	-.412	.046	-.101	-9.026	.000
Grade 4	-1.530	.257	-.077	-5.965	.000
Grade 5	-1.389	.256	-.070	-5.424	.000
Title I School	-2.815	.220	-.143	-12.771	.000

The plot of residuals shows that there are no problems with the assumption and that the residuals are normally distributed at each level (see Figure 3).

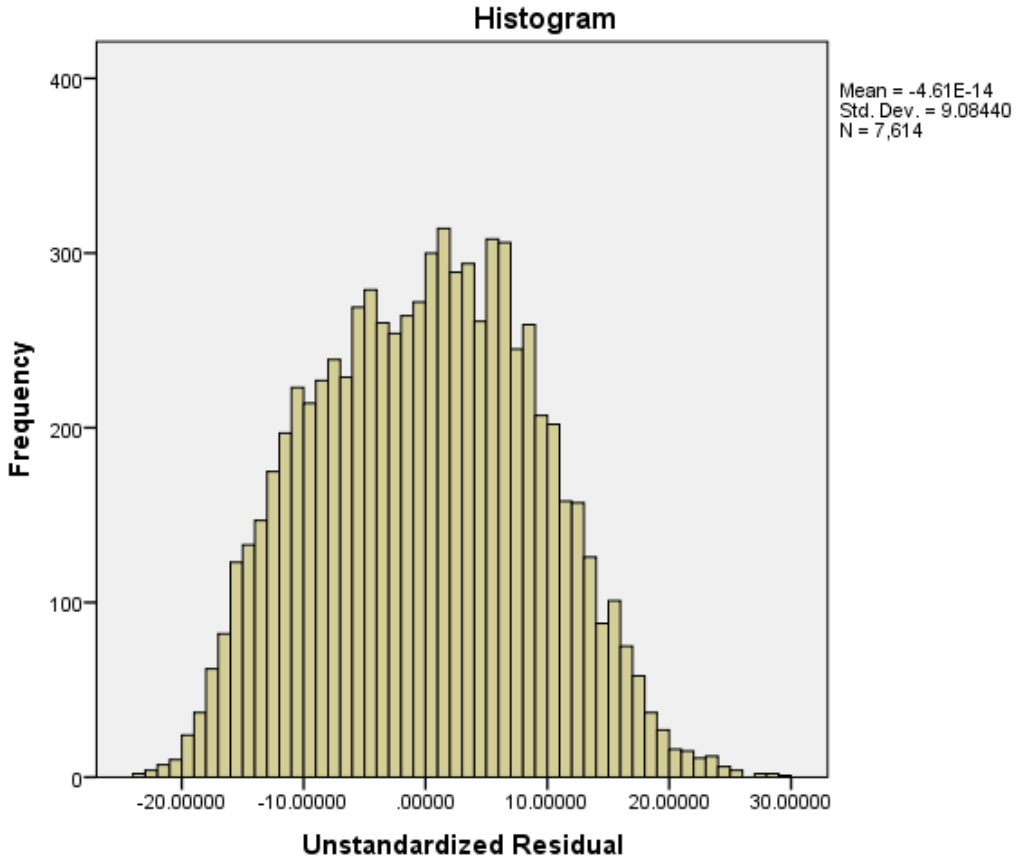

Figure 3: Histogram of Unstandardized Residual

The Normal Q-Q plot of unstandardized residual appears to be normally distributed as it follows the diagonal line closely and does not appear to have a nonlinear pattern (see Figure 4).

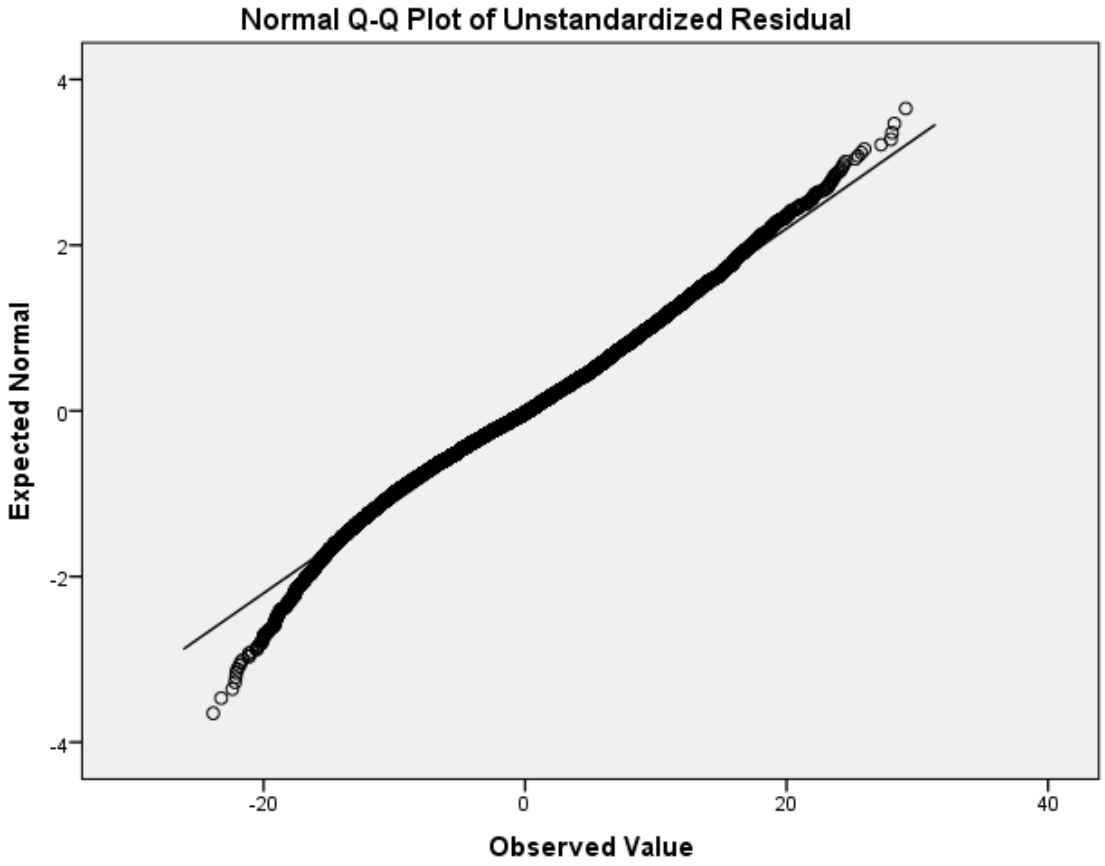

Figure 4: Normal Q-Q Plot of Unstandardized Residual

There are some outliers in opposite quartiles. The residual plot against unstandardized predicted value dots are approximately equally distributed above and below the horizontal zero lines without a particular pattern indicating independence of the residuals (see Figure 5).

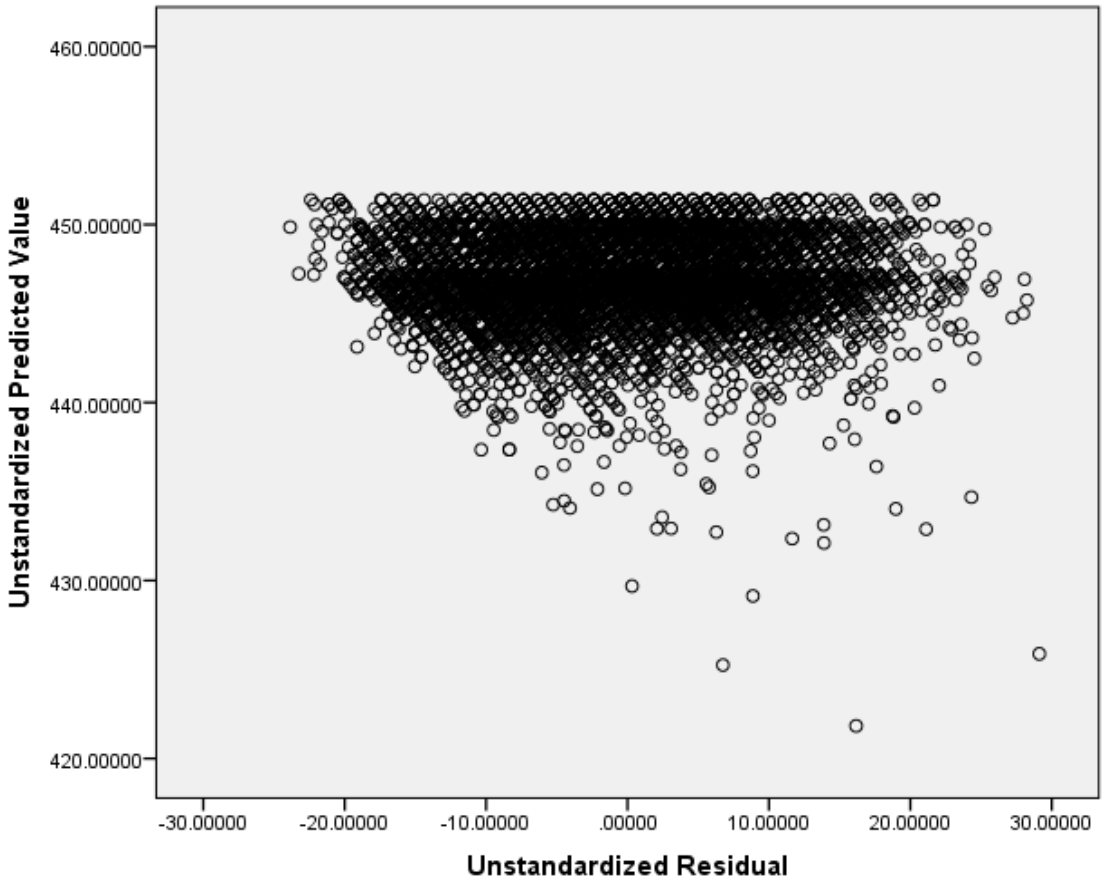

Figure 5: Residual Plot Against Unstandardized Predicted Value

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 helped pioneer the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The purpose of both acts was to help disadvantaged youth achieve academically in school. Most disadvantaged youths attend Title I schools, which receive additional funding to support student academic achievement. Battenfield and Crawford (2015) recognize that both acts stress the accountability of the K-12 program, but do not address the issue of inequality in education.

The problem addressed in this study was the continuing achievement gap between a large number of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and their peers. Though the No Child Left Behind Act has provided additional funding to Title I elementary schools to aid in closing the achievement gap, the achievement gap remains. The purpose of this study was to identify whether enrollment at a Title I elementary school or non-Title I elementary school in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States impacted the academic achievement of African-American males who were 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students on the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics.

This chapter contains the results summary, implications of the study, recommendations for further research, and the conclusion.

5.1 Results Summary

The literature surrounding Title I schools suggests that additional funding is awarded to schools whose families are socio-economically disadvantaged. The additional funding is used to directly impact students by providing additional learning

services such as tutoring or hiring additional staff to decrease classroom sizes. Weinstein et al. (2009) cautioned districts on school-based tutoring programs that remove students from valuable classroom lessons.

Other research shared in this study has indicated that African-American males do not perform better academically in Title I schools even though the No Child Left Behind legislation provides additional funding to be utilized at individual schools. The purpose of No Child Left Behind is to provide additional funding to Title I schools, however schools may spend the money as they see fit. Many Title I schools spend the money on classroom materials as opposed additional experienced staff to support struggling students. Title I schools should be cautioned on spending money for materials, especially those that may not support the Common Core Standards, and should ensure that adequate training is provided on the resources procured.

Most Title I schools in the large urban school district in the southeastern United States studied here are comprised of predominantly of African-American students, however the staff does not reflect the student population. The district should consider spending money on training staff on cultural proficiency and culturally responsive teaching to help increase the academic achievement of African-American students, specifically males. There should be a constant focus on hiring highly qualified teachers to work with high levels of low performing students.

The No Child Left Behind Legislature should be revised to include discussion about critical race theory, African-American male theory and social-emotional learning as it relates to closing the achievement gap. Although additional funds are being provided to underperforming schools, discussion on underlying issues should be

addressed, such as student absences, discipline, retention, and placement in Special Education classes. The current legislation regarding state testing practices should be reviewed. Are teachers teaching to the test, while students are losing critical lifelong lessons for the sake of a test score? State testing should look identical across all educational institutions but should also be modified for students who don't do well on timed assessments that cover content taught at the beginning of the year till the end.

For this study, two essential questions were posed.

1. Was there a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?
2. When controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) were there differences in academic achievement as measured by End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?

The first research questions' data, which addressed whether African-American males performed better in Title I or non-Title I schools, was collected from the Accountability Department at a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. There are twice as many African-American male students who attend Title I schools as there are African-American males who attend non-Title I schools. The researcher expected Title I African-American male students to perform lower than African-American male students at non-Title I elementary schools based on standardized assessments. The results revealed that African-American male students

who attended Title I elementary schools performed lower than African-American males who attended non-Title I elementary schools.

The second research question addressed whether, when controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) there differences in academic achievement as measured by End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and those who attended non-Title I elementary schools. Results indicated that students who had absences or student discipline concerns were 18% more likely not do well on the End-of-Grade reading comprehension test and 7% more likely not to do well on End-of-Grade mathematics.

5.2 Implications of the Study

This study proved that there remains an achievement gap among African-American males in Title I schools. The findings of the study reveal that fifty-eight Title I elementary schools still have achievement disparities among African-American males and their peers. The data collected allows this large urban school district in the southeastern United States a glimpse at the proficiency levels of African-American males at Title I and non-Title I elementary schools during the 2016-2017 school year. The data proves that there is an apparent disconnect between Title I elementary schools who receive additional funding for learning and non-Title I elementary schools within the district.

The large urban school district in the southeastern United States could use this data to identify the root cause of the proficiency deficit. The district could review how schools, both Title I and non-Title I schools, spend their money on resources, staff, and

professional development and review the quality of teachers employed. The district could also use this data as a tool to begin conversations about cultural proficiency and social-emotional learning within schools and the district as it relates to closing the achievement gap for all students. An avenue of collecting student proficiency data other than state tests should be considered for students who do not do well on state tests and assessments should be reevaluated based on the students taking the assessments. Donnor and Shockley (2010) encourage school organizations to critically examine how achievement results cannot completely paint the picture of useful school resources, how learning occurs in the environment, and how the varying levels of socio-economic status impact standardized assessment results. Duke (2006) warns district leaders of having too many interventions before assessing their effectiveness with student achievement. Duke (2006) also cautions school leaders in utilizing Title I allotments to increase student success on standardized tests instead of teaching students to become citizens.

Maleyko and Gawlik (2011) suggest looking closely at the impact of adequate yearly progress (AYP) as it relates to individual students, the instruction received by students, and individual school progress. Donnor and Shockley (2010) share that the purpose of the No Child Left Behind Legislation is to ensure that all public schools provide an environment that is focused on the academic achievement of all students. They mention how standardized test scores are compared among other similar school districts and individual schools within the same district. They also mention that standardized test score trends are compared among different subgroups of students which include race, socioeconomic status, and participation in the Exceptional

Children's and English Language Learners Programs. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) ensures that expectations are met for student academic success based on reliable and valid standardized assessments that collect data for all students.

The implications for the large urban school district in the southeastern United States should be to collectively plan ways to increase academic achievement for African-American males in both Title I and non-Title I schools across the district based on No Child Left Behind legislation. Donnor and Shockley (2010) suggest that school organizations introduce culturally responsive teaching, expose students to crucial conversations about education, and promote "academic excellence (Donnor & Shockley, 2010, p. 51)." Hucks (2011) suggests that culturally responsive teachers help African-American males achieve in the academic setting. Williams (2011) makes several recommendations on how to close the achievement gap which include smaller classroom sizes, national standards, and high expectations. Standardized testing leads to teachers teaching to the test, instead of teaching life skills. All school organizations could benefit from professional development on research-based strategies, allowing educators an opportunity to collaborate on lessons, and cultivating a school climate where students and staff value education.

Fremon et al. (1997) suggests that the number of African-American males in special education is typically twice the amount of African-American males in public education and that African-American males are twice likely to be disciplined as their peers. Cronin (2017) and Headen (2014) have also conducted similar research studies, and my results are similar to their findings. Both researchers concluded that African-American males underperformed while enrolled at Title I elementary schools.

Standardized state assessments were used to determine student success during their research studies as well.

Keaton (2011) suggests that educators focus on holding students to high expectations, utilize the latest research-based strategies, effective planning, progress monitor student success, celebrate students' success, and a employ comprehensive student discipline plan. Goals should be set at the being of the year and should be periodically checked to ensure student success. Staff should be provided professional development on the latest research-based strategies such as balanced literacy and instructional strategies based on students' needs.

When considering the research that was conducted, we should consider the absence of teacher characteristics, geographical location, reading and math curriculum, instructional strategies, and school-wide behavior plans. When referring to teacher characteristics, I am referring to teacher's formal teacher prep programs, ethnicity, gender, number of years teaching, teacher absences, and evaluation data. Having this information can support whether students are exposed to highly qualified teachers and will help indicate what types of students these teachers should work with at school.

Geographical information plays a critical role in identifying resources that are available to parents and students. Larger urban districts have more money to focus on activities in which parents and students may participate after school or on the weekends. Scrutinizing reading and mathematics curriculum and materials helps determine how students should learn based on the connection between content and structure. Is the curriculum rigorous, culturally relevant, and aligned to state standards? Is there a well-developed training process for teachers, parents, and administrators?

What are the processes for teachers who join the school after the training has been conducted, will there be a school representative who will continue to receive any additional training sessions to bring back to the remaining staff? These questions help determine whether students will be successful.

School-wide behavior plans should include representation from all grade levels, as well as all staff's perspective on how to address students with behavior concerns. The school-wide discipline plan should include specific consequences with examples and rewards for student success. Professional development on instructional strategies is important, as students perform better when the classroom reflects multiple teaching strategies. While whole group lessons generally meet the majority of student learning needs, it is important to provide small group instruction where students are grouped based on their levels and are provided content on their proficiency levels, as well as support for students one-on-one when deficits have been identified.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

In conducting this study, the researcher submitted a request for test data for African-American males in both Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools on End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics during the 2016-2017 school year. One recommendation for future research would be to ask for data that studies cohorts of African-American males in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade who participated in the End-of-Grade Test in reading comprehension and athematics. A replicated study should be conducted using the additional variables such as Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) and observation data, ethnicity, gender, number of years teaching, attendance and educational level. This replicated study

should also attempt to make connections between African-American male students and supporting data that connects information about the classroom teacher to each student.

A further study should be conducted to compare Title I schools across the district to each other on how they are impacting student achievement for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade African-American males who participate in the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics. A longitudinal study should be conducted to compare the long-term differences of African-American academic achievement as well as teacher ability to teach African-American males. Rodas (2019) claims that most Title I schools consist of African-American and Hispanic students. She encourages school districts to critically review the amount of low to below average teachers who work in Title I schools as teacher quality impacts student achievement.

Another recommendation is to look at the quality of curriculum and professional development utilized in both Title I and non-Title I schools as it relates to African-American male academic success. A triangulation of data could be conducted, comparing End-of-Grade reading comprehension and mathematics, measures of academic progress (MAP), the test of reading comprehension (TRC), NC check-ins, and classroom common assessments.

Another recommendation is to look at how African-American males succeed in other urban school districts around the nation similar to a large urban school district in the southeastern United States who attend both Title I and non-Title I schools. School districts in this study should use the Common Core Standards to instruct students. This would help address African-American male achievement as well as whether Title I

funding is increasing student achievement or parental involvement to contribute to the success of students.

When considering the perspective of the researcher, it is important to make a connection between poverty and education. The researcher should consider the resources available to families who live in poverty which extend beyond the school day. The researcher should also consider ways to support students and parents who are enrolled at Title I schools. The researcher should further consider how excused and unexcused absences impact African-American male achievement. The researcher should also consider parental involvement, lack of support or how to support parents on strategies that support learning at home.

As an administrator it is important to ensure that students have access to an effective schoolwide discipline plan that is not punitive, but rather restorative. Reviewing how and when students are suspended should be a part of the school-wide discipline plan and educators should consider how suspensions decreases the academic achievement of students. It also does not correct the negative behavior. Administrators should focus on celebrating the small successes of students which may include attending school ten days in a row, receiving a specific grade on an assessment, or even receiving fewer discipline referrals. Administrators should consider ways to decrease student absences and consider ways in which to support learning, even when students are unable to attend schools. When creating classes, it is important to look at the different personalities that will encompass the class as well as the number of students in the class. Smaller class sizes can help to create both student and teacher efficacy.

Administrators should also be mindful of the kinds of professional development that teachers need based on teacher evaluations.

5.4 Conclusions

Although the research results conclude that African-American male students who attend Title I elementary schools do not succeed as well as students at non-Title I elementary schools based on the End-of-Grade tests in a large urban district in the southeastern United States, African-American males contribute to their academic learning in positive ways. African-American males see value in adding their opinion about how they learn best.

The research results revealed that there are fewer African-American males who attend non-Title I schools as opposed to higher numbers who attend Title I schools. It is imperative that we review critical race theory and education as we attempt to increase the academic success of African-American males. We should look at instructional practices in both environments and select techniques that could benefit students in both Title I and non-Title I elementary schools.

This study set out to determine if there was a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attended either a Title I elementary school or a non-Title I elementary school. The study has identified a need to look closer at the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools with a focus on how additional funding is being spent on increasing academic achievement. The findings suggest that African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools show a greater academic deficit compared with African-American males who attend non-Title I elementary schools. The study shed light on

how student attendance and student discipline incidents impact student learning. This study focused on data for End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics. The findings reflect a need to continue to increase support for African-American males at both Title I and non-Title I elementary schools. The researcher is optimistic that district leaders will use the data from the study to focus on ways to improve the academic success of African-American males in both Title I and non-Title I elementary schools within a large urban school district in the southeastern United States.

The research uncovers the need to review how Title I money is spent on closing the achievement gap. Review of expenditures should include parent involvement activities, materials utilized, student and teacher absences, and professional development, as well as taking what works in non-Title I elementary schools with African-American males and applying it to Title I elementary schools.

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