BLACK MALE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN NORTH CAROLINA SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Yolanda L. Blakeney

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Approved by:

_____
Dr. Rebecca Shore

_____
Dr. Walter Hart

_____
Dr. Debra Morris

_____
Dr. Chance Lewis

ABSTRACT

YOLANDA L. BLAKENEY. Black Male Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences In North Carolina Secondary Public Schools. (Under the direction of DR. REBECCA SHORE)

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions surrounding equity and access for seven Black male teachers in a North Carolina secondary public school district. The research focused on two components of the secondary public school setting experienced by the seven participants: social context and instructional leadership. For purposes of this study, the researcher defined social context as workplace interactions between participants and their administrators and teacher colleagues. Instructional leadership roles were defined and excluded athletic director, coach, dean of students and administrator in this study. Seven of the seven participants possessed overall feelings of acceptance by administrators and colleagues. However, six of the seven participants believed that administrators expected them to manage primarily Black male student behaviors. Also, three of the seven participants neither felt heard nor felt that their cultural identity was valued in the workplace. Organizational barriers challenged Black male teachers' preparedness for instructional leadership, and some experienced obstacles accessing instructional leadership opportunities and as instructional leaders. This study concluded with recommendations for future research as well as potential ways to address equity and access issues presented. One recommendation included restructuring of the assignment of Black male teachers as mentors to Black male students to include a criteria-based selection process from a more racially diverse teacher pool. Whereas six of the seven participants became teachers through the alternative licensure pathway, a recommendation was also presented to address the inconsistent beginning teacher support for teachers entering the profession through the alternative licensure pathway.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would also like to acknowledge the Educational Leadership program at UNC Charlotte. Your instructors are professional, passionate, and experts in their concentrations. Every course, every class meeting, and every assignment was meaningful and relevant. However, the relationships formed with instructors were the greatest gift.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my Educational Leadership cohort. I could not have asked for a more talented and diverse group of school leaders from whom to learn and with whom to collaborate. Your friendship, humor, and support were priceless. I look forward to seeing the impact that each of you will have in the field of education as champions for children. Best of opportunities to you all!

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Lois Blakney, and my children – Natalie, Issac, Jamie, and Jamin,

Mother—I regret that you were not here in the flesh to witness this journey. However, I am fully confident that you watched and smiled the entire time. You were always my biggest supporter and loved to brag on your "Londa" even when you did not understand what I was doing. The attainment of this dissertation is a witness to the power of a single mother's love and determination to push her children to live a better life. Your seeds continue to bear fruit in my life. Thank you for your love and relentless desire to make a difference.

Natalie, Issac, Jamie, and Jamin–Thank you! You made room in your lives for many days of listening to me share what I was learning and discovering with great enthusiasm that you may or may not have shared at times. However, you listened, smiled, asked questions, and supported me the entire journey. I hope that my life and my accomplishments instill in you the same legacy that your Grandmother Lois left me. Continue the legacy of Blakeney Strong so that my grandchildren and generations to come live a life of great impact. I am proud of each of you and love you more than you will ever understand.

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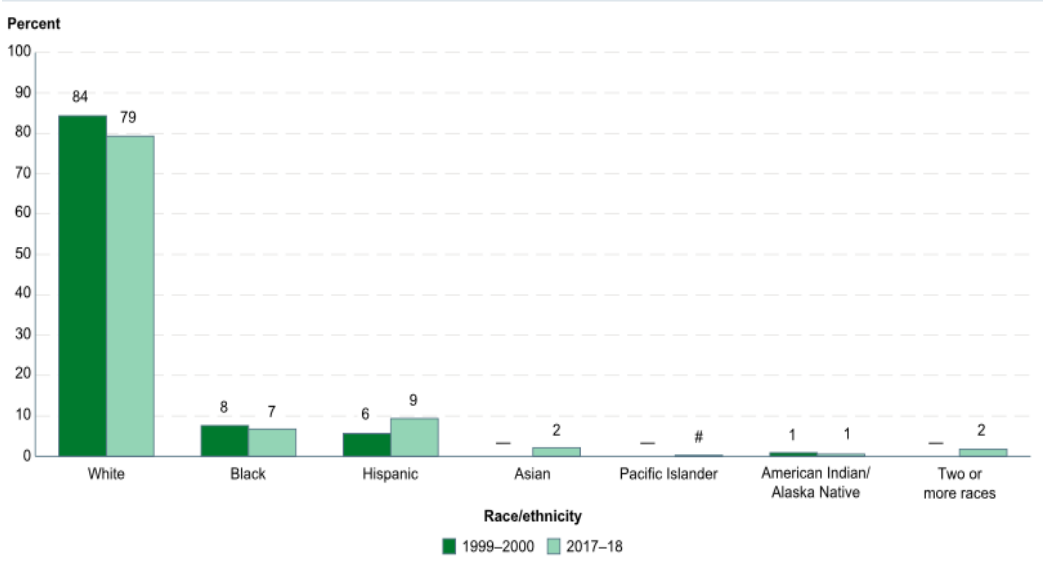
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1998, former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, challenged the U.S. public school system that its teachers should be excellent and look like America (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Examining the racial demographics of U.S. public school students between 2000 and 2017 revealed declines in the percentages of both White students (62% to 51%) and Black students (15% to 14%), while other racial groups such as Hispanic (16% to 25%), Asian (3% to 5%), and two or more races (2% to 4%), experienced increases (De Brey, 2019). Despite these changing demographics, White teachers comprised roughly 80% of the teacher workforce during this same period (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkin, 2011; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Figure 1 shows that while the percentage of White teachers decreased between 1999 and 2018, this group continued to disproportionately comprise the U.S. teacher workforce.

Figure 1

Percentage Distribution of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools



Source: *Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools* (2021), U.S. Department of Education, 2021.

Figure 1 also shows that Black teachers were the largest minority teacher subgroup. However, Black teachers were the only minority that experienced a decline during this time.

A negative consequence of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) from the U.S. Supreme Court was the adverse effect of ending 'separate but equal' laws on employment opportunities for Black educators (Fultz, 2004; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011). Black educators were not protected by the decision (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011). Critics pointed out that education leaders in the South promptly dismantled the presence of Black educators in schools (Fultz, 2004). Discriminatory displacement practices targeted Black educators and resulted in the loss of thousands from the profession (Fultz, 2004; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011).

Removing Black principals created another obstacle in recruiting, hiring, and deploying Black teachers (Fultz, 2004). Two decades following the controversial desegregation ruling, new legislation and judicial rulings provided more protection for Black educators. However, public schools, particularly in the South turned to discriminatory hiring practices such as 'non-hiring' of Black educators to control teacher racial demographics (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011).

Another catalyst for the decline in Black educators following *Brown* was implementing the *National Teacher Examination* (NTE) assessment as a prerequisite to entering the profession. Evidence suggested that requiring the NTE for completing teacher education programs resulted in White candidates accounting for 96% of newly certified teachers (Fultz, 2004). In *NEA et al. vs. State of South Carolina* (1978) the court required candidates to pass the NTE for entering the profession. Assessment biases in the NTE, though, resulted in lower test scores for minority teachers and negatively affected entry of Black teachers into the profession (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011). Required licensure exams continued to be the greatest barrier to entry and

completing post-secondary teacher preparation programs for minority educators, in particular Black males (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). As a result, racial disparity has continued to exist between White and Black teachers despite increased racial diversity among students (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016).

Racial disparity among the teacher workforce is most pronounced for Black male teachers, who represent only 2% of the current educator workforce (Walker et al., 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Researchers found that when fewer Black men entered the teaching profession, lower K-12 academic achievement of Black male students coincided with the absence of Black male teachers in the profession (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011).

The effects of lower K-12 academic achievement for Black male students were racial achievement gaps, lower high school graduation rates, lower college entrance rates, and poorer performance on entry assessments for post-secondary education programs. These same studies also noted broader career opportunities for Black males as another cause for the absence of Black male teachers in public education (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011).

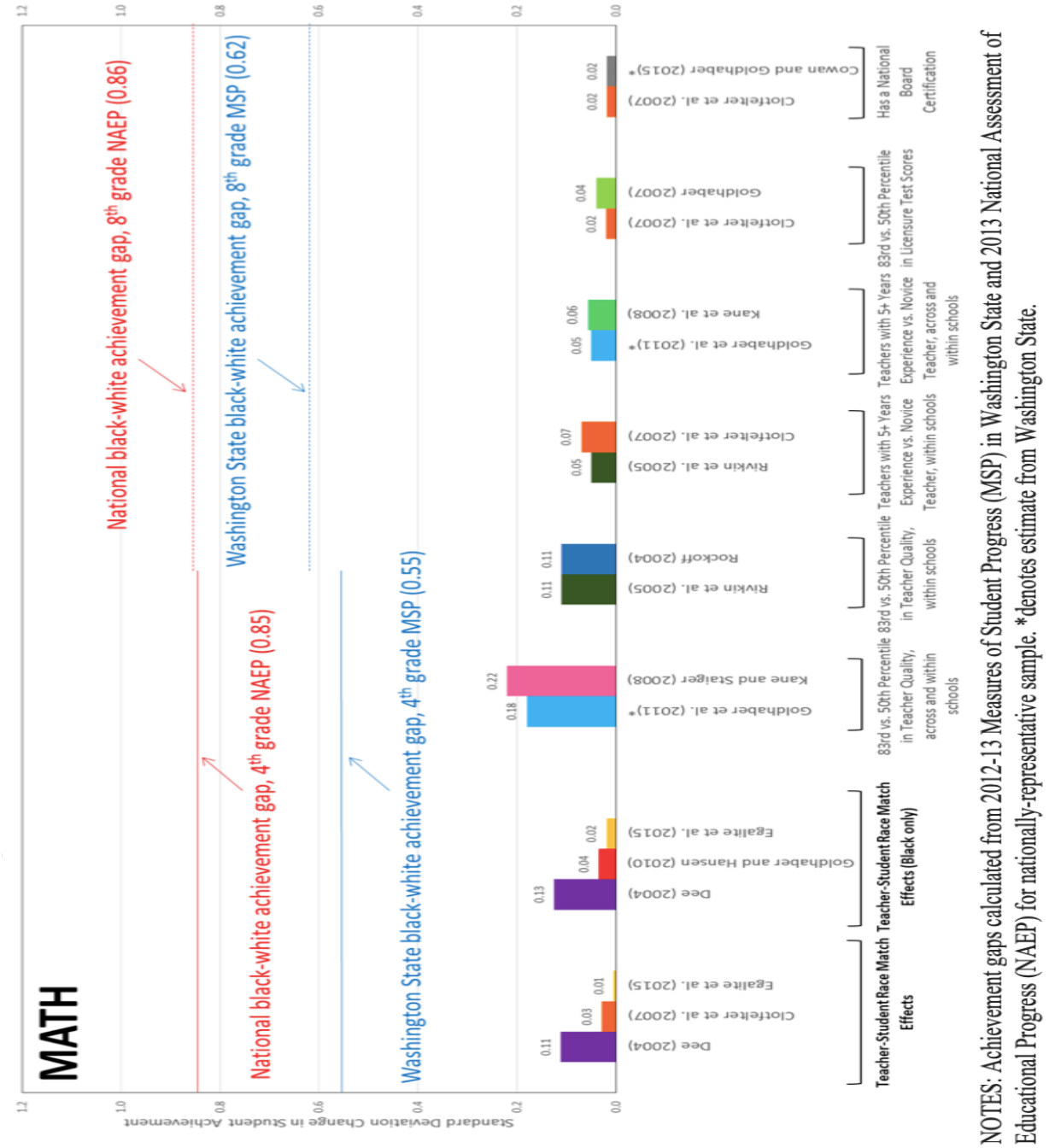
According to numerous researchers, matching the race/ethnicity of teachers and students resulted in more positive student outcomes, especially for high-poverty communities with significant at-risk student populations (Dilworth, 1990; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011; Ogbu, 1992; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Earlier studies sought to understand correlations between the race/ethnicity match of teachers and students and student test performance, but encountered

obstacles (Goldhaber et al., 2019). School districts lacked annual assessment data and large-scale data sets that connected students to individual teachers.

However, researchers revisited the correlation between teacher race/ethnicity and student test performance when longitudinal data became available. Dee (2004) found that having teachers and students of the same race/ethnicity resulted in a gain of 0.11 SD on students' math scores and a gain of 0.06 SD on students' reading scores. Clotfelter et al. (2007), Goldhaber and Hansen (2010), and Egalite et al. (2015) all conducted studies similar to Dee's (2004) using large statewide databases. Their findings supported the positive influence of matching race/ethnicity between teachers and students on test scores for students of all races (Goldhaber et al., 2019). Figure 2 shows the results for math and Figure 3 shows the results for reading (Goldhaber et al., 2015).

Figure 2

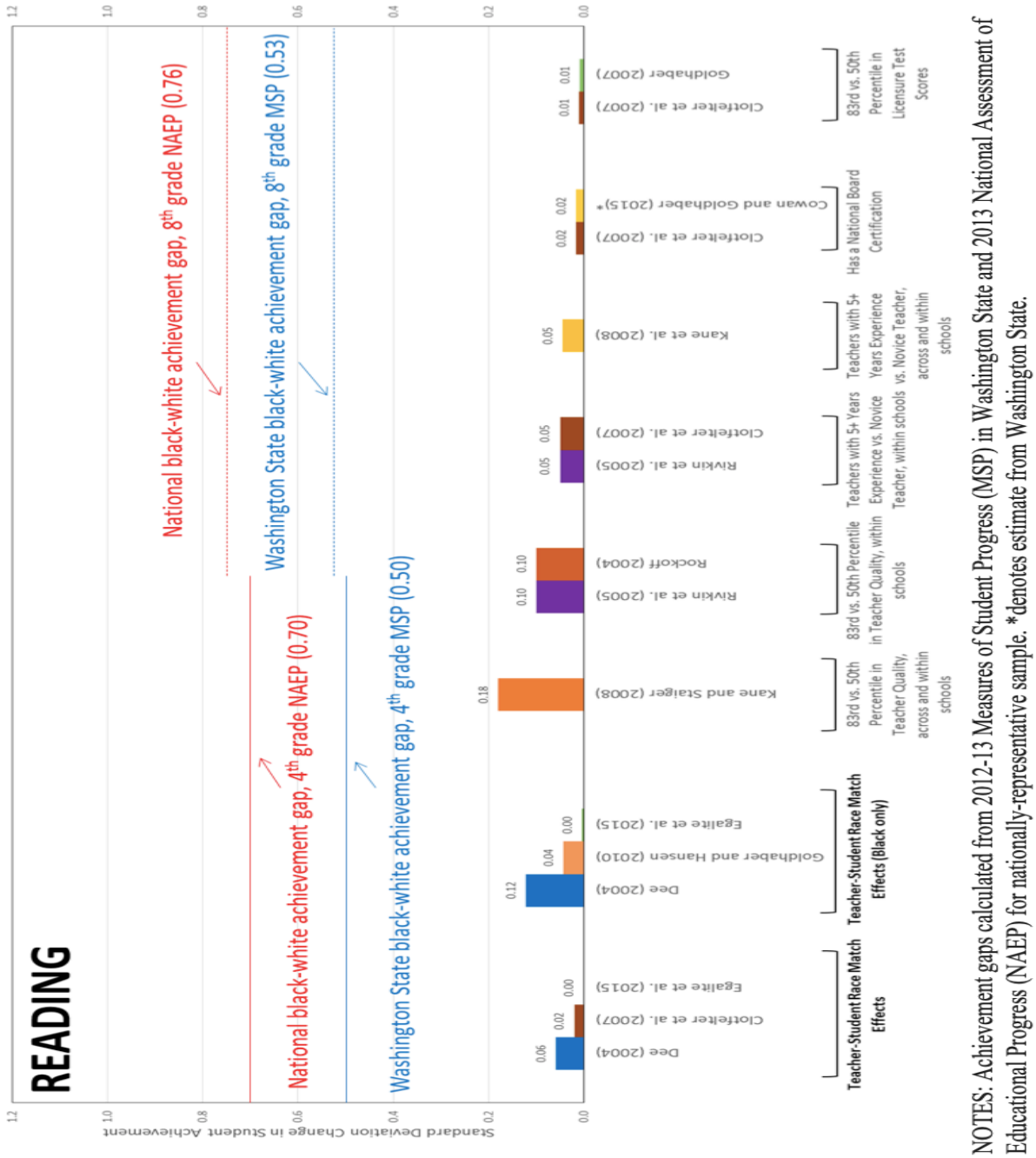
Estimated Effects in Literature of Teacher Characteristics on Student Math Test Performance



Source: Goldhaber D., Theobald R., & Tien, C. (2015). The theoretical and empirical arguments for diversifying the teacher workforce: A review of the evidence. *CEDR Working Paper* (ED 574302) ERIC.

Figure 3

Estimated Effects in Literature of Teacher Characteristics on Student Reading Test Performance



Source: Goldhaber D., Theobald R., & Tien, C. (2015). The theoretical and empirical arguments for diversifying the teacher workforce: A review of the evidence. *CEDR Working Paper* (ED 574302) ERIC.

Goldhaber et al. (2015, 2019) concluded that Black students with Black teachers made greater gains on math and reading scores than other groups of students who were matched by race/ethnicity with their teachers. Student gains in math and reading assessments were equivalent to having a national board certified teacher or a teacher with higher licensure test scores for all students, regardless of race, when race/ethnicity matched that of their teachers (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019). This impact on minority student achievement supported systemic efforts to diversify the public school teacher workforce.

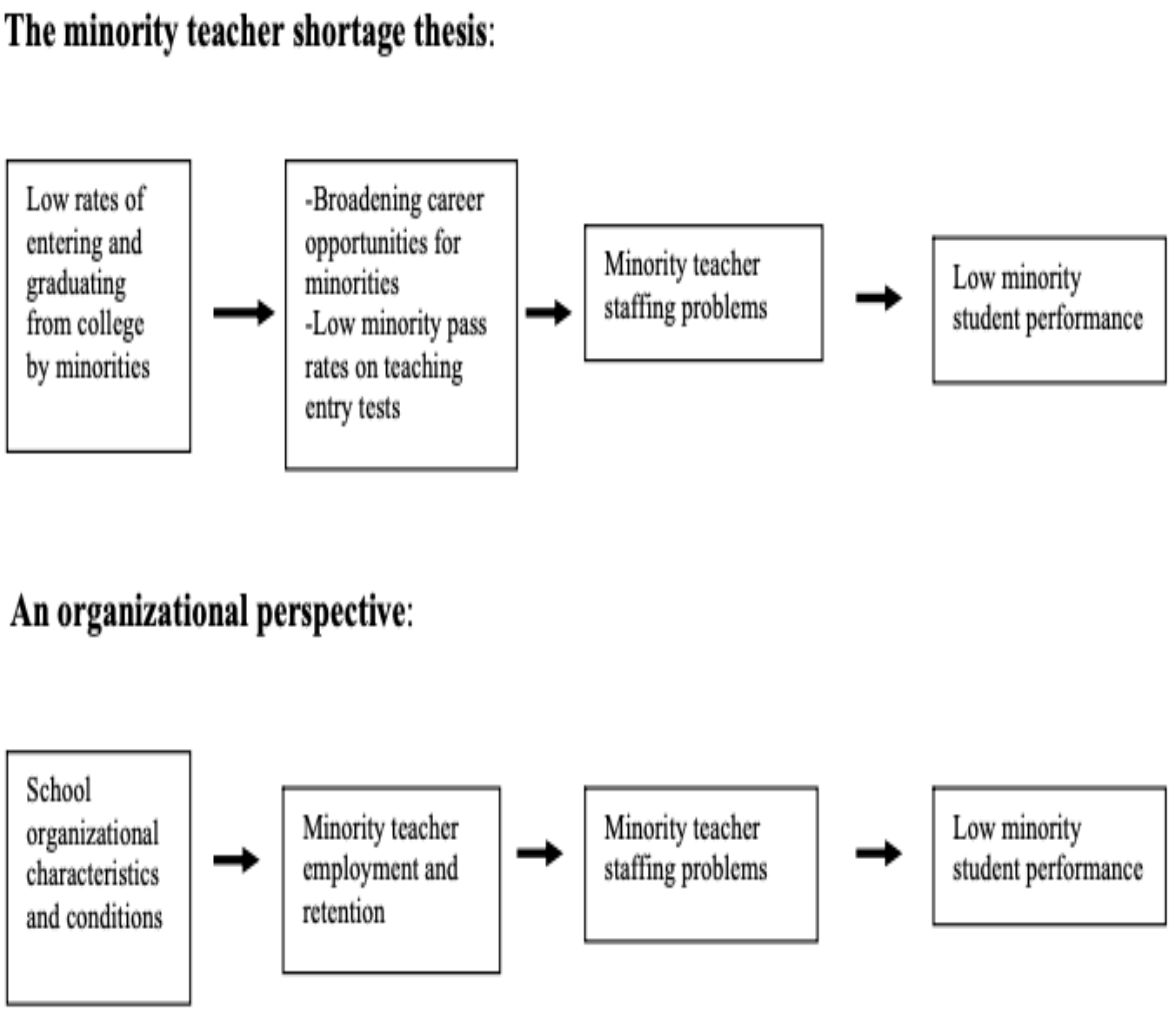
Some investigators argued that the benefits of teacher racial diversity extend beyond student test scores (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016). They proposed that minority students benefited from shared cultural values with minority teachers. These commonalities positively affected students' academic success. Cultural synchrony, or relationships with teachers of similar backgrounds and life experiences, increased the connections minority students experienced in public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011). Also, research suggested that minority teachers held higher expectations for minority students, which further positively influenced minority student achievement (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Studies also confirmed that Black male teachers are not a monolithic group. They possessed a wide range of experiences and opportunities influenced by the individual school setting in which they worked (Woodson & Bristol, 2020).

Another negative result of racial disparity among teachers was unequal access to quality teachers in disadvantaged schools (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016). An increase in the minority teacher pool increased the overall teacher-candidate pool, which increased the number of teachers available to work at disadvantaged schools. Based on these benefits, researchers identified the lack of racial diversity of teachers in

U.S. public schools as a contributing factor to negative academic outcomes for minority students. This is shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 presents two perspectives with which to examine the consequences of minority teacher staffing problems: the minority teacher shortage thesis and an organizational perspective. The researcher selected the organizational perspective for this study.

Figure 4

Consequences of Minority Teacher Staffing Problems



Source: Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). *Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage*. CPRE Research Report. https://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1221_minorityteachershortagereportrr69septfinal.pdf

One concern that arose concerning the impact of teacher diversification in public schools was the impact of minority teacher presence in public schools on White students who also benefited from having a racial/ethnic match with their teacher (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Therefore, researchers recommended racial/ethnic match as one strategy to address the present student opportunity gap.

Statement of the Problem

A U.S. Department of Education official attending the launch of a Black male teacher recruitment campaign at Morehouse College stated:

> Faced with the startling fact that black males represent 6 percent of the U.S. population yet 35 percent of the prison population and less than 2 percent of teachers, I cannot help but think how far we have to go (Bristol, 2018, p. 336).

The minority teacher shortage gained national attention and resulted in extensive research and education initiatives (Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Torres et al., 2004; Villegas et al.,2012; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). Recruitment efforts to diversify the U.S. teaching force received significant funding impacting over half of the states by the late 2000s (Villegas et al., 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016). These efforts resulted in future educator programs in high schools, high-minority community college partnerships and alternative certification programs (Villegas et al., 2012).

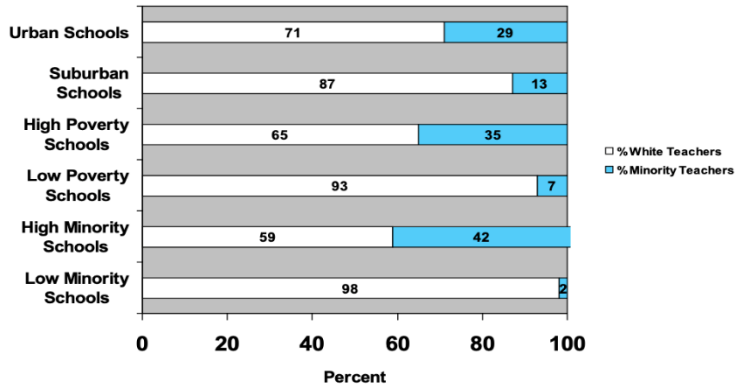
Organizations such as Call Me Mister (2000) and Black Men Teaching (2018) formed partnerships with secondary and post-secondary institutions to recruit Black males for college teacher preparation programs (Wallace & Gagen, 2020; Villegas et al., 2012). The Ford Foundation, the DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation, and other grantmaking organizations have committed substantial funding to recruiting and preparing minority teachers

(Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Villegas et al., 2012). These programs sought students in high minority, high-poverty urban schools that were often hard to staff (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Villegas et al., 2012). While these efforts have more than doubled the number of minority teachers hired to work in U.S. public schools, the overall percentage of minority teachers failed to keep pace with increases in minority student enrollment (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Villegas et al., 2012).

Researchers (Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016) examined public schools to determine causes of continued racial disparity among teachers. Studies incorporated the most comprehensive data source available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) and the supplemental *Teacher Follow-Up Survey* (TFS). Each study included all available cycles of the SASS and TFS. The 2019 study incorporated all seven cycles (1987/88, 1990/91, 1993/94, 1999/00, 2003/04, 2007/08, 2011/12) of the SASS/TFS for analysis. Quantitative studies confirmed earlier studies (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2016) that showed minority teacher recruitment efforts were effective. The number of minority teachers increased drastically. However, these studies also revealed that minority teachers were unequally distributed among schools, as shown in Figure 4. Roughly two-thirds of minority teachers worked in high-minority, high-poverty, urban communities. Only 3% worked in low-minority schools where there was less than a 10% minority student presence (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Villegas et al., 2012).

Figure 5

Type of Public School by Race/Ethnicity of Teaching Staff (2003/04)



Source: Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. CPRE Research Report. https://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1221_minorityteachershortagereportrr69septfinal.pdf

Ingersoll et al. (2019) found that turnover rates for minority teachers outpaced rates for White teachers in every cycle of the SASS/TFS. This turnover was especially pronounced for male minority teachers, who were 50% more likely to leave the profession than their female counterparts. Figure 6 shows organizational characteristics or conditions that public school teachers reported as having a negative influence on their job satisfaction categorized by school type. According to Figure 6, conditions that had almost equal negative impact on public school teachers no matter the school type were salary below $70,000, inadequate support from school leadership, low faculty decision-making influences, and professional development considered not useful. Figure 6 shows the conditions that disproportionately impacted public school teachers working at high poverty, high minority, and urban schools were serious student discipline problems, inadequate school resources, and low teacher classroom autonomy. Studies found that the reasons minority teachers tended to report leaving the profession included poor administrative leadership, serious student discipline issues, lack of influence on schoolwide decision-making, and lack of teacher classroom autonomy (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Two of the

four reasons found in studies disproportionately impacted schools (high poverty, high minority, and urban schools) in which higher percentages of minority teachers, in particular Black male teachers, tended to work. Thus, there is a greater likelihood of Black male teachers working in public school settings that have a greater number of working conditions negatively impacting teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention.

Table 1

Percentage of Public School Teachers Reporting Negative Conditions, by Type of School

	Type of School					
	High Poverty	Low Poverty	High Minority	Low Minority	Urban	Suburban
Organizational Characteristics/Conditions						
Highest Salary < $70,000	77	77	76	85	78	76
Serious Student Discipline Problems	26	11	28	8	27	14
Inadequate Support from Leadership	31	31	36	32	35	31
Inadequate School Resources	28	17	31	14	28	19
Low Faculty Decision-making Influence	49	39	49	39	48	42
Low Teacher Classroom Autonomy	36	23	36	19	36	26
Not Useful Discipline-Focused Prof Dev	54	64	57	63	39	41
Not Useful Content-Focused Prof. Dev.	36	42	38	43	57	60

Source: Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. CPRE Research Report. https://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1221_minorityteachershortagereportrr69septfinal.pdf

Factors which most influenced minority teachers' decisions to leave the profession were lack of decision-making power and lack of classroom autonomy (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Teacher satisfaction at public schools which employed more minority teachers, had a higher

representation of minority students, high rates of poverty, were in urban areas, and were much more affected by student discipline issues and lack of classroom autonomy. These schools tended to have less positive organizational climate and were harder to staff with teachers of all races/ethnicities.

A statistical simulation analysis was done to determine projected outcomes on the teacher workforce if minority teachers in urban/high-poverty schools had the same reported teacher classroom autonomy as teachers teaching in the top 10% of high-performing schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2016). Their findings suggested a conceivable gain of 250,000 more minority teachers in the teacher pipeline to staff schools.

Following several studies of public schools' working conditions, researchers asserted that recruitment and hiring were not the cause of low Black male teacher representation in public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016). Investigators have said that border heightening (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Kanter, 1977; Wallace & Gagen, 2020) and border crossing served as barriers in the social context and organizational structure of the workplace for minorities (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Kelly, 2007). Kanter (1977) defined border heightening as social isolation of minorities created by differing cultural practices and beliefs from the majority culture of the workplace (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Kanter, 1977). Kelly (2007) defined border crossing as minorities displaying insincere behaviors to integrate with colleagues of the majority culture.

Another theme from the literature identified perceived expectations that Black male teachers should act as disciplinarians for primarily Black male students as an obstacle in the social context and organizational structure of the workplace (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Brockenbrough, 2015; Brown, 2012). These barriers contributed to lower job satisfaction and

higher attrition rates for Black male teachers in public education (Brockenbrough, 2015; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016).

Kelly (2007) studied Black teachers working with a majority White staff. Kelly's (2007) research confirmed border heightening and described another workplace barrier, border crossing, for minority teachers. Other studies proposed that Black male teachers experienced pressure from school staff to primarily function as disciplinarians for troubled Black male students (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Brockenbrough, 2015; Brown, 2012). This expectation contributed to Black male teachers' feelings of being undervalued by administrators and colleagues (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Brockenbrough, 2015; Brown, 2012). Adverse outcomes for Black male teachers ranged from disillusionment and poor performance to their exit from education (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Walker et al., 2019.

Researchers confirmed that racial disparity was most noticeable for Black male teachers, who represent only 2% of the current educator workforce (Walker et al., 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Ingersoll et al. (2019) wrote that instructional leadership positions in public schools were an opportunity to address teacher racial disparities and benefit the academic achievement of minority students. Ingersoll et al. (2019) challenged public school decision makers to analyze and reform practices within the teacher pipeline to increase Black male teachers' access to and participation in instructional leadership roles. This study added to the body of knowledge surrounding the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of the workplace, as well as access to and experiences as instructional leaders to increase workplace satisfaction and job retention.

Theoretical Framework

Kanter's (1977) theory of structural power in organizations proposed that border heightening or social isolation, created barriers in the workplace for minorities. Kanter found that border heightening in the workplace for minorities was due to differing cultural practices and beliefs from the majority culture (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Kanter, 1977). Critical race theory was a second theory by which the researcher analyzed access and equity within the organizational structures of public education (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Individuals are empowered in organizations that provide access to information, support, and resources necessary to accomplish work and opportunities for growth and development of knowledge and skills (Laschinger, 1997). Access to these organizational power structures equated to social capital or empowerment within an organization (Kanter, 1977).

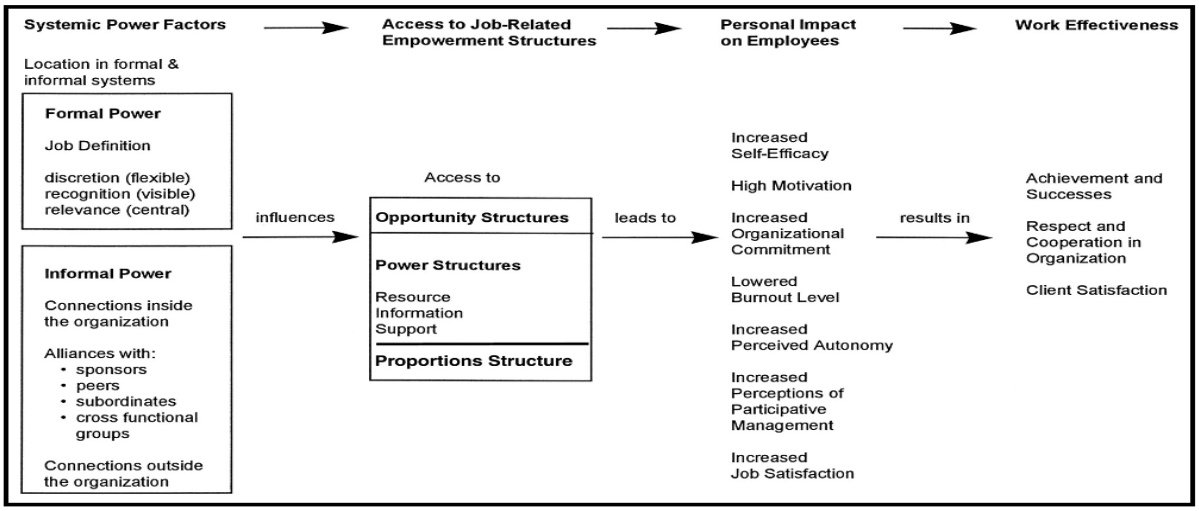
Critical race theory states that race, racism, and implicit biases are an inherent part of American society and perpetuates White supremacy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). White supremacy in social structures isolates and oppresses minorities. Studies showed that organizational power structures within public education were no exception to these negative influences. Race, racism, and implicit biases influenced organizational practices in education and challenged equitable access to power structures and opportunities for minorities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Access to power structures within one's organization had more impact on minority employee advancement than any individual predisposition which may have had the potential to hinder their advancement (Kanter, 1977; Spence Laschinger et al., 1999). Urban schools, which often have weaker organizational structures and cultures, employed more minority teachers, especially Black male teachers

(Ingersoll et al., 2017, 2019). Thus, Black male teachers had a greater likelihood of experiencing access and equity issues surrounding power structures within public school settings.

Kanter (1977) recommended that organizations examine internal hierarchies to ensure equitable access to their power structures for all employees, regardless of race. Kanter (1977) also cautioned organizational leaders to avoid negative stereotypes that perpetuated practices based on assumptions that certain race/ethnicities did not desire opportunities for development or career advancement (Kanter, 1977). Figure 7 presents the relationships among organizational power structures and their impacts on employee advancement.

Figure 6

Relationships of Concepts in Kanter's Structural Theory of Power in Organizations



Source: Spence Laschinger, H.K. (1996). A theoretical approach to studying work empowerment in nursing: A review of studies testing Kanter's theory of structural power in organizations. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, *20*(2), 25-41

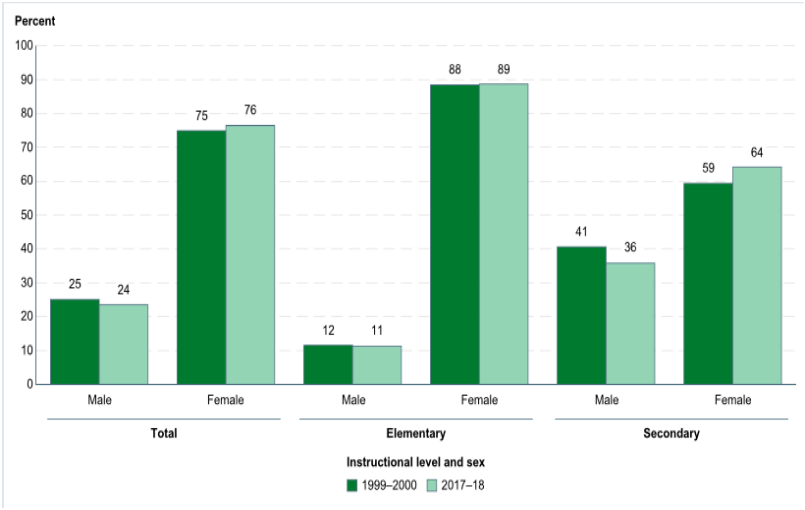
Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of equity and access for seven Black male teachers in a North Carolina secondary public school district. The researcher focused on two components of the secondary public school setting as experienced by

the seven participants: social context and instructional leadership. For this study, the researcher defined the social context of participants as workplace interactions with administrators and teacher colleagues. The researcher defined instructional leadership as roles related to instruction and academic matters such as department or grade level chair, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) facilitator, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Chair, School Improvement Team (SIT) member or School Leadership Team (SLT) chair, or mentor-teacher. The researcher excluded athletic directors, athletic coaches, dean of students, and administrators from this study. Black male teachers working in high schools were selected because research shows that more male teachers are working at the secondary rather than the primary level. This is presented in Figure 8. The goal of this qualitative research study was to fill a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of Black male teachers in public education that has often been presented as being uniform. The researcher also sought to understand the perceptions and diverse experiences of Black male teachers that negatively impacted retention in public education.

Figure 7

Distribution of Teachers in Public Schools by Percent



Source: NCES (2021). *Characteristics of public school teachers.* https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/clr/public-school-teachers

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this qualitative study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of their workplace experiences in secondary public schools?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their feelings of preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities within secondary public schools?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles in secondary public schools?

Methodology

A phenomenological approach assumes that there is an essence to shared experiences which are mutually understood and create core meanings for a group of people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify how participants perceived a situation, or phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The task of the phenomenologist is to determine and clearly communicate this essence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2013) described the product of a phenomenological study as a "composite description that presents the 'essence' of the phenomenon, called the essential, invariant structure (or essence)" (p. 82). Unlike grounded theory, which focuses on the building of a theory, a phenomenological study depicts the lived experiences of a group of people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For this study, a phenomenological approach was chosen because the researcher was interested in the lived experiences of individuals (Black male teachers) surrounding a specific phenomenon (working in North Carolina secondary public schools) (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creswell (2013) stated that the reader of a phenomenological study should walk away with the feeling, "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (p. 62). The

researcher sought to better understand the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers in secondary public education, as well as what impacts their retention. Therefore, the interview, which is the most common data collection tool for a phenomenological approach, was used because participants could recount their stories in their own voices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher used criteria-based selection, by which participants are chosen who have attributes identified as essential for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The criteria for this study required participants to be current secondary public school teachers working in the selected North Carolina school district, who identified as male and as Black/African American. Also, instructional leadership experience was a requirement for participation in the study. If a candidate did not possess leadership, recruitment survey responses had to indicate a desire to become an instructional leadership to participate. This study focused on the impact of workplace interactions and instructional leadership opportunities for Black male teachers in secondary public schools. Seven participants were selected for this study to maximize discourse and best represent the unique experiences of Black male teachers, as well as increasing the likelihood of achieving data saturation for the salient factors of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

After receiving UNC Charlotte IRB and district approval, the researcher obtained a list of all Black male teachers working in the selected school district from the human resources department. All potential participants received an electronic recruitment survey via email that described the study and invited recipients to participate. The investigator reviewed responses and confirmed that respondents who indicated interest in study participation met the criteria. Participants who met the criteria were emailed a copy of the informed consent for this study to review and complete via *DocuSign*.

Once the informed consent form was returned, the researcher emailed each participant to schedule a semi-structured interview via *Zoom* that lasted for a maximum of one hour. The researcher conducted these virtual interviews at a time agreed upon by the researcher and each participant. These meetings provided the researcher with rich feedback from participants for analysis and interpretation. The researcher created audio files and electronic transcripts of each *Zoom* interview. Transcripts of each interview were reviewed several times to verify accuracy. The researcher then deleted the audio files of each interview. Participants received a copy of the verified interview transcript via email to member-check for accuracy. The researcher used *NVIVO* to code each participant's interview transcript for analysis. Based on the data analysis, the researcher provided implications of the findings, as well as recommendations for future studies.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

This study focused on current Black male teachers who taught high school in the selected district in North Carolina. Selected participants met the criteria for this study: current Black male teachers in secondary public schools in the selected district, who had or desired to have instructional leadership experience. As participation was voluntary, findings from this study represented the experiences and perceptions of Black male teachers in the sample and highlighted patterns and differences in participants' perceptions and interpretations of their secondary public school experience in the selected district.

This study assumed that participants responded to interview questions honestly. Another assumption was that participants answered interview questions based on actual experiences and not personal biases. A final assumption was that the findings of this study represented the

experiences and perceptions of Black male teachers within secondary public schools that met the criteria of this study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms occur regularly in this study and are defined according to the glossary of terms used by National Center for Education Statistics (2019).

Racial/Ethnic Group

A classification indicating general racial or ethnic heritage. Race/ethnicity data are based on the *Hispanic* ethnic category and the race categories listed below (five single-race categories, plus the *Two or more races* category). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity unless otherwise noted.

White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Black or African American. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Used interchangeably with the shortened term *Black*.

Other Definitions

The definitions below are defined according to their use in this study and the literature:

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership roles are those not related to athletics or administration but instructional and academic matters such as department chair, PLC facilitator, MTSS chair, SIT/SLT member or chair, and mentor teacher.

All definitions provided below are as described by Ingersoll and May (2016).

Classroom Teacher Autonomy

Individual teacher's control over 6 areas: selecting textbooks and other instructional materials, selecting content, topics and skills to be taught, selecting teaching techniques, evaluating and grading students, determining the amount of homework to be assigned, and disciplining students (Ingersoll & May, 2016).

High-Poverty Schools

Refers to schools in which 60% or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch program for students from families below poverty level (Ingersoll & May, 2016)

Race/Ethnicity Match

A student and teacher identify as the same race or ethnicity (Ingersoll & May, 2016).

School-Wide Faculty Influence

Collective faculty influence over 7 areas: student performance standards, curriculum, content of in-service programs, evaluating teachers, hiring teachers, school discipline policy, and deciding spending of budget.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided a background for the research and the need for further research. This study focused on the workplace experiences of Black male teachers in secondary public schools, as well as their access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles. Chapter 1 also gave a statement of the research problem, the theoretical framework on which this research was based, and the purpose of this study. The chapter ends with the three research questions guiding the research, the methodology used, limitations, and definitions of frequently used terms.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of related studies. This chapter also highlights structural frameworks in the secondary public education system that negatively impact the experiences of

Black males in public education. Chapter 3 details the design of this qualitative study and the processes for identifying potential participants. Due to the researcher being a secondary school principal, the researcher was careful not to select participants they directly or indirectly supervised. Two respondents of the recruitment survey were eliminated due to prior work situations in which the researcher had been their supervisor. Owing to the researcher having almost 27 years of experience working in education in North Carolina, there have been professional development and leadership meetings in several school districts. Thus, the researcher was a professional acquaintance of five participants in this study. However, the researcher believed that the established positive rapport with the five participants contributed to their willingness to be a part of the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. The researcher conducted virtual interviews via Zoom. The video component of Zoom was not utilized to protect the anonymity of participants. The audio only component of Zoom was used to record the interview and create a transcript of each interview. The researcher used a recruiting survey to secure participants for the study. The researcher also confirmed that respondents met the study criteria.

Chapter 4 presents a summary of the data and analysis of the results. A summary of the recruitment survey process and responses is given. Emerging themes and subthemes for each question are described. Chapter 5 interprets findings and gives implications for school leaders. The interpretation of findings was presented by research question. The researcher recommends areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the decades following the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, the percentage of students of color in U.S. public schools almost doubled, from 22% in 1972 to 41% in 2004 (Madkins, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019). However, recent demographics for White and Black student populations showed a decline as the percentage of other racial groups increased (De Brey, 2019; NCES, 2019). Desegregation and immigration were believed to be contributing factors to the increased diversity of the student population (Madkins, 2011; NCES, 2019).

However, the racial demographics of educators remained unchanged: roughly 80% of faculty in public schools were and have remained White (Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkin, 2011; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Major recruitment efforts in the early 2000s more than doubled the number of minority teachers hired to work in U.S. public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Villegas et al., 2012). Overall, though, teacher racial demographics failed to keep pace with the racially diverse student population (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Villegas et al., 2012). The most prominent racial disparity among teachers and their students has been Black male teachers at under 2% of the overall teacher population (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Villegas et al., 2012; Lewis, 2006). Studies summarized in this chapter examined the historical impacts of power structures and practices on Black male teachers working in public education.

Historical Background of Minority Teacher Demographics

The *Brown* decision ended decades of segregated student populations and school staffs. However, the ruling not only affected public schools, but also paradoxically led to a backlash against Black educators throughout the South as they were not always hired to work in the newly integrated schools (Fultz, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Madkins, 2011). This retaliation

against Black teachers and principals resulted in a large scale exiting from the teaching profession (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011; Tillman, 2004). A number of researchers estimated that roughly 40,000 Black educators left the profession in the decade following *Brown* (Goings et al., 2019; Lewis, 2006).

Discriminatory hiring practices, such as 'nonhiring' of Black educators, arose and severely limited opportunities for Black teacher candidates and constricted racial diversification of public school faculty (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011). By the 2017-2018 school year, 79% of public school teachers were White, 9% Hispanic, 7% Black, 2% Asian, and 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native (*Race and Ethnicity,* 2020; NCES, 2019).

The resulting teacher racial disparities continued despite significant racial/ethnic shifts in the American population and student demographics (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2019). A homogeneous teacher workforce experienced an uneven distribution of minority students, as it was primarily urban school districts that experienced significant growth among Black and Latino students (Madkins, 2011; NCES, 2019). Thus, students rarely had opportunities to experience the positive benefits of same-race teacher relationships throughout their K-12 education, particularly in urban schools (Bristol, 2020a; Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; De Brey, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

To become a teacher in most U.S. public schools, one needs both a college degree and a state issued teaching license. However, a continued lack of racial diversity exists among U.S. public school teachers. Scholars attributed the following as factors contributing to the absence of minority candidates in the teacher pipeline: elementary and secondary level achievement gaps, lower high school graduation rates, decreased college entrance rates, and poorer performance on

education entry assessments (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2019; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Lewis, 2006). As noted earlier, the racial disparity appeared to be most significant for Black male teachers (Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Wallace & Gagen, 2020; Walker et al., 2019; Lewis & Toldson, 2013). Scholars concluded that systemic racist practices impeded the academic success of Black males at higher rates due to negative stereotypes, disproportionate discipline practices, and negative teacher perceptions (Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Lewis & Toldson, 2013). Consequently, fewer Black male students pursued education as a profession (Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Lewis, 2006).

Racial Disparity Between Teachers and Students of Color

Educator workforce data concluded that many public school students completed their K-12 education with little or no exposure to teacher racial diversity (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019). Many public schools lacked the teacher diversity needed for racially inclusive classrooms despite research concluding significant benefits to students of all races (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). Nationwide data from 2016 showed that ratios of students of color to teachers of color were: Whites were 48% to 79% (1:2), Blacks were 15% to 7% (2:1), Hispanics were 27% to 9% (3:1), and Asians were 6% to 2% (3:1) (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

White students had cultural experiences and values associated with their teachers. They also typically benefited from many positive role models in authority/leadership positions throughout their academic careers. Interestingly, Asian students also experienced a significant racial student-teacher disparity, but Asian students performed as well or better than White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019).

Racial Disparity Between Black Teachers and Black Student Populations

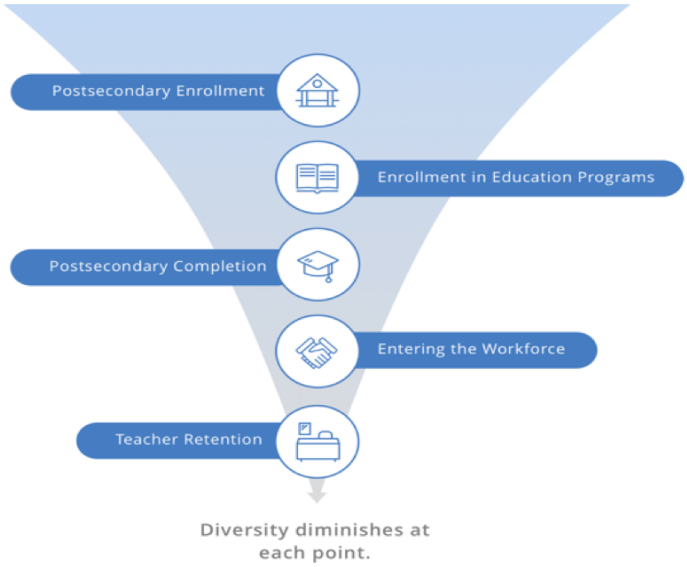
A disparity exists between the percentages of Black teachers, who accounted for 7% of the teacher population, and Black students, who accounted for 15% of the student population (NCES, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). There was an overall ratio of roughly two Black students to each Black teacher. Black male teachers, however, have an 8:1 ratio with Black students. Black male teachers experienced pressure to serve as positive role models for Black students when accounting, despite the uneven distribution of minority students and minority teachers in public schools. Urban school districts consistently enrolled significantly higher percentages of Black and Latino student populations (Madkins, 2011; NCES, 2019). Roughly two-thirds of minority teachers worked in minority, high-poverty, and urban areas (Ingersoll & May, 2011, 2016; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Villegas et al., 2012).

Academic and behavior outcomes were shown to be negatively impacted for Black and Hispanic students and even more so for males of both groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019). Education reports identified challenges and obstacles along the educator pipeline for Black males which limited the likelihood of their working entry into the teaching. Entry into the pipeline begins with PreK-12 preparation for post-secondary success. Lower academic performance and higher expulsion/suspension rates of Black students indicated the need for Black male teachers to serve as positive role models and continue to foster positive images (Lewis, 2006). Students who had negative K-12 academic experiences and were not in school due to repeated expulsions or suspensions performed poorly academically (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Researchers challenged school leaders to address the obstacles facing Black male students in PK-12 education so as to increase post-secondary entry and

successful completion of the pipeline, as shown in Figure 9 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Figure 8

Key Points Along the Educator Pipeline



Source: The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce. U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf

Black males who successfully finished the educator pipeline and entered the teaching profession were faced with a new challenge: retention (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019). One study examined six urban schools and found that recruitment and retention of teachers of color was difficult even when targeted strategies were in place (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some authors suggested that the workplace environment for current Black male teachers in secondary public schools offered more immediate opportunities for improving retention (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

School leaders have the authority to create more access for Black male teachers to power structures in schools in order to increase job satisfaction and retention (Kanter, 1977; Kelly, 2007). This approach is favored because addressing issues surrounding entry of Black males into

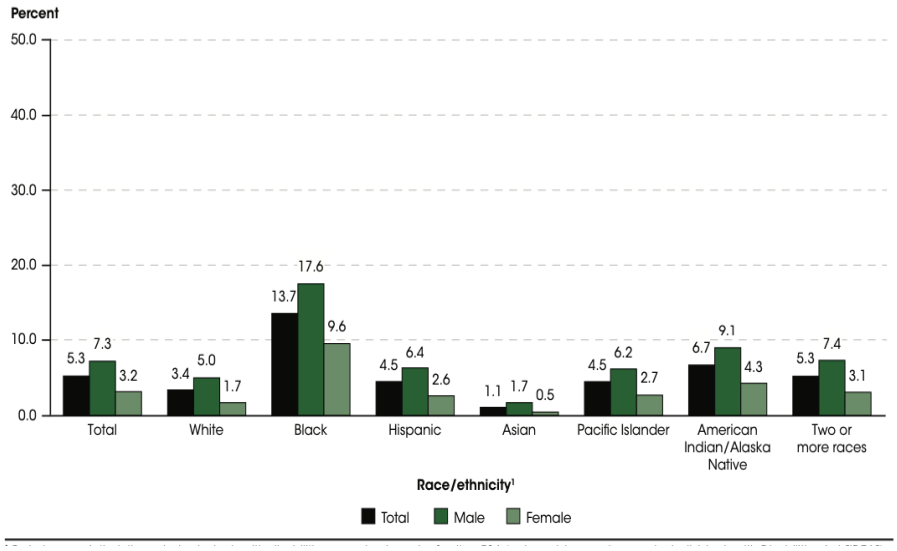
the educator pipeline requires significant changes in policies and practices and long-term outcomes.

Same Race Teacher-Student Disparity: Implications for Black Students

U.S. public schools have increasing numbers of Black students, particularly Black male students, who were disciplined more severely and at higher rates than their White peers (NCES, 2019). Black students were more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions (NCES, 2019). This practice was most pronounced for Black male students, as shown in Figure 10. Administrative data compiled during 2007/08 in North Carolina revealed that Black students taught by Black teachers received fewer office referrals than those taught by White teachers (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019).

Figure 9

Percentage of Public School Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex: 2013/14



Source: de Brey, C., Musu, L., McFarland, J., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Diliberti, M., Zhang, A., Branstetter, C., & Wang, X. (2019). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups*. NCES. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019038.pdf

Two problems caused by the racial disparity between teachers and students were the lack of culturally appropriate learning environments and lack of same-race role models for students of color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Klopfenstein, 2005; Sutcher et al., 2019). These same authors confirmed the positive benefits of the academic outcomes of students of color when taught by teachers of color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019). A strong predictor of bachelor's degree completion, perhaps even more than socioeconomics, was the highest level of math completed in high school (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Klopfenstein, 2005). These researchers documented that students of color were more likely to enroll in rigorous math courses when teachers of color taught those courses. The *2002 Educational Longitudinal Study* (NCES, n.d.) found that Black teachers held higher expectations for Black students than White teachers (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). A recent quantitative study (n=50,000) found that Black students taught by Black teachers were reportedly more motivated, felt cared for, and desired to attend college at higher rates (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019).

Overview of Themes

This literature review examined three themes impacting Black male teachers in public education. The first theme was the problem of Black male teachers being underrepresented in U.S. public schools. The researcher analyzed teacher turnover for teachers overall and Black male teachers. The researcher also examined the impact of low Black male teacher representation on Black students in public schools.

The second theme was factors contributing to the under-representation of Black male teachers in U.S. public schools. The researcher examined recruitment obstacles within the K-20 experiences of Black male students and analyzed employment practices of public schools that affected Black male teacher retention. The final theme searched in the literature were factors that

impacted job satisfaction for Black male teachers. The researcher searched for relevant studies that focused on the power of collegial interactions in the workplace and also examined the influence of working conditions on job satisfaction for Black male teachers. Table 1 summarizes the themes and studies found for this review.

Table 2

Themes Identified in the Literature

Themes	Sources
Black Male Teacher Underrepresentation in U.S. Public Schools	
Teacher Turnover	Bristol, 2020a, 2020b; Ingersoll & May 2011, 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kirby et al., 1999; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Madkins, 2011; Simon & Johnson, 2015; *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*, 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020; Woodson & Bristol, 2020
Black Male Teachers' Impact on Students	Bristol, 2018, 2020a; 2020b; Brockenbrough, 2012a; hooks, 1992; Ingersoll & May, 2016; Lewis, 2006; Lynn, 2006; Lynn & Jennings, 2009; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Moll et al., 1992; Quazad, 2014 Simon & Johnson, 2015; Valencia, 1997; Woodson & Bristol, 2020
Factors Contributing to Underrepresentation of Black Male Teachers	
Recruitment Obstacles – Academics and Discipline	Woodson & Bristol, 2020; Carey, 2017; Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Wallace 2017; 2020; Fergus, 2009; Howard, 2008; Bianco et al., 2011; Lewis, 2006; Woodson & Pabon, 2016; Madkins, 2011; Bristol, 2020b; Hobson et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015
Employment Practices	Adams, 2016; Bristol, 2018, 2020a, 2020b; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Glenn, 2016; Lewis, 2006; Madkins, 2011; Persinger, 2017; Simon & Johnson, 2015; *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*, 2019
Most Influential Factors Impacting Black Male Teacher Job Satisfaction	
Collegial Interactions	Bristol & Goings, 2019; Bristol & Shirrell, 2019; Bristol, 2018, 2020a, 2020b; Brockenbrough, 2012a; Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009; Grissom & Keiser, 2011; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Mackenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Woodson & Bristol, 2019, 2020

Working Conditions	Allensworth et al., 2009; Bristol, 2020a, 2020b; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Woodson & Bristol, 2020

Black Male Teacher Underrepresentation in U.S. Public Schools

Teacher Turnover

The public school workforce has approximately 3.5 million full- and part-time educators (NCES, 2019). The national attrition rate for U.S. public school teachers has been comparable to 90% of annual teacher demand (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; NCES, 2019). Two types of teacher attrition significantly impacted public schools. The first type was teacher attrition caused by teachers leaving the field (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; NCES, 2019). The second type of loss was teacher turnover from transfer. Teacher turnover has increased significantly over the past three decades (Allensworth et al., 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Educator turnover accounted for roughly 8% of annual teacher demand (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). An annual turnover rate of 16% for the U.S. public school teaching force can potentially harm school cultures and student learning (Allensworth et al., 2009).

Excessive teacher turnover can lead to hiring less experienced or uncertified teachers, increased class sizes, and reduced course offerings, all of which negatively impact student learning (Allensworth et al., 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). High teacher turnover can also negatively impact staff stability by disrupting collegiality and loss of teacher knowledge, experience, and collaboration. Researchers have found that schools with students from low SES areas and have a high percentage of students of color experienced higher levels of teacher turnover and were difficult to staff. These students were four times more likely to be taught by uncertified or inexperienced teachers compared to students attending schools with fewer students of color (Allensworth et al., 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Investigators also found a correlation between teacher turnover and students' underperformance on standardized examinations, which impacted urban schools at a significantly higher rate (Allensworth et al., 2009; Bristol, 2020b).

Teacher turnover affected teachers from various racial groups differently (Bristol, 2020a; Ingersoll & May, 2016). The public school teaching force recently was comprised of 82% White teachers (Ingersoll, May & Collins, 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). From 2008-2013, the turnover rate for teachers of color increased from 18.1% to 18.9% (Ingersoll & May, 2016), while that of White teachers remained unchanged at 15% (Bristol, 2020a). Research on hiring practices and attrition rates for teachers of color revealed schools with more racial/ethnic diversity in their student populations often had more racial/ethnic diversity among teachers (NCES, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Therefore, students who attended schools with predominantly White student populations had fewer or no teachers of color.

One motivation to diversify the teaching workforce was the disparity between the number of Black students and Black teachers (Madkins, 2011). For the past 20 years, Black male teachers have made up about 2% of the country's public schools' labor force (Bristol, 2020b; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Woodson & Bristol, 2020) despite dramatic growth in the number of elementary and secondary teachers since the late 1980s (Ingersoll & May, 2016).

Black male teachers had the highest turnover rate of all minorities (Bristol, 2020a; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kirby et al., 1999). This lack of representation provided little opportunity for creating positive images within public education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Thomas & Warren, 2017). Further, the likelihood of a male teacher of color leaving the teaching profession was 50% higher than a female teacher of color (Bristol, 2020a). Simon and Johnson (2015) found that the adverse effects of turnover on academic achievement were more

significant for low-performing students and Black students than for their higher-performing, non-Black peers. The scarcity of Black male teachers in U.S. public school classrooms compounded the negative impacts of Black male teacher turnover for students. Teacher racial demographics of public schools deprived students of color, and especially Black male students, of the social, emotional, and academic benefits of being taught by Black male teachers (Lewis, 2006; Thomas & Warren, 2017).

Black Male Teachers' Impact on Students

Quasi-experimental studies bolstered claims that educational outcomes for students improved with same-race teachers (Bristol, 2020a; De Brey, 2019; Thomas & Warren, 2017). Quazad (2014) found that teachers' perception of students' academic abilities increased when teachers were of the same race as students. Bristol (2020b) found no significant difference between students' grades and teachers' gender. However, students of color continued to lack same-race adult role models and culturally relevant school environments in which to learn, and some education advocates considered the shortage of teachers of color in public schools a civil rights issue (Ingersoll & May, 2016; Thomas & Warren, 2017).

Mackenzie and Scheurich (2004) conducted in-depth discussions with a group of eight experienced White teachers about their students of color, their own racial identities, and the relationship between their perceptions of their students of color and their own racial identity. The investigators proposed that implicit biases (equity traps) prevented White teachers from fully impacting the academic achievement and social-emotional needs of Black students. Equity traps were a means by which White teachers could shift accountability from personal beliefs/practices to economics as a cause for Black student underachievement (hooks, 1992). White teachers in urban schools had low expectations of Black students from low SES backgrounds (Bristol, 2018,

2020a). Those beliefs negatively impacted assessment practices and subsequently the academic performance of Black students. White teachers could therefore maintain negative stereotypes about Black students to avoid guilt or responsibility for these students underperforming.

Research confirmed that Black teachers had more positive views about the academic abilities of Black students than White teachers (Bristol, 2020a). Students responded positively to teachers who shared their social identity; this alone improved academic achievement and social-emotional learning for students of color (Bristol, 2020a; Woodson & Bristol, 2020). Studies showed that Black male teachers characterized their work with students, particularly Black male students, as providing their students with strategies to navigate Eurocentric spaces successfully (Lewis, 2006; Lynn & Jennings, 2009). Results from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study* demonstrated that math and English scores increased for Black students in K-5 when taught by a Black teacher (Bristol, 2018, 2020a). Longitudinal administrative data sets from North Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee found statistically significant increases in standardized exams for Black students with same-race teachers (Bristol, 2020a). Yet, Black male teachers were underrepresented in nearly every K-12 subject area (Bristol, 2020b; Woodson & Bristol, 2020).

Factors Contributing to Underrepresentation of Black Male Teachers

Recruitment Obstacles

Academics. Recent empirical investigations focused on pathways into the teaching profession and teaching practices of Black males (Adams, 2016; Bianco et al., 2011; Bristol, 2018). The pathway to becoming a teacher begins early and entails completing many tasks: successful completion of high school, college acceptance, entry in a teacher preparation program, and passing teacher licensure examinations (Bianco et al., 2011). These experiences

cumulatively shaped individual's attitudes toward becoming a teacher, as well as the likelihood of success in pursuing licensure and entering the teaching profession.

Studies highlighted the obstacles public schools faced to address K-12 challenges surrounding the academic achievement, discipline, and graduation of Black male students (Carey, 2017; Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Wallace, 2017). To disrupt the educational inequities faced by Black male students, well-prepared, culturally responsive Black male teachers are needed (Bianco et al., 2011; Lynn & Jennings, 2009). However, many minority students were left inadequately prepared for college entrance and graduation (Lewis, 2006; Madkins, 2011). In addition, racial and gendered messages based on teacher demographics of public schools discouraged students of color from pursuit of the educational field as a career (Bristol, 2020b; Fergus, 2009; Howard, 2008; Woodson and Bristol, 2020). Five Black male students in Bianco et al.'s (2011) study spoke highly of the teaching profession and shared how teachers can positively impact students' lives. However, they reported that professional athletes and medical doctors were more respected and had greater earning power than teachers in their community.

Furthermore, post-secondary teacher preparation programs faced obstacles recruiting Black males (Bristol, 2020b; Woodson & Bristol, 2020: Woodson & Pabon, 2016). Black males reported a lack of cultural diversity and relevance in their pre-service experiences (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Lewis, 2006). They also did not feel these experiences prepared them or their non-Black peers for diverse student populations (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Lewis, 2006). The mentoring of pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience was viewed as a potential recruitment and retention strategy since the late 1980s (Hobson et al., 2012). Once hired, teachers who had access to mentors from the same subject area and participated in training activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to leave the

profession during their first year and were less likely to transfer to other schools when properly inducted (Hobson et al., 2012).

Discipline. Disproportionality in school discipline represents one of the most significant problems in education today (McIntosh et al., 2018; NCES, 2019). A racial discipline gap has grown since the 1970s, especially in the past decade (McIntosh et al., 2018; NCES, 2019). Suspension and expulsion were also factors that had significant adverse effects on Black male student outcomes such as an increased risk of dropping out of school (De Brey, 2019; NCES, 2019). Studies, though, showed no higher rates of problem behavior for students of color that warranted more school discipline (Skiba et al., 2011; NCES, 2019).

Reviewing decades of research consistently confirmed that students of color, particularly Black males, were at significantly more risk for exposure to exclusionary discipline, including office discipline referrals and suspensions (McIntosh et al., 2018; NCES, 2019). Simon and Johnson (2015) found that teachers reported that their work was more difficult when they did not share social expectations or similar characteristics, including race, ethnicity, and language, with their students.

McIntosh et al. (2018) asserted that teacher inexperience contributed to disproportionality in discipline and special education referrals. Novice teachers with one or two years of teaching experience were more likely to suspend Black students and Black students with disabilities (NCES, 2019). Studies and education reports confirmed higher rates of disproportionality for behaviors in which violations were more subjective and required more teacher judgment (McIntosh et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2011). Increased Black male teacher presence in public schools could potentially reduce discipline referrals for Black male students. Other potential

benefits are increased cultural relevance in the classroom and positive role models to influence values surrounding academics (Lynn & Jennings, 2009; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Milner, 2016).

Employment Practices

Employment practices in education often hindered or prevented the hiring and retention of Black male teachers in schools. Education data and research have shown that schools with significant numbers of Black students whose families are working-class employed Black male teachers at higher rates (Bristol, 2018, 2020a; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Minority teacher percentages were highest at schools with 90% or more minority students. Conversely, White teachers accounted for 98% of teachers at schools with less than 10% of students of color and only 45% of staff at schools with 90% or more students of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; NCES, 2019).

Adams (2016) and Grissom and Keiser (2011) described a gatekeeper as the person who makes the final hiring decisions. The gatekeeper for teacher hiring was typically the school principal. Schools that served large numbers of minority students typically hired more minority teachers. Nevertheless, researchers found that these schools rarely have principals of color (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Walker et al., 2019). Principals typically utilized interview teams to assist with hiring decisions (Adams, 2016; Bristol, 2020b). Racial biases by interview committees were more apparent when the school had a primarily White student body and negatively affected Black teacher candidates.

Federal, state, and local policymakers continue recruitment efforts to increase the number of Black male teachers in public schools (Bristol, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kirby et al., 1999). There were several recruitment campaigns that gained national attention: Philadelphia's Fellowship of Black Male Educators, whose mission was to recruit and develop 1000 Black

males by 2025 (Persinger, 2017); Calling Black Men to the Blackboard to improve academic outcomes of Black male students (Bristol, 2020a); South Carolina's Call Me MISTER (Men Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) initiated in 2000 (Bristol, 2018; Lewis, 2006); Prince George's County, Maryland's African American Males Into Teaching Program (AAMTP) (Bristol, 2018); and NYC Men Teach, an initiative to recruit 1,000 male teachers of color (Bristol, 2018).

Efforts to solve staffing problems have focused primarily on recruiting promising Black male teachers in high-poverty schools, but with little attention given to systematically supporting and retaining them once employed (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2016). In response, districts implemented initiatives focused on mentorship for Black male teachers (Hobson et al., 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2019). One example, North Carolina's Profound Gentlemen's mission, sought to provide a community for Black male teachers to combat workplace isolation (Glenn, 2016).

Ongoing teacher diversity campaigns did not increase the net number of teachers of color because policymakers failed to address the disproportionately high rate at which teachers of color exit compared to White teachers (Bristol, 2020a). States then offered new pathways into education through alternative licensure programs (Adams, 2016; Bristol et al., 2020). However, researchers found that alternative teacher licensure programs had virtually no impact on the nation's teaching force (Madkins, 2011). A national survey of 2,187 U.S. high school principals found that they were more likely to reject applicants who earned their teaching credentials online as opposed to those who earned their credentials from traditional programs (Adams, 2016).

Influences Impacting Black Male Teacher Job Satisfaction

The Illinois Education Research Council (2007) found that while student demographics did influence teacher retention, working conditions had a more significant impact on a teacher's decision to remain or leave a school. Allensworth et al. (2009) indicated that teachers of all backgrounds, including race and ethnicity, were more likely to leave schools with predominantly Black student populations. As a result, the negative consequences of high teacher turnover had greater negative implications on Black male students' academic success and potential entry into or exit from the educator pipeline (Allensworth et al., 2009; NCES, 2019). A greater number of Black male teachers tended to teach at schools with more diverse student populations. Therefore, increased Black male teacher retention could have immediate positive impacts on Black male students who struggle academically and behaviorally in public school settings (Allensworth et al., 2009; NCES, 2019).

Without proper mentorship and acculturation into the mainstream culture of education, Black males who successfully entered the education workforce, did so with fewer social skills and educational preparation than their non-Black colleagues (Bianco et al., 2011; Bristol, 2018; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Brockenbrough, 2012a; Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). However, little research has explored the relationship between school organizational contexts and Black male teachers' experiences and perceptions of teaching in secondary public schools (Allensworth et al., 2009). Simon and Johnson (2015) and Allensworth et al. (2009) contended that working conditions were most important to all teachers, regardless of race and ethnicity. The most salient predictors of job satisfaction and retention according to these studies are social: school leadership, collegial relationships, and elements of school culture.

Simon and Johnson (2015) and Allensworth et al. (2009) also found that teachers did not leave because of students, but rather left schools that lacked leadership and positive collegial relationships. Also, negative collegial relationships and poor working conditions were found to be leading causes of attrition for Black male teachers (Bristol, 2020a; Simon & Johnson, 2015). However, there appeared to be a gap in the literature as to how to address these working conditions to improve Black male teacher retention (Brockenbrough, 2012b).

Collegial Interactions

Bristol (2020a) and Simon and Johnson (2015) concluded that there is a direct connection between teachers' experiences with their colleagues and their continued commitment to teaching at their school. Regardless of race or gender, teachers relied on their colleagues for professional and personal needs for social interaction, reassurance, and psychological support (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Three conditions strengthened teachers' work with their colleagues: an inclusive environment characterized by respect and trust among colleagues, formal structures that promoted collaboration, and the presence of a shared mission among teachers (Bristol, 2020a; Simon & Johnson, 2015). These conditions were critical as teachers improved their instructional practices through ongoing collaborative processes in which they constantly gave and received feedback and support from professionals in the organization (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Sociologists reported that perceptions of workplace isolation were associated with decreased cognitive abilities, increased negativity and depression, loss of desire for socializing, and constant paranoia (Bristol, 2020b; Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009).

Ferguson (2007, 2010) conducted the Tripod Project to investigate the impact of collegial interactions on teachers. Educators in 121 schools reported their personal experiences and interactions with colleagues and administrators via a survey. Approximately 1.4%, or 49,

teachers were Black male teachers which was marginally smaller than the national average of 1.9% (Bristol, 2018). Black male teacher respondents reported that their colleagues were less likely to offer them support unless the Black male teachers explicitly asked (Bristol, 2018). Complicating this dynamic was that Black male teachers reported experiencing little professional support around their practice (Bristol, 2018). Black male teachers also reported they were hesitant to ask advice from most teachers at their schools even if they needed assistance (Bristol, 2018; Bristol & Shirrell, 2019). Empirical studies confirmed that Black male teachers encountered different professional expectations than many peers (Woodson & Bristol, 2020; Woodson & Pabon, 2016). Common perceptions were that Black male teachers were expected to act as father figures to Black male students, meet dominant workplace standards of exemplary citizenship, and overachieve as professionals to push back negative stereotypes (Brockenbrough, 2012b; Woodson & Bristol, 2020).

School principals had a significant influence on teacher satisfaction and collegial interactions (Adams, 2016; Mackenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Black male teachers were more likely to describe their principals as good at managing school operations, a strong instructional leader, and open to allowing teachers to influence administrative policy (Bristol, 2018). Nevertheless, research confirmed poor professional support and lack of mentoring opportunities for Black male teachers (Bristol, 2018; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Woodson & Bristol, 2020).

Grissom and Kieser (2011) identified other workplace dynamics that negatively impacted Black male teacher retention. White principals tended to allocate special benefits such as paid instructional, tutoring, and leadership opportunities to same-race teachers (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Thus, Black teachers often earned less than their White colleagues at the same school with equivalent credentials (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Working Conditions

Well-documented working conditions in U.S. public schools directly impacted teacher retention (Allensworth et al., 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers who taught at low-income schools with a high percentage of students of color remained because of their dedication to teaching underserved populations (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers who left high-poverty, low-performing schools with significant populations of poor students of color tended to leave because of poor working conditions (Simon & Johnson, 2015). These teachers tended to move from high-poverty schools with higher concentrations of students of color with challenges to low-poverty schools with high concentrations of White students (Bristol, 2020b).

Specific working conditions that negatively impacted teacher retentions were inadequate access to textbooks and technology, and pressure to administer assessments believed to be inappropriate (Bristol, 2020b; Loeb et al., 2005), punitive student discipline policies, and lack of administrative leadership (Bristol, 2020b; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). Simon and Simon (2015) conducted an analysis of six studies and found that teachers who specifically taught hard-to-staff subjects, such as special education and mathematics, rarely remained in hard-to-staff schools.

Recent studies of Black male teachers' perceptions of working conditions within public schools incorporated Kanter's (1977) early research as a theoretical framework (Kelly, 2007; Smith & Calasanti, 2005). Kanter's (1977) theory of numbers and group composition asserted that the most detachment occurred when minority composition in the workplace was between 84:16 and 99:1 within any organization. Kanter (1977) and later researchers found that workers' strongest sense of detachment came when the ratio of their social group was 85:15 (Kelly, 2007; Smith & Calasanti, 2005). Investigators cautioned that school leaders remain cognizant of minority ratios within the workplace and create social structures needed to increase retention

(Woodson & Bristol, 2020). A gap in current research was exploring diversity within Black male teachers as a subgroup rather than addressing them as a monolithic group (Woodson & Bristol, 2020).

Bristol (2018) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to explore the working conditions of Black male teachers. Bristol conducted two series of 60-minute semi-structured interviews with 27 Black male teachers across 14 schools and identified two groups of Black male teachers based on work environments. One group was termed "loners" and described working conditions where only one Black male teacher worked in a school (Bristol, 2018, p. 334). The second group was termed "groupers" and described working conditions where four or more Black male teachers worked in the same school (Bristol, 2018, p. 334). This research revealed distinct experiences and trends between the two groups. Table 2 summarizes the workplace experience and perceptions of loners and groupers in public education settings.

Table 3

Loners vs. Groupers: Workplace Experiences and Perceptions

	Loners	**Groupers**
Job Placement	• More concentrated in elementary schools • More concentrated in pilot/innovative schools	• More concentrated in high schools • More likely to teach in a failing or a recently reconstituted school
Retention	• Lower attrition • Reported consistent negative interactions • Remained for overall favorable working conditions • Cited concern for social-emotional needs of students of color in their absence	• Higher attrition • Leave because of challenging working conditions in schools

Collegial Interactions	• More challenging relationships and perceptions of being feared by others • Relationships (colleagues and administrators) primary reasons for wanting to leave • Acknowledged racism was a consequence of working in majority White environments • Enjoyed greater flexibility of work environment	• Reported acknowledgment of their voice by colleagues • The primary cause for leaving was weak administrative leadership • Less likely to report racial tension as an issue at their schools • Reported greater administrator emphasis on discipline than on facilitating learning which constrained teachers and students
Working Conditions	• Believed White teachers influence school policy more than teachers of color • Believed negative racial stereotypes created hostile collegial relationships • Reported colleagues suggested they were not qualified to teach or hold school leadership positions	• Reported higher percentages of influencing/shaping school policy • Reported inclusion in social events
Teacher Education Program	• More likely to pass the teacher certification exam on the first attempt • More likely to be certified in alternative certification programs	• More likely to pass teacher certification exams after multiple attempts
Leadership Opportunities	• Reported colleagues suggested not qualified to hold school leadership positions • Vested in mentoring programs targeting Black males/boys of color	• More likely to report feeling respected as leader by colleagues

Summary

Chapter 2 presented a literature review of the conditions that impacted Black male teachers in U.S. public education and began with an historical recounting of teacher demographics in public schools. Next, the chapter considered racial disparities within the public education setting and the implications for students of all races and specifically Black students. Three emerging themes and subthemes were found in the relevant literature: the problem of Black male teacher underrepresentation in U.S. public schools; factors contributing to underrepresentation of Black male teachers; and influential factors impacting Black male teacher job satisfaction. The gap in research was how to cultivate working conditions that are inclusive and supportive of the unique experiences of Black male teachers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview of Methodology

A qualitative approach was selected for this study because the researcher desired to create a deeper understanding of the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their workplace and leadership experiences in the secondary public schools setting. This approach was appropriate because qualitative research is "understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Qualitative research provides a microscopic lens into individuals' interpretations and constructed meanings of their experiences in their natural world using words, artifacts, observations, or images as points of data analysis (Hancock et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Creswell (2013), "talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find" (p. 48) is the most effective way to develop these understandings. Qualitative research has four characteristics: a focus on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive (Hancock et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of Black male teachers' social interactions and experiences in a North Carolina secondary public school setting. The researcher sought to understand participants' perceptions surrounding their social interactions with administrators and colleagues. The researcher also examined participants' perceptions surrounding instructional leadership opportunities in terms of the teachers' preparedness, access, and experiences. The interview was the selected data collection tool because it let the researcher

collect richer discourse from participants for a more in-depth understanding of their perceptions (Hancock et al., 2021).

A qualitative methodology was selected to better understand the individual experiences and perceptions of Black male teachers, an underrepresented group, in secondary public schools (Mertens, 2015). This approach permitted the researcher to understand the meaning that participants constructed about their world and experiences by studying phenomena in their natural settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, a better understanding of workplace interactions and experiences was gained from the perspective of the participants. A qualitative approach gave the researcher the ability to use an emergent design approach, allowing adaptability as new themes and realities emerged. This resulted in greater participant fidelity (Hancock et al., 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Research Design

This study used a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology includes the assumption that there is an essence to shared experiences which can be mutually understood and create core meanings for a group of people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of a phenomenological study is to identify how participants perceive a situation, or phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The task of the phenomenologist is to determine and clearly communicate this essence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2013) described the product of a phenomenological study as a "composite description that presents the 'essence' of the phenomenon, called the essential, invariant structure" (p. 82).

A phenomenological approach was employed in this study because the researcher was interested in the lived experiences of individuals (Black male teachers) surrounding a specific phenomenon (teaching in North Carolina secondary public schools). As the most common data

collection tool for a phenomenological approach is the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. These semi-structured interviews included using previously developed questions that the researcher asked of all participants. However, the researcher also used follow-up prompts to encourage additional dialogue and understanding (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creswell (2013) stated that the reader of a phenomenological study should walk away with the feeling that, "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (p. 62). This study captured the essence of seven Black male teachers' experiences in the public education setting. A goal of this study was to present findings that would enable school leaders to improve working conditions and organizational structures that currently negatively influenced the retention of Black male teachers.

Research Questions

This study focused on Black male teachers' collegial interactions and access to instructional leadership and experiences. The researcher sought to understand Black male teachers' perceptions of their access to power structures and resources in the workplace that contributed to higher retention (Spence Laschinger, 1999). The specific power structures and resources explored in this study were collegial interactions and instructional leadership opportunities and access. The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of their workplace experiences in secondary public schools?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their feelings of preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities within secondary public schools?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles in secondary public schools?

Subjectivity Statement

The researcher is a Black female educator with over 25 years of experience as a teacher, a dean of students, assistant principal, and currently as a principal in secondary public school. The researcher has work experience in two adjacent North Carolina school districts. She has worked in both low-poverty and high-poverty high school settings. Throughout her career, the researcher participated in a variety of instructional leadership opportunities, such as teacher-mentor, department chair, SIT member, curriculum writer, as well as presenter of professional development at the school and district level. The researcher acknowledges potential biases based on these experiences. It is imperative that these experiences and opportunities or their lack thereof not impact the interpretations and analyses during this study. Therefore, the researcher utilized the process of 'epoche', which occurs when the researcher explores personal experiences to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions to be able to refrain from judgment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher bracketed or temporarily set aside personal prejudices and assumptions. The researcher also isolated the phenomenon to remain focused on its essence, known as phenomenological reduction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Lastly, the researcher utilized imaginative variation to view the phenomenon and see different from various perspectives to broaden interpretations and analyses beyond personal experiences (Hancock et al, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the researcher was a secondary administrator in the selected district, this study had no participants that the researcher directly or indirectly supervised, so the reliability and validity of participants' responses and the research study findings were not compromised.

Participants

The general population for this study was Black male teachers because this research examined this group's underrepresentation in the secondary public school teacher workforce. The specific population of this study was Black male teachers who currently taught in a secondary school in the selected North Carolina school district. Additional criteria for participation in the study included previous instructional leadership experience, or a desire to serve as an instructional leader if the participant had no experience. There were no other limitations on participation, such as subject area taught and personal or professional characteristics.

Setting

The district selected for this study was a medium-sized school district located in North Carolina. Many of the communities within this district were suburban or rural. However, there were urban communities where many of the students of color in this district lived. There was great disparity among the SES levels of students throughout the district. There were high concentrations of poverty and at-risk students at several schools. While the student population was diverse, a racial disparity existed between the percentage of teachers of color and students of color. The secondary school setting was selected because secondary schools have approximately three times more (36% versus 11%) male teachers than elementary schools (NCES, 2019). Therefore, more potential participants at the secondary level were available with experiences and opportunities aligned to this study's purpose and research questions.

Sampling Method

Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher wants to discover, understand, or gain in-depth insight into a case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) offered that this

sampling method derived from the desire to create an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, it is critical that a sample is selected that will allow one to gain the most insight (Chein, 1981). The researcher acknowledged that Black male teachers are not a monolithic group and, hence, possessed a wide range of experiences and opportunities influenced by the individual school setting in which they work (Woodson & Bristol, 2020). The researcher worked with the human resources director within the selected district to identify Black male teachers who could be potential candidates for this study. The human resources department provided a list of all Black male teachers in the district that contained their first and last names, as well as district email addresses. The researcher utilized the contact information to email an invitation to participate in the survey that included a brief description of the study, criteria required for participation, and a link to the recruitment survey (see Appendix A). After the researcher confirmed respondents met the criteria for inclusion in the study, individuals were invited to participate in a virtual interview.

Sample Size and Data Saturation

Patton (2015) proposed that the researcher determine a minimum sample size that provided adequate coverage of the case(s). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested sampling until data saturation or data redundancy was reached. The literature for this study highlighted multiple school characteristics that influenced the experiences of and opportunities for Black male teachers (Bristol, 2020a; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Bristol & Shirrell, 2019). The researcher selected maximum variation sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the sample size was determined to be a minimum of six but no more than 10 participants to provide enough data to reach saturation. From the 52 potential participants identified by the district human resources department, seven Black male educators participated in this qualitative research study.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study occurred in the summer and fall of 2022. The interview was selected as the data collection method because the researcher intended to collect rich experiences from participants in their own words (Hancock et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), a research interview "is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (p. 5). This study utilized semi-structured interviews of participants (structure) to collect data concerning the perspectives and experiences of Black male teachers (purpose). A semi-structured interview was selected because this instrument allowed the researcher to respond to each participant's unique situation and new ideas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher designed the structured instrument for the specific population of this study with an open-ended format suitable for qualitative research (Hancock et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview questions provided the context to examine Black male teachers' perspectives and experiences surrounding the social context and organizational structures of the workplace.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized two instruments in this study. The first instrument was an electronic recruitment survey shown in Appendix A. The survey was a *Google* form that was emailed to Black male teachers identified by the human resources director within the selected district. The recruitment survey provided a description of the study and the criteria for participants in the study. Survey questions collected personal and professional information that allowed the researcher to determine if the candidate met the criteria of the study. Candidates were able to indicate interest in participation in the survey and provide contact information for follow-up by the researcher.

The second instrument was a virtual one-on-one semi-structured interview via *Zoom*. The interview protocol shown in Appendix C addressed two phenomena of the Black male teacher experience in North Carolina secondary public schools setting: collegial interactions and instructional leadership opportunities. The semi-structured virtual interview utilized a 13-question interview guide, which was a collection of questions that addressed each of the research questions for this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interview questions were aligned with research questions (see Table 3).

Table 4

Alignment of Research Questions and Interview Questions

Phenomenon Examined	Research Questions	Relevant Interview Questions
Social Context – Administrators and Colleagues	**Q1** What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of their workplace experiences in secondary public schools?	What would you consider to be strengths of your relationship with administration and/or teachers? How have current structures within your school supported your growth as an instructor? What could have been done differently to better support your growth?
Instructional Leadership	**Q2** What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their feelings of preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities within secondary public schools?	Tell me about opportunities for instructional mentorship either from administration or colleagues. To what extent did said mentorship advance your instructional leadership abilities? What recommendation(s) would you give yourself as a beginning teacher to become an even more effective instructional leader at this school now?

	Q3 What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles in secondary public schools?	Describe the attributes of a model leader in your school. Please elaborate. Tell me about instructional (non-athletic) leadership opportunities that exist in your school. Give me an example of an instructional leadership opportunity you pursued or want to pursue. Describe your experiences as an instructional leader in your current role(s). Tell me more about obstacles you faced as an instructional leader. Why have you decided not to serve as an instructional leader at your school?

Procedures

The researcher worked with the district human resources director to identify teachers who met the criteria to participate in the study. The information provided was used to email an invitation to participate in the study. The email contained a summary of the research study, criteria required for participation, and a link to complete the recruitment survey. The researcher confirmed respondents who indicated interest in participating in the study and met the criteria. An informed consent form (see Appendix B) was emailed to participants. The informed consent document explained the purpose and implications of the study, possible risks, benefits of participation, and strategies for quality and confidentiality of the data. Once participants returned the completed informed consent via *DocuSign*, the researcher emailed participants to arrange a virtual interview via *Zoom*. Participants were informed that the virtual interview would last no

longer than one hour and would be audio recorded. Once the date and time were confirmed, the researcher emailed a calendar invitation via *Zoom*.

The researcher conducted virtual interviews via *Zoom* utilizing the interview guide. Participants were asked to allot one hour for the interview. *Zoom* was used to conduct the interview and transcribe participants' responses. The researcher utilized the video and audio functions of *Zoom* during the introductory portion of the interview to establish rapport and gather demographic information. Before the start of interviews, the researcher reminded participants of the voluntary nature of their participation and their ability to stop participation at any time without penalty.

Interviews did not utilize the camera function during the audio recorded portion of the virtual interview to protect the identities of participants. To further ensure anonymity of participants, pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and notes. Interview transcripts created in *Zoom* were checked for accuracy by the researcher, who listened to the interviews and made needed edits. A copy of the reviewed transcript was emailed to participants for an additional review, or member check, for accuracy. Member checking was conducted by emailing the transcripts to participants to clarify unclear content and intended meanings as needed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All interview files were deleted once transcribed and confirmed for accuracy by the researcher and participant.

Data Analysis

Flick (2014) described data analysis as the classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements or meaning of material or of what is represented. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended that qualitative data analysis take place simultaneously with data collection for identifying clear themes and research findings. Merriam and Tisdell (2016)

suggested that the researcher review transcripts/records and record observer comments/field notes after each interview or observation to plan intentional pursuits of information in the next round to help create emerging categories, or themes, that exist across participants' responses and inform findings. Researchers identify themes through a process known as coding, which is assigning a word or phrase to describe what is seen in the data (Saldana, 2013). Coding allows the researcher to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or themes that inform the findings of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This study used a thematic analysis approach to analyze transcribed files to ensure consistency across all cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, multiple readings of each data file occurred. The transcribed data files were uploaded into *NVivo* to assist data analysis. The researcher read each data set (transcript) in its entirety for initial meaning and understanding. Field notes were added during this reading to assist establishing meaning and understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher performed a second reading of all data sets and added codes to each file (Hancock et al., 2021). During the third reading of each data set, the researcher categorized codes and identified emerging patterns, or themes, within each data file. *NVivo* provided a tracking system that aided in the identification of recurring and relevant codes. Subsequent interview questions were modified and/or added to further investigate and/or clarify emerging themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the interviews continued, themes were recategorized as needed to appropriately apply across data sets (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2013).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has four areas by which to ensure quality: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Maher et al., 2018; Shenton, 2004: Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility seeks to make meaningful connections between the study's findings and the environment studied (Shenton, 2004). In this study, credibility was ensured during the data collection process by carefully selecting participants who met the criteria of this study, the use of *Zoom* to transcribe interviews, including field notes/memos as documentation and member checking of transcripts. The recruiting survey ensured that participants met the selected criteria to provide meaningful data for this study. Also, participants were not directly or indirectly supervised by the researcher, who is a secondary principal in the selected district. During the data analysis process, the researcher maintained transcription rigor by verifying the accuracy of transcribed files and member checking. The use of thematic analysis increased intercoder reliability, as well as consistency and transparency across each data set. The researcher also contacted participants as needed to clarify meaning during the coding process and evolution of themes.

Transferability, or the ability to apply this research to different situations, was ensured through the detailed methodology included in this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative research design was followed and shared in this study to ensure that future research on this topic can be replicated. The data collection process (interviews) did reach saturation to guarantee the credibility and transferability of this qualitative study.

Dependability, the ability to replicate a study with similar results, was ensured at the beginning of the study as the researcher identified and suspended personal biases and judgements for this research (Shenton, 2004). This step increased the dependability and credibility of this study. The researcher openly stated in the subjectivity statement the personal connections to the research that had to be suspended. Member checking also ensured that the researcher's interpretations were those of the participants and not the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Shenton, 2004). Confirmability, or seeking of objectivity, was ensured through the bracketing of researcher's biases, field notes, careful intercoder reliability and member checking, (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

The proposed study posed minimal risks to participants. This study was conducted with maximum consideration of the guidelines for research involving human participants. The researcher secured approval for the study from the university's IRB Board. Additional approval to conduct the research study was secured from the human resources director of the selected district. Participation in the research study was voluntary and all participants submitted a signed informed consent via *DocuSign* before joining the study. In addition, participants were reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation and their ability stop participation at any time without penalty prior to the start of interviews. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in lieu of participants' actual names when reporting findings. Also, the responses from participants will not be shared with their supervisors. All data was stored on password protected devices accessible only by the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the qualitative methodology of this phenomenological study. The researcher conducted data analysis through *NVivo* to assist with coding and identifying recurring themes across each case file. Findings are presented in the next study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The goal of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers in North Carolina secondary public schools. The researcher selected this topic due to the lack of Black males (only 2%) within the U.S. teacher workforce (Walker et al., 2019; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). The researcher chose to focus on a district in North Carolina based on proximity and established relationships with participants to conduct a phenomenological study.

Recruitment Survey Results

The recruitment survey (see Appendix A) served as a screening tool to make sure respondents met the criteria for the research study. The criteria for participation in the research study included three components. The participants had to identify as Black males and currently teach at the secondary level in a North Carolina public school. Participants also needed instructional leadership experience or have a desire to serve as an instructional leader. Instructional leader was defined to exclude a dean or administrator role. The researcher secured a list of 52 Black male teachers from the human resources department in the selected district. A research study recruitment invitation was emailed to all 52 participants. The recruitment email provided a description of the research study and a link to the recruitment survey. Nine recipients completed the recruitment survey. The nine respondents had a wide range of teaching experience. Collectively, respondents' years of teaching experience ranged from one year to more than 20 years. Table 4 summarized respondents' years of teaching experience.

Table 5

Years of Teaching Experience for Recruitment Survey Respondents

Years of Experience	**0-3**	**4-5**	**6-10**	**11-15**	**16-20**	**20+**
Number of Respondents	1	0	2	4	1	1

Recruitment survey responses indicated that all respondents self-identified as African American/Black for ethnicity, as well as male gender. Eight of the nine respondents indicated a desire to participate in the research study. Seven of the nine respondents met criteria for research study participation. Table 5 provided a summary of respondents' responses to the recruitment survey.

Table 6

Frequencies of the Recruitment Survey Questionnaire

Questions	**Frequency**	
	Yes	**No**
Do you teach in a North Carolina public school?	9	0
Do you teach at the secondary level (grades 6-12) full-time?	9	0
Currently, Black male teachers represent 2% of the U.S. teacher workforce and have the highest turnover of any educator subgroup. The goal of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers in secondary public schools setting in North Carolina. The areas of focus will be 1) collegial interactions and experiences with peers and building administrators and 2) instructional leadership opportunities. Are you Interested in participating in a virtual interview via Zoom that will last no longer than one hour as a research study participant? (Participation is confidential and anonymous.)	8	1
For the purposes of this research, instructional leadership roles are roles served in the capacity as a teacher and not an administrator or dean of students. Examples of instructional leadership roles are mentor teacher, department/grade level chair, school improvement/leadership team, magnet program chair, PLC facilitator, etc. Do you have past or current instructional leadership experience OR desire to serve in an instructional leadership role as a teacher?	7	2

If you agree to participate and meet the criteria, please provide your first and last name so that I may contact you.	8	1

Participants

Selection Process

Four of the initial nine respondents were eliminated from participation in the study. One of the respondents indicated that he was not interested in participating in the research study. A second respondent was eliminated because he had not been in an instructional leadership role and indicated no desire to do so. Lastly, a third and fourth respondent were eliminated because the researcher was their supervisor and the working relationship with these individuals might impact the reliability and validity of their responses, and thereby the study's findings. The researcher sent a second recruitment email to the group of Black male teachers. Two additional candidates responded directly to the researcher via email to indicate interest in being in the study. The researcher confirmed that both respondents met the research study criteria. The addition of these two respondents increased the number of participants to seven.

A pseudonym was given to each participant to protect anonymity and to maintain confidentiality. Each participant signed an Informed Consent (see Appendix B) as approved by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte IRB office. The researcher then scheduled and conducted a one-hour virtual interview with each participant via *Zoom*. A summary of the seven research study participants is shown in Table 6. Participants are listed by their assigned pseudonyms.

Table 7

Descriptive Data on Research Participants

Research Participant	Alternative Licensure	Years Of Teaching Experience	Content Area	Instructional Leadership Experience	Coaching Experience
Aaron	Yes	6	EC/Success Coach	No	Yes*
Brad	Yes	15	World Language	Yes	Yes
Chris	No	20	Science	Yes	No
David	Yes	3	EC	No	Yes*
Eric	Yes	16	Health/PE	No	Yes*
Fred	Yes	12	Health/PE	Yes	Yes*
Gary	Yes	7	CTE	Yes	No

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates that the participant has served or currently serves as a head coach of a sport.

Summary

Aaron, Participant 1, had a Bachelor of Science in Social Work and a Master of Science in Sports Administration. Aaron had employment and coaching experience at the college level but chose to transition to the K-12 public school system for family reasons. Aaron had six years of teaching experience in the Exceptional Children's (EC) department. Aaron was hired as head coach for the men's varsity basketball team his entire teaching career. All of Aaron's teaching experience was within a North Carolina public high school. Earlier, Aaron taught as a full-time EC inclusion and resource classroom teacher. Aaron transitioned into the role of Success Coach in August 2022. He co-taught EC math inclusion classes as well as one behavior-focused class. Aaron had past experiences as a member of the communication, diversity, and social committees. He had no instructional leadership experience but desired an opportunity and entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Brad, Participant 2, had a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, as well English as a Second Language. Brad originally pursued a degree in law and worked as a paralegal supervisor for 10 years. He chose to transition to the K-12 public school system following a life changing event. Brad had 15 years of teaching experience in the World Languages department at the high school level. All his teaching experience was within a North Carolina public high school setting. Brad had prior coaching experience as an assistant with the Track and Field team but was not coaching at the time of his interview. In prior years, Brad was a full-time high school Spanish teacher. Brad transitioned into the role of Spanish Teacher and Student Wellness Specialist, which is a social and emotional learning support resource for students in August 2022. Brad had extensive instructional leadership experiences at the school and district levels. Brad has served as a mentor teacher and department chair and was a member of SIT. Brad served on leadership teams to open two new high schools. He taught blended and virtual courses before the pandemic. Brad participated on a district curriculum writing team for World Languages. He also developed high school placement tests and entrance exams for language immersion magnet programs. Brad entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Chris, Participant 3, had a Bachelor of Arts in Education and a Master of Arts in School Administration. Chris was the only participant who did not enter education through the alternative licensure route. Chris had 20 of teaching experience in the science department at the high school level. Chris' teaching experience included elementary, middle, and high school settings in North Carolina public schools. Chris had no coaching experience. Chris transitioned into an assistant principal position shortly after his interview and had past instructional leadership experience as a grade level chair, department chair, and mentor teacher.

David, Participant 4, earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Education (College Student Personnel Administration). David was employed at the college level but chose to transition to the K-12 public school system for personal and family reasons. David had three years of teaching experience in the Exceptional Children's (EC) department at the high school level. All his teaching experience was within a North Carolina public high school setting. He was hired as the head coach for the men's varsity soccer team and taught EC math inclusion and EC resource classes. David had no instructional leadership experience but desired an opportunity. David entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Eric, Participant 5, earned a Bachelor of Science in Sports Management and Marketing, as well as a Master of Arts in Health and Physical Education. Eric had 16 years of teaching experience in the Health/Physical Education department at the high school level. All of Eric's teaching experience was within the North Carolina public high school setting. He was hired as an assistant coach or head coach for women's and men's varsity basketball teams during his teaching career. He was hired as the head coach for the women's varsity basketball team at the time of this study. His teaching position was a full-time Health/Physical Education teacher. Eric had no instructional leadership experience but desired an opportunity. Eric entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Fred, Participant 6, earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Arts in Exercise Sports Science. Fred has 12 years of teaching experience in the Health/PE department at the high school level. Fred had public high school teaching experience in several states including North Carolina. Fred had experience as a head coach for varsity football and track and field during his teaching career. He was hired as the assistant varsity football coach and head coach for the varsity men's track and field team at the time of his interview. His teaching

position was a full-time Health/PE teacher. Fred had prior instructional leadership experience as a mentor teacher and PLC Lead. Fred entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Gary, Participant 7, earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Master of Business Administration. Gary had seven years of teaching experience in the Career and Technical Education department at the high school level. All of Gary's teaching experience was within the North Carolina public high school setting. He had no coaching experience. Gary was a full-time high school business teacher. Gary had instructional leadership experience as a mentor teacher and entered education through the alternative licensure program.

Themes by Research Questions

This research study focused on three areas of Black male teachers' perceptions and experiences within North Carolina secondary public schools. The first area was the social context and interactions with administrators and colleagues. The second was Black male teachers' perceptions and experiences surrounding preparedness for instructional leadership. The third area was Black male teachers' perceptions and experiences concerning access to instructional leadership opportunities, as well as their experiences serving as instructional leaders. Analysis of each of the participants' narratives generated recurring themes within each of the three areas of focus. Those themes are described in the following sections.

RQ1

Participants shared their perceptions and experiences concerning interactions with past and current administrators, as well as colleagues. The primary theme that emerged was that participants possessed overall feelings of acceptance from both their administrators and

colleagues. Participants believed that they held a space in secondary public schools that was valued and respected.

However, there were recurring themes describing negative perceptions and negative experiences that surfaced within their narratives. Two negative themes surfaced in participants' narratives when describing their interactions with administrators. One was Black male teachers feeling included in leadership opportunities to "check a box" for racial diversity. A second theme was Black male teachers feeling an expectation by administrators to act as mentors or disciplinarians primarily for Black male students.

Two negative themes surfaced in participants' narratives when discussing their interactions with colleagues as well. One theme was participants' perceptions of social isolation, or border heightening (Kanter, 1977) from their White colleagues and its negative implications for Black male teachers. A second theme was the conflict between personal cultural identity and the cultural identity of the workplace, or border crossing (Kelly, 2007).

Feelings of Overall Acceptance by Administrators. All participants reported having overall feelings of acceptance by their past and current administrators. Participants also reported feeling valued and respected as an instructor by their administrators. Aaron stated, "Yes, with past and current administration teams, I feel like they have been supportive, especially with past administration." Brad perceived that his voice was valued within his content area and stated, "When it came down to language then yes. I felt that when I spoke, it…it was, yeah, it was respected."

Chris shared that motivation from two different administrators, who knew he had administrator credentials, helped him to feel comfortable taking on new leadership roles. Referencing one administrator, Chris stated "I just didn't say no because it was her asking. And

it kind of thrusted me into leadership roles that I probably would have avoided on my own." When asked about the strength of his administrator team, David shared "I would say the collegiality, the warm welcome. The opportunity to pursue my own interests, like coaching. And I would just really focus on the collegiality for me."

Eric based his feelings of being respected on his evaluation ratings. Eric stated, "As far as, you know, as far as anything of that nature, they keep marking accomplished on certain things. So, I think I'm respected at least." Fred stated, "Each high school I've worked at, I felt that I was definitely…felt valued or felt that I was necessary in the building." When asked if he believed his administration valued concerns he presented, Gary responded "yes."

Feelings of Overall Acceptance by Colleagues. All participants reported having overall feelings of acceptance by their past and current colleagues. Participants also reported feeling supported and respected as an instructor by their colleagues. Aaron and David taught in their respective EC departments. Both participants agreed that their colleagues were very supportive in helping them to learn the nuances of EC paperwork, in addition to instructional strategies. Aaron stated:

> I think I've had teachers to support me…to help me with, you know, going through my lateral entry, to support me with classroom assignments. Some things that I do not have, they had to sit down and explain to me how to carry out the…on the special education part, or, you know, writing IEPs and things like that that I was not, you know, comfortable with at first.

Aaron acknowledged that his colleagues' support was instrumental in successfully completing his early years of teaching.

David shared that a benefit of his colleagues was "their ability to clarify and explain processes and procedures of the special education field." He also acknowledged that his colleagues helped him to learn much more quickly than he could have on his own:

> It was definitely inspiring to me that again a warm welcome but the influence they had on me gaining knowledge pretty quickly. The curve was not as high as I thought it would be because of the help that they gave me.

David was very complimentary of his department members' willingness to provide resources and support when asked.

Gary also acknowledged the instructional support of his colleagues. Gary stated, "In the department, I…I think as a department, we…we support each other. If…if there's a need, I think that the department supports…supports each other, or I could find support, you know, if I needed it." However, Gary did make a distinction between the levels of support among his department and his PLC. He alluded to a greater level of support from the department as opposed to the business and marketing PLC.

Brad and Chris shared feelings of being respected and valued as a leader among their colleagues. Their perceptions were based on their colleagues' reliance on them as advocates to administrators, as well as to students. Brad, in his role as department chair, supported teachers with classroom management. Brad stated:

> If I had a teacher who was having a lot of difficulty, you know, to try to teach them how to main…how to get it together, I would have the kids come to my room. Kind of, you know, work with the kids and you'll get them on their work. Talk to them, and then have them go back to that teacher, and then work with the teacher to try to help him or her to understand what they needed to do with that particular student.

Brad's desire was to build relationships with students to help them acclimate successfully to the classroom environment. Brad also stated:

> So, instead of having them go down to the administration initially, you know, I would take the kids and…and work with them. And…and so for years, this had been a way that we would do things and it was effective. Because we get the kids on track sooner than later and not have them with something on their record.

Chris believed that he was a leader in every building in which he worked. Chris shared examples of advocating for teachers and students to administrators when he felt that initiatives were not in their best interest. He believed that this tendency earned him high value and respect among his colleagues. Chris stated, "I guess people saw a leader in me that I didn't see…in some situations, I didn't even want to be the leader. It was just like, I was the confident one…the brave one, you know." Chris went on to state, "So, other teachers would just kind of fall in line behind me. When I took a stand, they just took a stand behind me because I did it and because they knew I wasn't afraid."

Perceptions of Administrators

Expectation to Manage Black Male Students. Each interview began with participants sharing feelings of overall acceptance within their school communities. However, an emerging theme shared by six of the participants was administrators' expectations of Black male teachers to manage primarily Black male students. Aaron shared that as Success Coach he was assigned a behavior focused class. His goal was to teach positive behaviors to a small group of male students, who were all Black and Hispanic and demonstrated challenging behaviors. Aaron stated, "You know when you're teaching a new course that's never been taught in the school before, but they give it to you, and just kind of, you're just kind of figuring it out." Aaron

expressed frustration that his administrators told him to "make the course his own" rather than provide curriculum support and resources. Aaron alluded to other examples of being pulled from his co-teaching classes to assist administration with Black male student discipline: "I can do the instructional piece, but at times I'm pulled from the instruction piece to be able to do the administration piece." Aaron suggested at times there was greater focus by administration on his impact as a disciplinarian rather than as an instructor.

Brad shared similar experiences of administrators relying on him to act as a disciplinarian for Black male students. Brad stated that this role is "one of the areas that I think that I'm used for the most no matter where I go or where I've been." Brad, however, saw this role as an extension of his mission as an educator. Brad was an experienced teacher with extensive leadership experience. He did not view his involvement in supporting student behaviors as competing with his instructional responsibilities. Brad stated:

> I might be stepping in because I feel I have a disposition. I'll be more…I'll be more patient. I understand where that kid is coming from. I can try to work with that kid to keep that kid from, you know, ruining…doing something reckless, you know. So, for me, it's an extension of my classroom. It's an extension of teaching. I mean I'd be teaching the language that I teach, but I'm actually teaching maybe a life lesson.

Brad continued:

> So, it's an extension of what I came into education for, you know. I…I didn't just come here, I mean I came in and taught a language. That was my door in, my way in, but overall is to try to touch the lives of as many kids as I can, you know, for the time that I am here.

Brad viewed his involvement in student discipline situations as being a support to students rather than a support to administrators. Brad felt his focus was helping students and student support was a part of that work.

Chris suggested his past administrators utilized the master schedule to rely upon him for disciplinarian support. Chris stated, “But, yet anytime you had all the rough kids in the building, every rough student on that grade level, they had them sitting in my class.” Chris suggested these student placements were intentional because of his ability to create positive relationships and maintain strong classroom management amidst challenging behaviors. Chris did not share that any communications occurred between him and his past administrators concerning this observation.

Fred shared his personal experience with administrator expectations to mentor primarily Black male students. Fred stated, “I think it’s assumed because I’m a Black male, I’ll have a better relationship with that kid that is a Black male, or that is a black female, more than the other races or genders.” Fred also stated that he observed other Black male teachers placed into the role of mentor or disciplinarian for Black students, particularly, Black male students. Fred did not agree with this assumption of school administrators. Fred shared “I definitely don’t think that’s right. But I’ve seen it happen a bunch.” Fred went on to state, “It’s just assumed that those five or three Black men in the building can communicate better with the troubled youth in the building, which it…it shouldn’t be the case.” Fred concluded:

> I’m not gonna be that Black male teacher in the building that’s gonna go and talk to every troubled Black male in the building at different times. Now, that’s not my role and I’m…I’ve seen that happen. I’ve seen that…that being requested by not only myself, but

> other colleagues that are Black males, and I definitely don't think that's right. But I've seen it happen a bunch.

Fred prided himself on being able to build relationships with, as well as support any student with whom he shared similar life experiences regardless of race.

Gary shared similar sentiments about the assumption that Black male teachers should be expected to mentor or act as disciplinarians for Black male students. Gary stated:

> There are a lot of assumptions that go with being a Black male in education. One is that you automatically can identify with…with a young African American male that may be acting out. You know, which is it's almost kind of like you…you know what they've been through…been through so, you know, you talk to them. Certainly don't…don't put them in that situation because I think anybody can help. You just gotta connect.

Gary believed that relationships, and not race, was the key factor in connecting with students.

David shared similar sentiments concerning this expectation. He stated:

> The challenge has been how do you engage one to help them understand that you're willing to help them in their cultural knowledge, awareness, acuity, and not because of your race, but because it's just the right thing to do.

David felt it was important that administrators understood that anyone can help a struggling student, no matter their race. He also thought it was important for administrators to understand that a Black male teacher can help a student of any race, not just Black males. Overall, participants valued the power of building relationships with students and wanted to be relied upon to support students with whom they had connections, regardless of race.

Listened To but Not Heard. A second theme that surfaced was participants' perceptions of superficial leadership opportunities to create the illusion of racial diversity. Four of the

participants had prior instructional leadership experience (Brad, Chris, Fred, and Gary). Two of these four participants, Brad and Fred, referenced their inclusion in decision making processes by administrators as "checking a box" for racial diversity. Chris had multiple instructional leadership experiences as grade level chair and department chair but expressed no perceptions of nominal participation. Gary's instructional leadership experience was only as a mentor teacher. He expressed no feelings of nominal participation. Although David had no instructional leadership experience, he also alluded to this perception of nominal participation in school level decision making.

Brad alluded that administrator teams at two previous schools did not have students' best interest driving their decision making. Brad described his interactions with both administrative teams when he stated, "We listened to you. But I don't ultimately, I think that whether I was there or not, what I was trying to contribute really didn't matter. It was just a formality of having me there." He perceived many of the interactions with administrators as procedural with no real interest in hearing him or affecting real change in the school, even on the topic of diversity. Brad stated, "And, so with those administrations, you know, suggestions, anything I would say, or do, you know, was ignored, or just not even acknowledged." Brad suggested those administrators' motives were, "We're checking off a box to say that we, you know, we got your voice. We had diversity." Brad went on to share examples of giving input to administrators where his input was "ignored and never acknowledged." When asked why he felt his input was ignored, he stated that there was no feedback or follow up from administrators.

David shared that there seemed to be a lack of genuine interest in Black male teachers' expertise or cultural perspectives in leadership circles. Rather, David believed that the inclusion of Black males was to create the illusion of racial diversity. David stated:

> I think that there is still a long historical assumption of…of Black males being lazy, of being unintelligent, and…and…and I won't say aloof but not as prepared for the profession as others. And that's why sometimes, I think maybe sometimes, they're not approached, but more approached for the fact of representation. Like, do we have one of them?

David had similar experiences of sharing concerns and ideas with his administrators where he also received no follow-up. David concluded this topic by stating, "I would say listened to, but not heard. I think the administration would listen, but not hear, not necessarily my anguish, but hear the need for that from my perspective." David also stated, "I mentioned a couple of times that I wanted to participate on the school improvement team, but it was not offered to me." David still had no offers for instructional leadership opportunities as of the date of his interview.

Fred shared an example of participating on a school committee with no perceived opportunity to make an impact. Fred stated, "It was a lot of decisions being made. That it was, I don't know if I necessarily needed to be in there." He shared that the committee made decisions that did not pertain to his content area or skill set. He mentioned that the group discussed scheduling, testing, and policies that were not relevant to his content area of Health/Physical Education. Fred stated:

> I felt that I was checking a box. And what I mean by that is I…I…I felt that I was chosen not only because I was a male, but I was a Black male to be on that board because there was no one else.

He perceived that his participation was for racial representation only since he had no experiences in the areas of expertise utilized by this specific committee.

Brad noted one exception to the perception of being listened to but not heard by administrators. However, he suggested that Black male teachers who taught state-assessed subjects that impacted the school's performance had more respect and voice with their administrators. He stated:

> That you would have some you know, male teachers of color and they would be getting respect. They'll get to do things. But it was because they taught classes that maybe benefited the…showed growth on the stats that the principals looked at. Maybe that's, you know, a difference.

Brad's content area was World Language and is not subject to state assessments.

Fred alluded to distinguishing among Black male teachers and their voice within the secondary school setting. Fred shared that he noticed that there was a proportionately smaller number of Black educators who were included in an inner circle of information. Fred stated:

> I think my administrators, for the most part, have been…been supportive. The one thing I would add, I don't…I don't know if all my African American colleagues would say the same. Ummm. I felt at one high school that I felt like I was in the club and maybe others were not.

When asked to elaborate what he meant by "in the club", he stated: "I would say like…ummm… someone that's in the…in the know, or someone that's being informed or being a part of the conversations. And, then you have some that's not." As he continued, Fred stated, "I noticed it was a lot of African Americans that wasn't in the know. I was thinking that it might have been more everybody was the same, but no. It wasn't." Fred noticed this lack of Black teachers "in the know" when he was in the process of leaving a school and was not as involved.

Perceptions of Colleagues

Border Heightening. While research study participants described overall feelings of acceptance in the workplace by their colleagues, there were negative themes that emerged. One recurring theme was social isolation of Black male teachers within the workplace. Five of the seven participants shared concerns in this area which aligned with Kanter's theory of border heightening, or social isolation in the workplace for minorities due to differing cultural practices and beliefs from the majority culture (Bristol & Goings, 2019; Kanter, 1977; Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Brad shared one adverse effect of this social isolation for Black male teachers:

> You have these pockets, these groups of these well-seasoned teachers. Okay, And then you have the minority teachers, the men, you know, very few men of color are in education. And so the ones that you have, they might have a PLC, or they may have a, you know, a mentor. But outside of doing the mandatory mentoring, sit down across the table, you speak with them, you get up, you leave, you know. You go ahead…you join the PLC. Discuss things. Alright. You leave. But that, in my opinion, it's not enough to teach. You know, you don't have enough teachable moments together.

Brad believed this social isolation and absence of teachable moments negatively impacted the professional growth and establishment of critical relationship building for Black male teachers and their identities as instructional leaders.

Brad also suggested that it was not until he became established as a teacher that his colleagues voluntarily collaborated with him. Brad stated, "I started doing well, then the other teachers at the school I was at then, they started joining in sharing information. They didn't want to share and engage in interchange." Brad felt he had to earn the support of his colleagues.

David believed the lack of racial representation sent a message to Black male teachers and potential Black male teacher candidates. David stated:

> I would probably say, you know, like you said in the school environment, when you're not a critical mass and you don't see a lot of people like you, you tend to sometimes not have that resilience that some may have. You just don't see a lot of you. And that could mean for some like this isn't for me because I...I can't really connect with other people in this environment because they don't value what I think about is relevant to them. Like I don't feel comfortable connecting with them.

David shared another perspective of the social isolation of the workplace for Black male teachers. David stated:

> I mean being able to go out to lunch and just enjoy a chicken wing. It is, to me, some solace of release from the day-to-day pressure and stress of being a teacher, not just a Black male teacher. But when you are with other Black males doing that, there is something that happens spiritually that I appreciate. I think there's a…there's a spoken language or feeling I'm with my brothers. They understand whether there's things at home or whether there's things in school.

David expressed a strong desire to build community with other Black male teachers.

Gary discussed negative stereotypes often associated with Black males in his interview. He sensed a mistrust of Black male teacher collaboration from his White colleagues. Gary stated, "It's okay when they are together, you know, our counterparts, you know, get together and collaborate. There's nothing wrong with us doing the same thing." Gary also stated:

> And be okay with, you know, with circling yourself around other Black males that may

> be at your school or, you know, try to identify some at other schools and, you know, and maintain that support. I think too oftentimes we think, hey, you know we're…we're together now. All of a sudden, people are looking at us and we shouldn't be and I…I think that's, you know, nothing further from the truth.

Gary shared that this could be discouraging to Black male teachers new to the workplace and lead to discouragement or exit from the profession.

Eric shared that while he does feel accepted by his colleagues, he did still desire collaboration with other Black male teachers. Eric stated:

> You know, and I'm pretty sure you understand too as…as a person of African American descent. You kind of see different things and you notice different stuff. There's kind of nobody that you can lean on or talk about certain things with. When Coach [Redacted] was here, we could, you know, we could go back and forth and talk about certain things. I don't really have that here since he left with anybody. So, yeah that's…you know, in that area it is a little bit different.

Eric was currently the only Black male teacher in his department. Eric shared that "I often have to look out to find people like that. We can bounce ideas off and talk a little bit more freely than you probably would with just your White colleagues."

Fred was hired at a newly opened high school in the summer of 2020. He did not meet his staff until August of 2020. Fred expressed satisfaction describing the diversity of the staff at this school. Fred stated:

> For the most part, most of the time they…they lacked diversity where I've been. But my current situation, it was…it was a…It was awesome to come into this building and see

> the amount of diversity that I…that I was able to be a part of. For the most part, the majority of the other high schools, it wasn't like that.

While Fred believed he was capable of getting along with colleagues of any race, he had a deep appreciation for the diversity in the racial makeup throughout the school in different departments.

Border Crossing. The second recurring theme was conflicting cultural identities of Black male teachers within the workplace. This observation aligned with Kelly's (2007) identity of border crossing in the workplace by minority employees who work in settings with a majority of White coworkers. Border crossing is the exhibiting of (sometimes superficial) behaviors to integrate with colleagues of the majority culture (Bristol & Goings, 2019). Three of the seven participants alluded to this conflict within the social context of the workplace for Black male teachers.

Aaron regretted turning down the opportunity to serve as a member of SIT. Aaron desired instructional leadership experience but thought his colleagues would resent him if he accepted:

> I didn't want to be on the SIT team because again I already have a lot of leadership roles. I think a lot of teachers think I already carry a lot of, you know, things on my…on my plate. But going to that SIT team is also an opportunity for me to be an advocate not just for teachers but also for students and I refused it. But now I look back on it and probably wish I would have done it because I think I'm more of an outspoken individual.

Aaron continued to desire an opportunity to serve on SIT. He stated he would not reject a future opportunity to serve the school in this role.

David referenced the burden of Black males to deal with negative societal views of Black males even in the professional setting. He suggested Black male teachers felt pressured to "code switch" or respond to two different cultural expectations in the workplace.

David stated:

> There are some things that I don't know about Polish Americans. There's stuff I don't know about Italian Americans. There's not an assumption that they're not intelligent or lazy because they're that background. And I think Black males carry this code switch many times because of that. You know, I can act this way in this environment, but I have to act this way in this environment.

David suggested Black males had to divert from their cultural values to fit in with their non-Black colleagues.

Fred discussed this pressure during his interview as well. Fred was saddened that some Black male teachers, and Black teachers in general, felt they had to choose between being their authentic self and a persona more accepted by colleagues in the workplace. Fred stated:

> I've always been myself. I've always been confident in who I was. I'm professional, you know. I'm prepared. I'm…I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm where I'm supposed to be. I'm…I'm…I'm still gonna be me. I'm gonna have fun. I'm laughing. I'm loud [Laughs] and I…I can see some brothers on, you know what I mean, some males, Black male or females not thinking that's okay. Which I think is sad.

Fred prided himself on remaining true to his cultural identity throughout his career. He held deep sentiments that the focus should be the skills a person brings to the work setting and not a specific cultural identity. Fred went on to state:

> I'm trying to figure out the best way of saying this. [Laughs]. I don't think you should

> as a Black male, Black female, you should view, you know what I mean, I guess…the way you talk, the way you walk, it'd be any different than what you would normally. As long as…and you would assume somebody that's coming to a professional…profession to act professional. So, why should they change anything? Any way they look. Any way they talk. Just be professional but be yourself. Make sure you're prepared and you're consistent. But I…I truly believe them being themselves is gonna be the better them rather than doing anything other than that.

Fred noted instances of his non-Black colleagues attempting to include him in their social circles. However, Fred shared that this was at times very awkward for him. Fred stated, "I think in those settings where it wasn't as much diversity, I think the…uh…my colleagues, kind of overdid it, maybe to make me feel comfortable. But it made me uncomfortable. I don't know if they knew that."

RQ2

The second area of focus for this research study was participants' perceptions and experiences surrounding their preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities. Participants recounted similar experiences and barriers that negatively impacted their growth as a teacher and, subsequently, their leadership opportunities. Those themes and relevant subthemes are expounded in the following sections.

Barriers to Instructional Leadership Preparedness

Alternative Licensure. Literature asserted that mentoring of pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience was viewed as a potential recruitment and retention strategy (Hobson et al., 2012). Black males who entered the profession through an alternative licensure option typically are not afforded the benefits of the student teaching experience. Six of the seven

research study participants entered the teaching profession by way of an alternative licensure pathway.

Aaron shared, "As a young…young African American male, I feel like at times, they make it harder for us to be able to…us to be able to fill the positions or do the things that we need to do." When describing why he thought the alternative licensure process was an obstacle, Aaron stated:

> It's the licensure piece for me. I think it's…it's definitely an obstacle. Due to the fact…you know, being able to teach at the collegiate level, you know, having a master's degree, and then coming down to high school and having to go and take other classes. And feel like you're not…you're not able to support or instruct at the high school level, but you are able to do that at the collegiate level, which is a higher level. I think that's one of the…that's one of my…always been a big argument for me.

Aaron also stated that he found the demands of EC teacher licensure and responsibilities difficult to navigate alongside the responsibilities as men's varsity basketball head coach.

Aaron shared that he still had three assessments to complete his licensure requirements. Aaron discussed the misalignment between state licensure assessments and beginning teacher experiences for EC teachers. He stated:

> And within the tests is more K-12 so it's not, you know, it's not the high school setting tests…which is all that I've done is high school. So, it's K-12. So, you have to figure out from, again, from kindergarten all the way to twelfth grade the things you have to do within the EC department and so it's kind of been a struggle for me. Again, I have no history in it but only prior work I have is in a high school setting. I think that's one of the biggest pieces for me.

Aaron concluded by stating, “The loops and the hoops you have to jump through to get to those type things, sometimes it burns people out.”

David also believed there were misalignments in the alternative licensure requirements for candidates with higher education work experience that made the process more difficult. David stated:

> I’m like there has to be exceptions in being in higher education for 25 years and having taught in higher education and you have a job that’s helping students get to higher education. It’s very interesting to me that a license in teaching would exclude someone who would be qualified for that. And there might be a reason for it. I don’t know but I think a conversation with that individual as opposed to just looking at policy.

David also stated, “Black males may have taken a different route. They have different experiences.” David went on to state, “I do think that there are other ways in which you can find Black males to bring into higher education or to be a part of…secondary education besides a…a teaching license.”

Concerning the completion of alternative licensure requirements, David stated, “Even though the course work did some preparation, a lot of preparation, but I think they could have done an even better job.” David shared that he faced challenges preparing for the state assessments required to complete the alternative licensure process. David stated:

> The hurdles were just time. If you’re working. Trying to take care of your family. You have children in college and all that. So, you have to get a second job and things like that to make ends meet. When do you find time to study for the test? You have tests in school. You have to prepare for the Praxis. So, others have done it. So, it doesn’t mean that it

> can't be done. But I think that that is a little bit of a hurdle that you look at. At least in my situation, it was a little challenging.

David had two state assessments remaining to complete his alternative licensure requirements.

When asked about the practicality of alternative licensure coursework, Fred stated, "Yes, they're definitely…definitely not practical. I'm not saying it's not meaningful. I…I think that they try, but it's not. I mean it's not something that's…it's not realistic." Fred went on to state:

> Because most of those are online, so you're not necessarily getting any type of instructional, like guidance, from an instructor. You're writing a post. And everybody's doing it. Telling their experiences through a post but you're not doing. You know what I mean? You haven't gone through the educational department at the University. So you don't necessarily get that true understanding of what you're doing. So, I think that might be a little bit of a problem.

Fred concluded, "Because most of those…license…alternative licensure teachers…I mean, Black men teaching history or exceptional children, and this is not something that helps someone staying in because of what comes along with those positions." Fred believed that more diversity among public school leadership would create more opportunities for Black males as teachers and instructional leaders.

Inconsistent Beginning Teacher Support. Researchers proposed that teachers who had access to mentors from the same subject area and participated in induction activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to leave the field during their first year (Hobson et al., 2012). They were also less likely to transfer to other schools when properly inducted. Four (Aaron, Chris, Eric, and Gary) of the seven participants reported positive mentoring experiences. Three of the seven participants reported the absence of a mentor or a

negative mentor experience. Brad and Fred recalled no assistance from colleagues or a mentor in their first year of teaching. David was assigned a mentor that did not work in his high school. He was not able to access his mentor for consistent support.

Brad was a beginning teacher in a different district and experienced some challenges he attributed to the absence of a mentor teacher. Brad stated, “I’ll be totally honest. I really didn’t get any help. I got very, very minimal help from the school district that I was in as far as having someone right there to work with me.” Brad went on to state, “If I needed something, I asked for it. They'll give it to me. Move on." Brad sought outside resources and support that established his foundation as a teacher. Brad stated:

> I can honestly say, my first year, I don’t even remember ever having a…being a part of a PLC. I don’t remember anyone, besides when I you know asked for information, I don’t remember anyone coming to me, volunteering, or offering to help me with anything.

Brad suggested that new teachers should be taught how to work efficiently. Brad stated, “Even though I was having a lot of success early on, you know, I was sleeping like three hours a night, you know, trying to make sure that the next day I was good.” Brad was not surprised by the lack of Black male teacher representation in secondary public schools based on his experience. He believed the lack of support Black male teachers are afforded when they begin their careers was a critical reason turnover rates were so high. Brad stated:

> I don’t understand why anybody in their right mind, you know, Black male teachers, you know, why would they come in and do this unless they had a reason beyond just a job or beyond just a career? You have to want to do something. You have to be on a mission to do this. I’m on a mission, you know, and some of the most successful teachers of color that I’ve worked with, you know, most of them that have lasted in doing this, they were

> on a mission. They had a specific purpose, you know, but I would definitely say that's the reason why men of…teachers of color are leaving. Because when you come in, they're not giving you the same type of training, time, association.

Brad highlighted the benefits to Black males in other professions - better salaries, professional growth, and opportunities for promotion. He shared it was no surprise to him that Black males chose professions other than teaching.

David expressed a lack of connection with his mentor as a first-year teacher. David stated that "the opportunity to connect at the level that I wanted to connect wasn't there because of the busyness of the department." He was assigned a mentor outside of his school which limited his access to and support from this individual. David found that he had to advocate for his own needs among his department members. David was fortunate in that his colleagues were very responsive and supportive to his requests.

RQ3

The third area of focus for this research study was participants' perceptions and experiences surrounding access to and experiences as instructional leaders. Four of the seven participants had limited instructional leadership experiences and the most common instructional leadership experience was as a mentor teacher. Three obstacles to access to instructional leadership opportunities surfaced: influence of gatekeepers, coaching responsibilities, and teacher salary. Brad was the only participant with extensive instructional leadership experience. Based on his narrative, negative stereotypes of Black males surfaced as the biggest obstacle for Black male teachers in instructional leadership roles.

Black Male Teachers' Access to Instructional Leadership Opportunities

Hiring Practices. Some researchers claimed that public schools, particularly in southern states, turned to discriminatory hiring practices of Black educators to control teacher racial demographics following *Brown* (Fultz, 2004; Madkins, 2011). Fred shared an example that aligned with this hiring practice in the context of coaching. Fred shared an experience that occurred while interviewing for a head varsity football coach position. During the tour of the campus, Fred asked the head coach a question concerning an observation he made during the tour. Fred stated:

> I literally said Coach, I've met a lot of African American men…athletes on this campus but I have not met one African American teacher or coach on your staff in this building. And he said, Coach, I, you know what I mean, I'm trying to do it a different way than what I was taught to do and that's part of the reason why you're here now.

Fred shared, "I have a great relationship with Coach [Redacted] at this point, because he was the only person that answered that question that way." Fred appreciated his honest response. He also respected his intentionality in the recruiting process to be more inclusive in his selections.

Fred referenced inconsistent hiring practices of teacher candidates with arrest records as one example of discriminatory hiring practices within the public education setting. Fred referenced human resources hiring practices that disproportionately penalized Black males who applied to teaching positions. Fred shared he witnessed this practice in several districts. Fred stated:

> I feel that's been a roadblock for multiple African American males. But if it's…if that's the policy that no one with a whatever could be hired, it should be a policy for all. That's what I'm, I guess that's what I'm getting to. If you want…if you want someone that's free of anything to be in front of your…I mean be in charge of your high school students,

> okay. I…I get it. A person made a mistake, and then they pay for it. But everybody should pay for it. [Chuckles]. Right.

Fred alluded to discriminatory hiring practice on multiple occasions during his interview. He felt strongly against this partiality to candidates who were not Black males. Fred suggested that increased racial representation among public school leadership was one strategy to address this inequity. Fred stated:

> I…maybe I shouldn't feel this way, but, you know, me being a Black male, I…I, you know what I mean, we don't get the same luxuries. I'm being honest. Like, I don't have an arrest on my record. I have a master's. And I know I have colleagues that are of the different race that don't have either one, and they got the job before me. Or, they would have gotten the job before me because in the leadership roles, for the most part, are not Black males or Black women.

Fred referenced an additional discriminatory hiring practice he observed was the positions offered to Black male candidates. Fred shared, "You'll see more Black men or Black women in the TA positions. Almost like the person to help to control the classroom, not in the leadership of the classroom role. I've noticed that." Fred stated that these individuals were relied upon heavily to build relationships with Black students and their families, as well as intervene to provide disciplinary support. However, he rarely observed support for those individuals to advance into certified positions or into positions of leadership.

The Power of Gatekeepers. The gatekeeper for teacher hiring is typically the school principal (Adams, 2016; Grissom & Keiser, 2011). Schools that served large numbers of minority students typically hired more minority teachers. However, these schools rarely have principals of color (Adams, 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2016;

Walker et al., 2019). Principals typically utilized interview teams to assist with hiring decisions. Racial biases by interview committees in schools with more significant concentrations of White students negatively impacted hiring decisions affecting Black teacher candidates (Adams, 2016; Bristol, 2020b). Five of the seven participants referenced their administrators as factors influencing their access to instructional leadership opportunities. School leaders, in particular principals, had considerable influence on the opportunities made available or unavailable to the participants.

Brad referenced a colleague, who worked at the district level, as instrumental in his growth and development as a leader. Brad stated, "It really helped me to understand backwards design and different types of instructional and curriculum processes…She took me to the next level I would say." In this case, Brad's colleagues had a positive influence on his development as a teacher and instructional leader. Brad also shared that he believed that the content area taught impacted instructional leadership opportunities offered by administrators. Brad stated:

> You would have some, you know, male teachers of color and they would be getting respect. They'll get to do things. But it was because they taught classes that maybe benefited the…showed growth on the stats that the principals looked at. Maybe that's, you know, a difference.

Brad taught Spanish throughout his entire teaching career. This subject is not a state assessed content area.

Chris shared a memorable experience with a past principal whom he approached concerning an assistant principal position. Chris stated, "When it really came down to the fact that people were really afraid of me. I actually had an administrator tell me once – no, I can't

give you…I can't put you in that role because you're too scary." When describing the White male principal in this case, Chris stated:

> I was a good work horse for them but when it came to climbing the ladder, it was like he's too scary. He's too intimidating. He's too loud or he's too rough, you know. Always different excuses and none of them really valid.

This was in contrast to Chris' current principal, who sought to build his leadership capacity in preparation for an administrator position. This principal encouraged Chris to pursue instructional leadership opportunities and created positive rapport as a leader with staff members. These instructional leadership opportunities prepared Chris for an assistant principal position. Chris added:

> And then now in my current situation, again, my principal knew of my degree and suggested maybe you should do this, you know. Maybe you should go be the leader at this…this summer program, or go lead this group, or go join this group to, you know, help teach teachers. It kind of pushed me into it. Whereas I was…probably on my own, I wouldn't have even sought out the opportunities whereas she…she pushed me into it.

Chris transitioned into an administrator role with this principal in the fall of 2022.

When asked why he had not acted on his desire to serve in a leadership position, David stated, "It was not by choice. It was…it was because it was never offered. I mentioned a couple of times that I wanted to participate in the school improvement team, but it was not offered to me." David expressed this several times throughout his interview. When describing his lack of leadership experience, David stated:

> There were a lot of moving parts in the position of an EC teacher. So, instructional leadership, when we define that as someone who's going to influence someone else, there

> wasn't a lot of time to do that because there were a lot of moving parts that I had to learn.

David expressed interest in a graduation coach position at the beginning of the school year based on his prior work experience at the college level. David stated:

> Besides being a classroom teacher, maybe many of those roles haven't been explained to me. But the graduation coach is definitely attractive to me because I have experience helping students graduate successfully, get into college, or a vocation. So, in 5 years, I expect to be in a role of that sort.

David was discouraged by his administrators from applying for the position. David stated, "They could not put me in that position because of the lack of teachers in the EC area and they needed my expertise in that area. So, they would have lost a very critical position in that area." David had extensive experience at the collegiate level in student services and shared that his true passion was 'Academic development for African American males, who are struggling.'

Eric mentioned the importance of racial diversity among school leadership multiple times throughout his interview. Eric stated, "I would like to see a little bit more diversity amongst administrators, teachers, and so forth. I think you have a few schools, but I think I'd…I'd like to see more there." Eric attributed this lack of racial diversity among school leadership as a factor in low Black male teacher representation in schools overall and instructional leadership roles.

Fred stated, "I don't know if I've been sought out to be, like, in other leadership roles, maybe like the SIT team or anything like that. No. I don't think I have." Fred also stated, "I have had many administrators suggest that I should go into Ed Leadership maybe in a principal or AP role which is something I'm…I've never really been interested in." Fred expressed potential interest in the athletic director position once he decided to no longer coach.

Gary referenced the lack of diversity among administrators in his district and potentially negative impacts on opportunities for Black male teacher opportunities. Gary said:

> And I don't think that our administrators represent the…the makeup of the school. You know, all of our administrators are…a…white, and then we have four there. Three of them are male, and one's a female so it certainly doesn't make up the…the identity of the school. And it's probably like that across borders, because I can only think of one, two Black principals or their assistant principals out of the whole county and I don't know every principal but, you know, from what I've seen, that's all I've seen. Well, if…if they're looking to move up that could potentially be a barrier. I don't know how many Black male principals there are in the county. And I'm in [redacted] county and I don't know how many there are. That…that could potentially be a barrier.

Gary went on to share a personal example of the power of gatekeepers. He applied for a CTE leadership position on two occasions. Gary did not receive an interview or any type of follow up the first time he applied. Gary applied for the position in his current building the second time. He interviewed for the position but did not receive the position. Gary received no follow up on his interview. He reached out to his principal for feedback. Gary reached out to his administrators for feedback and found the responses lacking. Gary reflected:

> The one thing that they were stuck on was I did not have that certificate at the time that, you know, that was required for that position which it said on the application that, you know, you have…that you're able to get it. So, that's the only reason I applied.

Gary was frustrated with the perceived lack of transparency and felt that the certification status was not a true barrier. He was also frustrated that once again there was no follow up or feedback to help him prepare for a future opportunity. Gary continued to aspire to attain the CTE

leadership position. In the meantime, Gary had interest in serving in other leadership positions, such as department chair.

Coaching Responsibilities. Four of the seven participants are head coaches for an athletic team. Each participant was hired by their administrators as a coach of their respective sport. Each participant was also a full-time teacher in their school. It was suggested that fulfilling coaching positions impacted the hiring practices and instructional support provided.

Aaron shared that he was hired as an EC teacher so that he could become the head coach of varsity men's basketball. Aaron stated:

> I got my undergrad in social work and…I got my master's in sports administration but into going to high school setting, that…that was the only current position that I could roll into to be able to get into the high school setting.

Aaron stated he was offered an EC position so that he was in the building as the men's varsity head coach. Aaron did not believe the responsibilities of an EC teacher were accurately communicated to him by his administrators.

David reflected on the responsibilities he had to balance as a head coach and new teacher in the EC department. He also expressed a desire for better communication of the expectations of the EC role. David shared:

> I think one of the biggest things for me is not knowing coming into high school going special education. It is definitely a difficult piece when you're doing other things outside of…outside of the building sports related. It's definitely a difficult piece. I wish going into it…I wish I would have knew more about the EC background…the layout and got a better understanding, kinda, what my role would be within the building.

Both Aaron and David shared that they may have considered different content areas if they had a better understanding of the role of an EC teacher.

Eric was a head varsity women's basketball coach and assumed athletic director duties in his off-season. Eric shared his observation concerning the hiring practices of Black male teachers. Eric stated, "I do think lines of ummm, diversity have been obstacles for some. A lot of, and it's funny, I mean, and it kind of goes a lot of the Black male teachers are coaches in this area." Eric expressed a desire for a change in this area.

All three of the participants who were not hired as head coaches by their administrators had instructional leadership experience. Fred was the only research study participant hired as a head coach who had instructional leadership experience. Fred was also an assistant coach to a major sport in his off season. Fred shared

> That was my…the first day ever. [Laughs]. It was…It was literally here's the roll. [Laughs]. I had no leadership. It was really…. It was new. It was, it was, it was no help with it at all. And I think that was more because when they were looking for me, I…I guess more than anything was being a head football coach more than a teacher or serving any other roles. After a while, I think that changed.

Fred's leadership experience included mentor teacher, Health/Physical Education PLC lead, and participation on a few committees.

Brad was the only participant with extensive instructional leadership experience that extended beyond mentor- teacher. Brad impacted instruction at the building and district levels. His coaching experience was voluntary and pursued as another opportunity to connect with and support students.

Black Male Teachers' Experiences in Instructional Leadership Roles. Four (Brad, Chris, Fred and Gary) of the seven participants had prior instructional leadership experience. Two (Brad and Chris) had instructional leadership experience beyond mentor-teacher. Brad was the only participant with extensive instructional leadership experience among the seven research study participants. He also had the most to share about the challenges of being a Black male serving in leadership positions. Chris had negative experiences transitioning into the administrator role but shared no negative experiences as an instructional leader. Gary shared no negative experiences in his role as mentor teacher.

Brad's participation on building and district level teams afforded him much more exposure to the challenges of leadership. His instructional leadership perceptions based on his experiences were that respect and value were not extended by his colleagues until he proved himself as an instructor. Brad recalled:

> I can learn from you. You can learn from me, you know, but if that's what you want to do. But, yeah, as a person of color, unless you prove that you got, yeah, unless you can show results for what you have then, yeah, then you are appreciated. Then people come to you. Then, they warm up to you. But if you are a White teacher, you know, especially White male, you know, the expectation is that you are already, you know, just by virtue of you saying something…just you showing up. Yeah. You're respected. They'll listen.

Brad fully believed that it was possible for a Black male to be accepted by his colleagues as an instructional expert or leader but only after performing and proving himself.

Brad shared that students were always his biggest advocates. As his students spoke about his lessons in other classes, then his colleagues became interested in his instructional expertise. Brad shared:

> But, yeah, so, it's not automatic. I mean, I wouldn't want…I wouldn't want any educator, especially an educator of color, to walk in and think that you know you're gonna be respected and appreciated. You're not gonna be appreciated. You're not gonna be respected. Not until the kids start putting the word out because they're your biggest advocates, you know, when you're doing the right thing.

Brad felt that Black males entering education should be prepared for this experience in the beginning stages of their career. His advice to new Black male teachers was "You gotta go in there when you first get to a program, quiet, do your thing, show it to them, and then, once they see it, then you get respect, you know. But, yeah, so, it's not automatic." He shared that students must be their motivation if they want to have longevity in the education profession.

Summary

Chapter 4 began with a summary of the recruitment survey results and descriptive data of the seven research study participants. The researcher presented an overview of the data analysis process, which included coding and use of *NVivo* to examine each participant's narrative. The researcher then categorized codes to identify broad recurring themes from participants' narratives. Recurring themes were presented in categories aligned to each of the research questions. Table 7 is a summary of the three research questions and corresponding themes as well as subthemes identified in participants' narratives.

Table 8

Research Questions and Corresponding Themes/Subthemes Identified in Participants' Narratives

	Feelings of Overall Acceptance *Administrators* *Colleagues*
Q1. What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of their	**Perceptions Surrounding Administrators**

workplace experiences in secondary public schools?	*Expectation to Manage Black Male Students* *Listened To, But Not Heard* **Perceptions Surrounding Colleagues** *Border Heightening* *Border Crossing*
Q2. What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their feelings of preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities within secondary public schools?	**Employment Practices** *Alternative Licensure Limitations* *Inconsistent Beginning Teacher Support*
Q3. What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles in secondary public schools?	**Access to Instructional Leadership Opportunities** *Hiring Practices* *Power of Gatekeepers* *Coaching Responsibilities* **Experiences as Instructional Leaders** *Negative Stereotypes*

Research Question 1 addressed the social context of the workplace for Black male teachers in secondary public schools. Emerging themes were that participants perceived an overall sense of acceptance, but there were issues within the culture surrounding interactions with administrators and colleagues. Each participant reported overall feelings of acceptance from their administrators and colleagues in the secondary public school community. However, some participants discussed their perceptions of an expectation to manage primarily Black male student behavior, as well as being listened to but not heard by administrators. Some participants also discussed conflicting messages surrounding their cultural identities within the workplace.

Research Question 2 considered the perceptions surrounding the preparedness of Black male teachers for instructional leadership opportunities. The emerging themes that surfaced were inequities surrounding hiring practices and beginning teacher support. Four participants had

instructional leadership experience. The most common leadership experience was mentor teacher. Two participants with leadership experience included instructional leadership experiences beyond mentor teacher.

Research Question 3 focused on Black male teachers' perceptions of access to instructional leadership opportunities and experiences in instructional leadership roles. Three themes surfaced when examining Black male teachers' access to instructional leadership: discriminatory hiring practices, the power of gatekeepers, and coaching. A barrier that negatively impacted Black male teachers' experiences as instructional leaders was negative stereotypes.

Chapter 5 interprets the findings, presents implications of the findings of this study for Black male teachers in instructional leadership, and addresses the social context of Black male teachers in public secondary schools. Limitations of this study are also given. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for future research on this topic.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine Black male teachers' perceptions and experiences in North Carolina secondary public schools. The study included seven participants who were current secondary public school teachers who identified as Black and male, who either had instructional leadership experience or a desire to serve in an instructional leadership role in the future. Participants responded to an electronic recruitment survey to indicate interest in participating in the study. The researcher confirmed respondents met the criteria and conducted a one hour virtual interview with each individual via Zoom. The researcher also used Zoom to transcribe participants' interviews. To ensure accuracy of transcripts, the researcher listened to interviews, read transcripts multiple times, and included member checking by participants. The researcher created codes utilizing the software *NVIVO* and conducted a constant comparison analysis to conclude findings for three research questions.

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning the social context of their workplace experiences in secondary public schools?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning their feelings of preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities within secondary public schools?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of Black male teachers concerning access to and experiences in instructional leadership roles in secondary public schools?

In this final chapter, the researcher will provide an interpretation of findings, a summary of findings, and a discussion of the findings of the study. The researcher also will propose implications for use by school decision makers and principals. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for further study.

Summary of the Findings

This study resulted in the following findings for Black male teachers' perceptions and experiences:

RQ1: Seven of the seven participants possessed overall feelings of acceptance from administrators and colleagues. However, three of the seven participants perceived that they were not heard by administrators. Also, six of the seven participants voiced that they are sometimes overused as mentors for Black male students with challenging behaviors. Five of the seven participants felt a lack of community due to social isolation from their colleagues as beginning teachers. Three of the seven participants experienced or observed perceived pressure on Black male teachers to assimilate behaviors of the majority culture of the workplace because their cultural identity was not valued.

RQ2: Six of the seven participants of this study entered the teaching profession through the alternative licensure pathway. Three of the seven participants did not believe the alternative licensure program requirements adequately prepared beginning Black male teachers for the responsibilities of the classroom. Three of the seven participants shared that their beginning teacher support process lacked consistency and authenticity with mentors.

RQ3: Six of the seven participants in this study had athletic coaching experience. Four of the seven participants were hired as head coaches. Four of the seven participants voiced that Black male teachers were limited in opportunities available to pursue instructional leadership. This was especially true for Black male teachers who serve in head athletic coach positions. In this study, four of the seven participants had instructional leadership experience. Two of the four participants with instructional leadership experience perceived that they experienced obstacles in their instructional leadership role due to the lack of support from school leaders or colleagues.

Recommendations for School Leaders and Policy-Makers

As was clearly evidenced through the literature review for this study, there is a dramatic disproportionate lack of presence of Black male teachers working in U.S. public schools. Black male teachers and principals are grossly underrepresented, despite clear research showing that their presence in schools is significantly beneficial to students in schools. In addition, these low numbers of Black male teachers continued after decades of efforts to increase their numbers in U.S. public schools concurrent with great increases in numbers of students of color attending U.S. public schools. Earnest attention should be given to rectifying the continued racial disparity of teachers of color in public schools. As this study showed through the candid voices of Black male teachers themselves, there are specific steps that can be taken that show promise of alleviating this problem in public schools. Many of these efforts fall under the responsibility of school leaders and policymakers.

School leaders and education decision makers can take steps to increase not only the recruitment but also successful retention of Black males as public school teachers. One strategy is to shift the focus from the alternative licensure pathway to earlier recruitment of Black males through participation in secondary level future teacher programs, as well as acceptance into a post-secondary universities and teacher preparation program (TPP). School districts and universities could collaborate to incentive acceptance and completion of TPPs that result into employment with specific school districts. This would not only increase the number of Black male teachers entering school districts but would also increase the number of licensed Black male teachers entering classrooms. This would reduce the barriers surrounding the coursework, licensure assessments and inconsistencies with beginning teacher support needed to retain a beginning teacher. Administrators could also increase Black male teacher retention through

recruitment for advanced level teaching assignments. Literature shows there is a direct correlation between the number of minority teachers teaching advanced level courses and minority student enrollment in those advanced level courses. This strategy could also increase the instructional leader profile for Black male teachers rather than disciplinarian or coach. Administrators can also support retention for Black male teachers who show leadership potential by coaching and supporting into the role of instructional leaders rather than recommending the administrator pathway. Administrators should encourage Black male teachers to serve in leadership roles to their increase leadership capacity over time which could also support their preparation for an administrator role, if desired, as a seasoned instructional leader.

Revise Beginning Teacher Activities/Program

There are several practices that can be implemented immediately by the building principal to address the barriers described in this study. The principal can support new Black male teachers by collaborating with lead mentors to revise the Beginning Teacher (BT) program at his school. The BT program is recommended because a large number of Black male teachers enter education through the alternative licensure pathway and participate in BT programs. Administrators could attend BT meetings throughout the year to get to know new teachers and build relationships/connections. Administrators could use this opportunity to lead activities for and with beginning teachers that provide coaching, connection with the school vision, and relevance within the staff community as instructional leaders. Administrators could also utilize this opportunity to capture the thoughts, concerns, and feedback of beginning teachers and ensuring feedback to develop a culture of being heard and valued in the school community as a new teacher.

Lead mentors could revise BT programs to focus more on building social networks and leadership rather than the mentor-mentee checklists that currently included in BT activities in North Carolina. Networking opportunities could include a variety of teacher leaders from throughout the district who present in-person and/or virtually to share the impact of their work as teacher leaders. This could be an invaluable opportunity for beginning teachers to hear these leaders share how they balanced their teaching responsibilities to pursue their passions through leadership. Lead mentors should be cognizant of social activities offered and observe the amount of interaction between mentors and beginning teachers to ensure cultural inclusion of all teachers.

The three years of participation in the BT program could be used to create a leadership profile to inform and guide teachers into the myriad of instructional leadership opportunities available. Year one, beginning teachers could complete surveys to identify strengths, passions, and past experiences that are useful in identifying potential areas of leadership. Administrators and mentors could utilize this information to create a plan for exposure to leadership in action through observation of leadership groups, shadowing a teacher leader throughout a specific project, and co-teaching opportunities of choice.

Opportunities for Instructional Growth of Coaches

Four of the seven participants of this study were hired as head coaches. One of the four had instructional leadership experience. Participants' narratives indicated that those who had no instructional leadership experience found the responsibilities of coaching too demanding to pursue leadership opportunities (David), were not interested in pursuing leadership opportunities other than athletics (Eric) or possessed limited knowledge of opportunities (Aaron only mentioned SIT throughout his interview). Therefore, school leaders should increase opportunities

for coaches, head coaches in particular, to become instructional leaders in the classroom and then among their colleagues. School leaders could support instructional leadership growth by including coaches in new teacher orientation activities and instructional professional development through the goal setting already implemented through the North Carolina Professional Development Plan for teachers. Administrators could also provide facilitator or co-facilitator opportunities to build capacity for instructional leadership of coaches among colleagues. Administrators could maintain the same expectations for classroom instruction rigor/expertise, assessment practices, and data use for coaches that are held for non-coaching teachers. School leaders could be intentional in highlighting instructional leadership exhibited by coaches among colleagues and in school community communications to expand the image of Black male teachers who are coaches.

Identify and Strategically Support Mentors for Students

Based on the demographic trend of increasing numbers of diverse students in U.S. public schools combined with low numbers of diverse teachers and administrators, districtwide policies and practices must equip a larger pool of racially diverse staff members to support the growing number of minority students. Additionally, students are living in poverty and are struggling with academics and challenging behaviors in public schools. As stated by Brad, “You have to be on a mission to do this.” Principals and other school leaders need to form intentional, authentic relationships with all teachers, but particularly, teachers of color to ensure their voices are not only heard but valued. In addition to hiring practices, district leaders can modify practices to address negative perceptions of Black male teachers and expectations of them to mentor Black male students, while increasing the number of qualified mentors amongst their ranks. District

policy can also be expanded to include well-defined parameters for student mentorship to establish clear systemwide expectations.

One recommendation is to create a systemwide process to identify candidates to serve as potential student mentors so there is more fidelity despite differing school demographics. As was voiced by participants in this study, some were more interested than others to serve in this capacity and it will be through forming close professional relationships based on trust that stereotyping can be reduced. Initial evaluations for candidates who are interested could assess the motivation to become a student mentor and identify areas of strength as a potential student mentor. Eligible candidates could then complete a district level training. One module of the training could include professional development for all employees on strategies for supporting minority students and students impacted by poverty to ensure that candidates of all races/ethnicities are prepared to address the needs of students regardless of background. One strategy to ensure equity and access is to incentivize annual trainings by offering a stipend or continuing education credits. District level tracking of stipends paid, or continuing education credits awarded will help to ensure that schools are training and preparing a racially diverse group of staff members as mentors. Based on identified racial disparities, district level leaders could work with principals to increase the school's capacity to develop a racially diverse student mentor pool.

The assignment of student mentors could follow a practice identified within the policy. Students who will be assigned a mentor could have their name and basic profile placed in a database to be shared with all available student mentors. Mentors could complete the survey for all eligible students rather than select a specific student. Mentors could have the option to request a student but must complete the survey in its entirety for all students. The survey could assess

opportunities to interact with each student such as a homeroom/classroom teacher, club advisor, or coach. The survey could also assess the alignment between the strengths of the mentor and the needs of each student. The top two to three mentors that match the student could be offered the opportunity. The number of assigned students could be determined based on the comfort level of the mentor.

Survey responses could be reviewed by a committee which could include at least one administrator, one counselor, and MTSS Coach or other support personnel. The review of survey responses by a committee allows for consideration based on multiple characteristics and not just race. Communication of the policy and practices by district leaders and principals will inform staff members of the intentionality to match students of all races with the best mentor regardless of race.

There will be tracking of the assigned mentorship through mentor and student mentee surveys, as well as academic and behavior progress monitoring of the student. A district instrument will collect this data to create a rating for each mentor. Based on ratings, mentors will either attend an assigned training to continue or remain eligible and attend no further training until the required annual training.

Beginning Teacher Support/Mentor Teacher

Six of the seven participants in this study entered the teaching profession through the alternative licensure pathway. These six participants pursued education in a master's degree program or as a second career. However, David stated that the alternative licensure coursework was "definitely not practical", and Fred stated that alternative licensure coursework "is not something that helps." Higher education programs could survey alternative licensure program completers who are currently teaching to determine if these views are shared by a significant

number of teachers. If needed, higher education programs could conduct a mixed methods study to determine how to better align coursework with the responsibilities and experiences of a beginning teacher.

State and district beginning teacher requirements do not currently account for experiences lacking by teachers who pursued alternative licensure and did not participate in a teacher preparation program. This component of beginning teacher requirements should be revised to support this group of teachers who are disproportionately minority and male. A collaboration between state policymakers and school districts would be required to restructure mentor support for this group of teachers. One recommendation is to change mentor teacher responsibilities to replicate the student teaching experience and create opportunities for stronger relationships between mentor teachers and beginning teachers. This approach could address the social isolation and lack of instructional support experienced by some study participants.

The proposed beginning teacher model could include a nine week process of modeling and support by the mentor teacher and district level content specialists. For this model, mentor teachers should be assigned who work at the same school as beginning teachers. The mentor teacher is also assigned a planning period devoted to mentoring the beginning teacher for nine weeks. The nine week period is divided into three 3-week components. During the first 3-weeks, the mentor teacher teaches one section for the beginning teacher. The beginning teacher will observe and complete assignments to provide written and verbal feedback to the mentor. District level content specialists will provide lesson plans for the mentor and mentee in every content area to support this process. Mentor and beginning teacher will meet once weekly at a minimum to discuss content, classroom management, classroom routines, grading, and parent communication.

During the second 3-week period, the mentor will begin a gradual release of instruction in this class to the beginning teacher. The beginning teacher will have co-teaching opportunities, as well as opportunities to lead small group activities. Ideally, these opportunities will be the first class of each day to provide a model for the beginning teacher to facilitate classes for the remainder of the day. The mentor will create lesson plans with the beginning teacher prior to the class to ensure the beginning teacher is prepared. The mentor will also provide support during the lesson, as well as feedback after each lesson. The lead mentor in the building or a district content lead will observe and provide feedback to the mentor and beginning teacher a minimum of once during the second week.

During the final 3-week period, the beginning teacher will lead all instruction and the mentor will observe the lesson, support the beginning teacher as needed, and provide regular feedback. The beginning teacher will be responsible for creating lesson plans to be reviewed by the mentor prior to teaching the lesson. The mentor will provide feedback and support as needed. The mentor may reach out to the district content specialist if needed to support the beginning teacher. The mentor will continue to provide support with classroom management, classroom routines, grading, and parent communications. The lead mentor in the building or a district content specialist will observe and provide feedback a minimum of once during the second week.

The district will provide weekly virtual meetings for beginning teachers to ensure fidelity in the process and provide immediate support where needed. Beginning teachers will also complete a brief survey each week to notify district personnel of any perceptions of lacking support or social isolation. This time will also serve as a time to inform beginning teachers of additional resources or contacts for instructional supports. Beginning teachers will also be equipped with the proper information and questions to self-advocate in their buildings among

colleagues. District leaders will also share professional development opportunities for which beginning teachers qualify to ensure opportunities are made available to all beginning teachers.

This recommendation does require collaboration between state policymakers and district leaders to allocate funding, training, and allotments needed to implement this plan. However, school principals may simulate this support on a smaller scale. As needed, the principal could provide one experienced teacher one block in the master schedule to serve as a mentor teacher to an alternative licensure beginning teacher(s) identified as needing additional instructional support. Principals could determine the need for this level of mentor teacher support for alternative licensure teachers based on criteria such as content area or prior work experiences. This approach could give the principal the flexibility to control the number of quarters or semesters the mentor teacher provides beginning teacher support in this capacity or teaches a course(s) to balance the needs of alternative licensure teachers with those of the entire school.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted in a medium-sized district in North Carolina. The district contained a combination of rural, suburban, and urban communities. Recommendations for future studies are to replicate this study in different areas of the country where schools are either urban or rural and compare to the findings of the district in North Carolina. A different option is to replicate this study in a small district or a large district to confirm the impact of the size or demographics of students and staff on the findings. It would fill a gap in the knowledge of Black male teachers' perspective to confirm the impact of geographic location, school type, or size of district on the perspectives of Black male teachers.

Another option is to conduct this study as a longitudinal study. A longitudinal study could identify Black male teachers with similar characteristics and credentials who enter the

profession over a five year period. The study would track instructional leadership preparedness and experiences over the five year period to assess any changes in perceptions. This approach will highlight the impact of experiences on perceptions over a longer period of time to assess how school culture impacts job satisfaction. A mixed methods approach will provide the researcher with quantitative data to compare participants characteristics, rate perceptions, and track opportunities or experience. Qualitative data will provide the rich discourse to give a better understanding of participants' experiences. Future studies can include Black male teachers in different districts to evaluate the impact of opportunities available in different areas on perspectives. Another option is to conduct future studies that include other minorities, such as Hispanic males. The findings of this study would provide a comparison of male minority teacher perspectives to identify common and unique issues.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers in secondary public schools. The researcher focused on the following aspects of the Black male teacher experience in the public education setting: the social context of the workplace, preparedness for instructional leadership opportunities, and access to and/or experiences in instructional leadership roles. In this chapter, the researcher provided a summary of the problem and theoretical framework for this study. The researcher then provided two policy recommendations school districts. The first recommendation was a revised policy at the district level for the selection of mentors for students. This recommendation provided a framework for a criteria-based selection process to eliminate the use of race/ethnicity only to match students with adult mentors. The recommendation included district and building level practices to ensure

equity and access by any staff member in the selection and assignment of mentors for struggling students.

The second recommendation presented in this chapter involved changes in the expectations of mentor teachers for beginning teachers who enter the profession through alternative licensure. This recommendation presented a nine week period of focused and intentional collaboration with the mentor to equip beginning teachers with instructional support. The goal was to replicate the student teacher experience for beginning teachers who entered the profession through the alternative licensure pathway.

This chapter ended with recommendations for future studies. The researcher recommended replication of this study in different areas of the country to determine if the findings of this study are applicable to similar school districts in other areas. Another recommendation was to replicate this study in different school types, such as rural and urban to determine if the perspectives of Black male teachers were the same. The final recommendation was to conduct this study on different minority groups, such as Hispanic males, to determine if race/ethnicity influenced minority teacher perspectives.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Survey

BLACK MALE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN U.S. SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS - RESEARCH STUDY RECRUITMENT SURVEY

1) Are you a certified teacher?

- ✘ Yes
- ✘ No

2) How many years have you completed as a certified teacher?

- ✘ 0 - 3 YEARS
- ✘ 4 - 5 YEARS
- ✘ 6 - 10 YEARS
- ✘ 11 - 15 YEARS
- ✘ 16 - 20 YEARS
- ✘ 20+ YEARS

3) Do you teach in a U.S. public school?

- ✘ Yes
- ✘ No

4) Do you teach at the secondary level (grades 6th - 12th) full-time?

- ✘ Yes
- ✘ No

5) What is your ethnicity?

- ✘ AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK
- ✘ AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
- ✘ ASIAN
- ✘ HISPANIC
- ✘ PACIFIC ISLANDER
- ✘ TWO OR MORE RACES
- ✘ WHITE

6) What is your gender?

- ✘ MALE
- ✘ FEMALE

7) Are you interested in participating in a virtual interview that will last no longer than one hour via Zoom as a research study participant? (Participation is confidential and anonymous.)

- ✘ Yes
- ✘ No

8) If you agree to participate and meet the criterion, please provide your first and last name so that I may contact you.

9) If you agree to participate and meet the criterion, please provide your an email address so that I may contact you.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Title of the Project: Black Male Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences in North Carolina Secondary Public Schools
Principal Investigator: Yolanda L. Blakeney
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Rebecca Shore, UNCC Professor

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of Black male teachers who teach in North Carolina secondary public schools.
- You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one virtual interview via Zoom.
- If you choose to participate it will require a maximum of two (2) hours of your time.
- Risks or discomforts from this research include the discomfort of sharing your perceptions about personal experiences or incidents that occurred in the workplace.
- Benefits may include increasing the body of knowledge surrounding the impact of secondary school workplace culture on Black male teachers.
- You may choose not to participate at any time during the study.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of Black male teachers about their workplace experiences and access to instructional leadership opportunities. Specifically, this research examines the secondary school culture and teacher leadership opportunities available to Black male teachers and their experiences in instructional leadership roles.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you meet the criteria for this study. You identify as a Black male teacher and you teach at the secondary level in a U.S public school in the selected district.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one-on-one virtual interviews via Zoom with the researcher. The audio portion of the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

Your time commitment will be about one hour for the virtual interview. You may be contacted after the interview by the researcher for follow-up information as needed.

What are the benefits of this study?
You as a participant will not benefit directly from participation in this study. However, other Black male teachers may benefit as public school leaders gain a better understanding of the Black male experience and intentionally make policy changes to create workplace cultures that better attract and retain Black male teachers, who currently only represent 2% of the teacher workforce.

What risks might I experience?
You may experience a breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, the researcher will utilize pseudonyms in the recorded audio, transcripts and field notes related to the virtual interview. After the data analysis is complete, all audio files will be deleted.

How will my information be protected?
All data files collection and digital files will be password protected. All files will be stored on a password protected device. All digital files will be deleted within six (6) months of study completion. No subject names will be used in interview data to protect your identity. Study data will only be shared as required for research study completion via university sponsored/owned email and sharing programs.

We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, we will not include any information that could identify you. We will protect the confidentiality of the research data by using pseudonyms in the written study and coding for subject names within the interview data.

Other people may need to see the information we collect about you. Including people who work for UNC Charlotte, the study sponsor [if applicable], and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies without asking for your consent again or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you. OR We may share your research data with other investigators and/or use your biospecimens in future studies without asking for your consent again. The information we share with these other investigators will not contain information that could directly identify you. There still may be a chance that someone could figure out that the information is about you.

Data in the form of the final written study may be deposited in a public repository, such as ProQuest, which is a database that houses theses and dissertations. Typically, access to these sites are restricted to students associated with an educational institution.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

If you choose to withdraw from this study, any data collected will be destroyed. None of your data will be included in the final study.

The Primary Investigator, Yolanda L. Blakeney, may choose to terminate participation at any time without the consent of the participant.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?
For questions about this research, you may contact Yolanda L. Blakeney at ylglenn@uncc.edu, phone and Dr. Rebecca Shore at rshore6@uncc.edu or 704-687-8867, extension 4.
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Protections and Integrity at uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to be audio and visually recorded
With your permission, you will have the following done during this research (check all that apply):

_____ Photography/Still Visual Shots ____ Video recording __X__ Audio recording

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, follow-up appointments may be audio or visual recorded. Pseudonyms will be used in all meetings. Participants have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options:

_____I consent to the use of audio/visual recordings for research purposes.
_____I do not consent to the use audio/visual recordings for research purposes

_____
Signature Date

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Name (PRINT)

_____

Signature Date

_____

Name and Signature of person obtaining consent Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Black Male Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences in North Carolina Secondary Public Schools - Interview Guide

Introduction Key Components: • Thank You • Verify Your Name • Purpose • Confidentiality • Duration • Interview Format • Opportunity for Questions • Interview Consent	Thank you so much for agreeing to be a participant in my research study. My name is Yolanda Blakeney. I will conduct your virtual interview. Please confirm your first and last name for me. The purpose of this research is to examine your perceptions and experiences as a Black male teacher in North Carolina secondary public schools. My focus will be your collegial interactions, access to instructional leadership opportunities, and experiences as an instructional leader, if applicable. Your responses will remain confidential. The audio only portion of this interview will be recorded and a pseudonym will be utilized. Your district and school will not be named. Discuss only what you are comfortable sharing and this interview may end at any time. The interview will last no longer than 1 hour and will be recorded (audio only) via Zoom.

	Are there any questions about any of the information I shared? *Begin Zoom recording of audio only.* *Restate the purpose of this interview.* Are you willing to participate in this interview?
Questions Maximum of 15 Open-Ended Questions • Ask Factual Before Opinions • Use Probes As Needed ◦ Would you give me an example? ◦ Can you elaborate? ◦ Would you explain that further? ◦ I do not understand what you are saying. ◦ Is there anything else?	What would you consider to be strengths of your relationship with administration and/or teachers? How have current structures within your school supported your growth as an instructor? What could have been done differently to better support your professional growth? Tell me about opportunities for instructional mentorship either from administration or colleagues. To what extent did said mentorship advance your instructional leadership abilities? What recommendation(s) would you give yourself as a beginning teacher to become an even more effective instructional leader at your current school? Describe the attributes of model leaders in your current school. Please elaborate. Tell me about instructional (non-athletic) leadership opportunities that exist in your current school. Give me an example of an instructional leadership opportunity you pursued or want to pursue. Describe your experiences as an instructional leader in your current role(s). Tell me more about obstacles you faced as an instructional leader. Why have you decided not to serve as an instructional leader at your school?

Closing Key Components: Additional Comments • Next Steps • Thank You	Is there anything more you would like to add? I will analyze the interview transcript and provide you a copy to review and confirm as well. Feel free to contact me with any questions via email. Thank you for your time and participation.