MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING BLACK MALE PRINCIPALS IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA

by

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ABSTRACT

TITUS L. HOPPER. Motivational Factors Affecting Black Male Principals in Rural North Carolina. (Under the direction of DR. REBECCA SHORE)

Many Black educators and principals led the nation's schools in the early-to-mid-1900's, when American public education was racially segregated. Black male principals leading predominantly Black schools was commonplace before the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* that ruled that the practice of separate was no longer equal. The number of Black male principals serving in North Carolina schools today is disproportionately low. Research on rural schools is scant and there is even less research about Black male principals leading these schools. This study focused on the motivational factors affecting Black male principals working in rural North Carolina school districts. The purpose of this basic, interpretive qualitative case-study was to explore the lived experiences of these principals. As part of this exploration, the researcher examined factors that motivated Black male principals to work in rural North Carolina counties. All five participants in the study expressed that they embraced their profession and work as a major component of their identity; four were native to their rural communities. They believed they had a moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for rural North Carolina students and prove that Black male principals were educational leaders and more than disciplinarians. Job dissatisfaction factors included the low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students from rural counties in North Carolina, as well as the inequitable distribution and access to human capital and resources. The researcher's hope is that insight gained from this investigation would positively impact recruiting, mentoring, coaching of Black male principals, and aid in their retention not only in rural districts, but potentially all districts.

ACKNOWLDGEMENTS

Psalm 1 is my favorite Bible verse. It says:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

I am so humbled to have the opportunity to acknowledge those who have helped me prosper. I must first and foremost honor my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who introduced himself to me during my sophomore year at NC State University. I'm grateful for Pastor Reginald Stepney, Dr. Pamela Banks-Lee, and the United Student Fellowship for helping me establish the roots of my faith. I'm grateful for the spiritual contributors to my village, Pastors Anthony and Brenda Herndon, Bishop Marcus and Lady Omeka Benjamin and my pastors, Bishop Randy and Lady Norma Borders. Your support and your prayers helped me stay the course.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work and my degree to my family; Pastor Roosevelt and Mrs. Yolanda Harris, my children, Josiah and Lauryn and the love of my life, my wife, Michelle Renee Hopper who supported me unselfishly through my master's degree and doctoral pursuit! Thank you for your prayers, your words of support and patience through this process. The best is yet to come!!!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the mid-1800's, five year-old Sarah Roberts attended a school established for Black children in Boston, Massachusetts. The route to her school passed five White-only elementary schools. Sarah's father attempted repeatedly, and unsuccessfully, to get his daughter enrolled into a school that was closer to their residence and of much better quality. The ensuing case of *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) was revisited in the U. S. Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) ruling that caused the "separate but equal doctrine" to become the standard (Alexander & Alexander, 2019). A noticeable number of Black educators and principals led the nation's schools from the early-to-mid 1900's, when American public education was racially segregated. This phenomenon, therefore, existed before the United States Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* which ruled that separate was no longer equal.

The United States Supreme Court accepted a case in which the families of five Black children brought an action against the city of Topeka, Kansas due to the poor quality of its educational facilities. In this case, the court ruled that as far as public education was concerned, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' had no place, and separate educational facilities were inherently unequal (Alexander & Alexander, 2019). Based on this decision, states were ordered to integrate "with all deliberate speed." In *Brown*, the Supreme Court ruled that "a separate school exclusively devoted to one class must differ essentially, in its spirit and character, from that public school known to the law, where all classes meet together in equality" (Alexander & Alexander, 2019, p. 1219). However, the will of the Court was met with much resistance.

Peters (2019) noted that following the *Brown* decision, approximately 38,000 Black educators and administrators were fired in 17 Southern states between 1954 and 1965. On March

13th, 1953, Topeka's school superintendent, Wendell Godwin wrote to Darla Buchanan, a Black educator, saying that "due to uncertainty about enrollment in schools for Negro children" her employment as an educator would be discontinued (Tillman, 2004). He also shared in this letter that if the Supreme Court should rule that segregation in elementary schools were unconstitutional, then the school board would proceed on the assumption that the majority of people in Topeka would not want to employ Negro teachers for White children (Tillman, 2004, p. 1). As a result of the *Brown* ruling, a large number of Black educators were systematically dismissed (Tillman, 2004).

Times have changed and history has seen many Black citizens rise to prominence in some areas. In 2008, Barack Obama became the first Black male president. The Biden administration selected the first Black female vice-president, Kamala Harris as well as the first Black female supreme court, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. While some inroads have been made in national leadership and corporate America, the same is not evident within most public schools. Though attention has been given to increase diversity among America's teachers, principals remain an important group to consider when addressing under-represented minorities.

Statement of the Problem

The school principalship has historically been considered a bastion for White men (Pollard, 1997). Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) 2012 *School and Staffing Survey* reported that of the 89,810 principals in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, in 2012 only 10.1% were Black. This survey data also reported that of 2,550 principals in North Carolina, 15.2% were Black (NCES, 2012). More recently during the 2017-2018 school year, NCES reported that about 78% of public school principals were White and 11% were Black. Bristol and Goins (2019) described the barriers that hinder Black male

educators, and found that Black males were only "2% of the [national] teacher workforce" (p. 52). During that same school year, 46% of public school principals were male and 54% were female (NCES, 2020). To summarize documented trends: First, the number of public schools in the U.S. have increased and therefore more principals are needed. Second, over the last three decades, more women have become principals. Third, though the number of principals nationally has increased, the percentage of Black male principals has decreased. Pollard (1997, p. 354) wrote that "though progress has been made, women and men of color are still a woefully inadequate presence in [public] U.S. schools." This has been happening at a time when the student population nationally is increasingly diverse.

Younis et al. (2022) noted that only six percent of school research focuses on schools in rural settings. Considering that a third of students in the United States attend rural schools, there is a need to add to the limited body of existing research, especially regarding rural school leadership (pp. 1-2). Furthermore, though research on rural schools is scant; there is even less work centered on Black male principal leadership, a fact compounded by their small numbers. Smith (2019) reinforced this sentiment by emphasizing the lack of any extensive work on Black male school building-level leaders across public and private school settings.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks guided this study: Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory (1959, 2017) and Bell's interest convergence theory (1980). Both are relevant and will give a frame of reference to analyze and compare research participants' motivations to work in rural North Carolina school districts.

In this study, the researcher investigated the relationship between Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory and the motivations of Black male principals to work in rural NC school districts.

Herzberg's curiosity led him to seek insight into what made workers want to do their jobs (1959, 2017). This theory will be described more fully in Chapter Two.

The highest concentration of Black male principals in North Carolina are in low wealth, high poverty counties (see Table 1 and Appendices B and C). The researcher evaluated the influence of Bell's interest convergence theory, which suggests that Black people achieve civil rights victories only when White and Black interests converge (Bell, 1980). The researcher investigated whether interest convergence theory influenced Black male principals' decision to work in rural, low wealth, high poverty North Carolina schools. An explanation of this theory and its relevance to this study is given in Chapter Two.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case-study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male principals in rural NC public school districts. As part of this exploration, the researcher examined factors that motivated Black male principals to work in these counties. This study contributes to the literature on this subject. It is the researcher's hope that insight gained from this investigation would positively impact recruiting, mentoring, coaching, and retention of Black male principals in North Carolina and throughout the country.

Research Questions and Methods

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What factors are associated with job satisfaction and professional motivation for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

RQ2: What factors are associated with job dissatisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

RQ3: How do race and gender relate to job satisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

Merriam and Tisdel (2016) wrote that qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and its interactions. Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study in that it "helped the researcher and the reader understand the meaning attributed to the participant experiences" (Chetty, 2013, p. 40). A basic, interpretive qualitative case-study design was used because the researcher sought to understand the phenomenon of interest as a potential reason participating principals worked in rural settings (Merriam & Tisdel, 2016).

Purposeful, convenience and snowball sampling were used to identify ten Black male principals working in rural NC school districts. Of the ten principals that were originally identified and contacted, eight responded, and ultimately five agreed to participate in this study. The participants' locations were essential to the selection process. It was a requirement that the county in which the participants worked was considered either a Tier 1 or Tier 2 location. This designation is defined later in this chapter and explained in detail in Chapter Two.

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdel, 2016). Each interview was transcribed and a constant comparative method utilizing open and axial coding was used along with peer debriefing to access and analyze each participant's responses. This process supported the researcher's aim to describe and translate responses in search of themes related to the research questions (Merriam & Tisdel, 2016).

Data Collection

In this study, data were collected from the following sources:

- Semi-structured interviews that were recorded and transcribed via *Zoom* with five Black male principals in N.C. school districts in Tier 1 or Tier 2 counties.
- 2020-2021 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) principal demographic information found in Appendix C.
- Open ended, recorded, and transcribed responses by each of the research participants to the research questions found in Appendix D.
- NCES principal demographic data.

Delimitations and Assumptions

Several boundaries were established for this research. This study included only Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina public school districts located in counties identified as Tier 1 or Tier 2 counties by the North Carolina Department of Commerce. There were no research participants from private schools, independent schools, or public charter schools due to the absence of uniform and consistent licensing requirements to serve as principal in those settings. The data for this study were gathered during the spring, summer, and fall of 2022. This qualitative research study utilized a sample size of five participants who all served in eastern North Carolina, thereby restricting the generalizability of its findings.

It is important to explain why private schools, independent schools and public charter school principals were excluded from this study. Mike Cash (personal communication, March 24, 2021), former data analyst for the NCDPI, shared that private and public charter schools operate under different rules than traditional public schools. He also noted that the licensure data used to determine years of principal and educator experience could be erroneous because licensure is not necessarily a requirement in North Carolina to be a charter school or private school principal. Principals that do have a North Carolina license to serve as a principal often do

not provide data to update their license while working at public charter schools (M. Cash, personal communication, March 24, 2021). Also, principals in private and public charter schools are sometimes not referred to as principals but are often referred to as headmasters, schoolmasters, deans or directors.

Several assumptions were made during this study. While seeking to understand individual principals' perspectives, the researcher assumed that participants would respond truthfully to interview questions. To encourage participants to be forthcoming in their responses, they were reminded that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential. They were assured that data would be anonymized before publication. It was also assumed that the interview questions would provide usable responses from participants.

Definition of Terms

In this study, the researcher chose to provide definitions for the following words to provide clarity for the reader. These constructs provided relevance and aided in understanding this current research.

Black: A classification by the Bureau of the Census for citizens of the United States who are non-Hispanic, including those descending from any of the Black racial groups in Africa (Alston, 2018, p. 20).

Hygienes: External factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction (preventive and environmental factors such as company policy, supervision, salary, and working conditions). It should be noted that changes to or the absence of hygienes do not lead to job satisfaction (Herzberg, 2017; Seimens, 2005).

Motivators: Internal and intrinsic factors such as recognition, achievement, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself that contribute to an increased probability of job satisfaction (Herzberg, 2017; Seimens, 2005).

Principal: A school-based administrator employed by the local education agencies (LEAs) to work in an administrative leadership position in a North Carolina public school system who meets the employment and licensure criteria required by the State Board of Education (NCDPI, 2020).

School-based Administrator: Principals and assistant principals (NCDPI, 2020)

***Tier 1 County*:** The 40 most economically distressed counties in North Carolina (NCDOC, 2022).

***Tier 2 County*:** The next 40 economically distressed counties in North Carolina (NCDOC, 2022).

***Tier 3 County*:** The 20 least economically distressed counties in North Carolina (NCDOC, 2022).

Organization of the Study

The number of Black male principals serving in North Carolina schools is disproportionately low. This study focused on the motivation of Black male principals working in rural North Carolina school districts. Chapter 1 introduced recent national and North Carolina demographic data that highlighted the lack of diversity among school principals and provided the background and statement of the problem.

Two theoretical frameworks were introduced in Chapter 1: Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory and Bell's interest convergence theory. These frameworks provided a foundation for analyzing principals' motivations. The chapter also gave an account of American education

before and after *Brown* to highlight the unintended consequences of the *Brown* decision as a possible explanation for the low numbers of Black male principals since that ruling.

In Chapter 2, the researcher provides a context for the meaning of the word 'rural'. Owing to the absence of a generally accepted definition, this study used the term 'rural' to refer to Tier 1 and Tier 2 North Carolina counties. Also, Chapter 2 reviews studies on the following topics:

- Current data about Black male principals
- North Carolina D.R.I.V.E. Task Force
- Current research on the lived experiences of Black male principals
- Concerns about the Black male teacher-to-principal pipeline
- Unintended consequences of *Brown v Board of Education*
- Historical context following the *Brown* decision
- Benefits of Black male principal leadership
- Historic and current challenges facing rural education in America
- Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory
- Bell's interest convergence theory

Chapter 3 details the research methodology for this study, including research design, participant selection, interview protocol and methodology, the transcription process and procedures for data analysis. The researcher thought it imperative to include a subjectivity statement to increase research validity. Chapter 4 gives the results of the study to identify motivating factors affecting Black male principals in rural North Carolina. Chapter 5 discusses the study's findings and implications for superintendents, human resource departments,

community stakeholders, the NC Department of Public Instruction, NC General Assembly, NC State Board of Education, NC legislators as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The limited presence of Black educators generally, and Black male principals in particular, raises concerns. Research has shown that there are numerous benefits associated with having Black male leaders in schools. These benefits relate to enhancing the academic achievement and social well-being of students of color. Despite this knowledge, the number of Black male principals in North Carolina schools remains low, and is troubling due to the growing number of students of color in North Carolina's public schools.

Current Data About Black Male Principals

NCES (2017, 2021) reported that between 1993 and 2017, Black principals' representation never exceeded 11% nationally. Though better than the national average, in 2019 Black principals held 26% of the state-funded principal positions in North Carolina (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2019). However, in line with the national trend through the 2020-2021 school year, the North Carolina data changed little. Data from that year showed that 24% of North Carolina public school principals, excluding those working in public charter schools, were Black (see Appendix C) and Black males accounted for only 8% of the state's principals (M. Cash, personal communication, March 24, 2021). Of the 115 North Carolina LEAs, 54 had no Black males serving as principals in 2020-2021. As previously stated, the focus of this study was to investigate motivational factors affecting Black male principals in rural North Carolina.

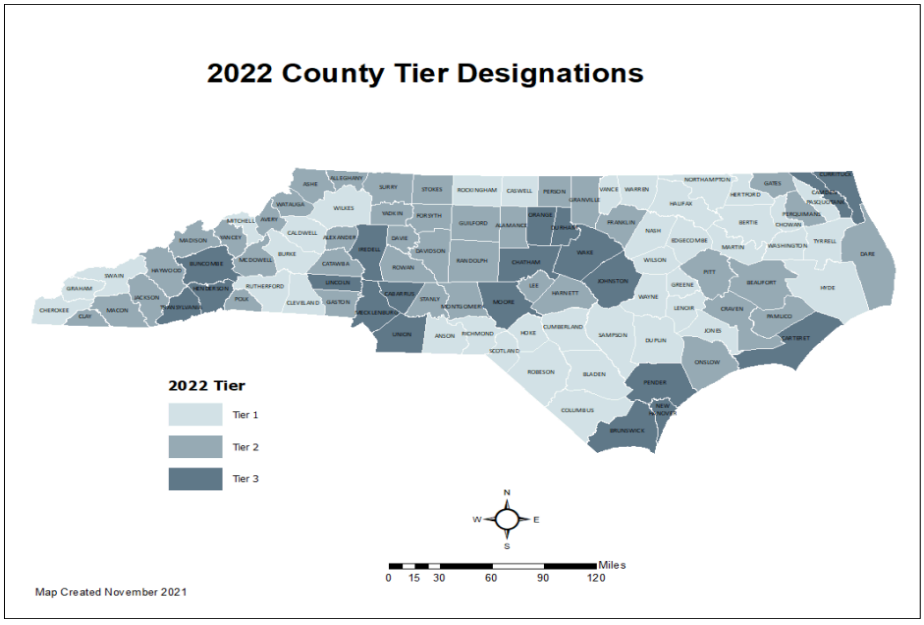
There is no clear definition of the word "rural" in research (Younis et al., 2022, p. 7). However, there are numerous definitions used by federal agencies to define what they mean by 'rural' (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2008). For this study, Tier 1 and Tier 2 designations developed by the NCDOC were used. Since 2007, North Carolina has used three levels to designate county development. Tier rankings use four factors:

- Adjusted property tax base per capita for the most recent taxable year
- Percentage growth in population for the most recent 36 months for which data are available
- Median household income for the most recent twelve months for which data are available
- Average unemployment rate for the most recent twelve months for which data are available

The NCDOC (2022) ranks the state's 100 counties annually based on economic well-being and assigns each a tier designation. The 40 most economically distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2 and the 20 least economically distressed counties as Tier 3. For purposes of this study, 'rural' will refer to Tier 1 and Tier 2 North Carolina counties (see Figure 1 and Appendix B).

Figure 1

NC Department of Commerce County Tier Rankings in 2021



According to 2020-2021 North Carolina data, the greatest concentration of Black male principals in North Carolina were in low wealth, high poverty Tier 1 counties (see Table 1 and Appendix C).

Table 1

2020-2021 NC Principal Demographics by Tier Designation

NC Economic Tier	Number of Black Male Principals	N	Concentration
Tier 1 Counties	78	648	12%
Tier 2 Counties	57	899	6%
Tier 3 Counties	62	918	7%

N = Total number of principals in the economic tier

DRIVE Task Force

In December of 2019, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 113 to establish the Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) Task Force. The task force was composed of parents, educators, administrators, education advocates, state and local governments, the University of North Carolina System, the North Carolina Community College System, and employers with a presence in North Carolina. Its purpose was to improve recruitment, retention, development, support of educators of color, and identify priorities for increasing educator diversity in the state (Hunt Institute, 2021).

Research has shown that having a teacher of the same race/ethnicity as students can have positive impacts on students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement (Hunt Institute, 2021; Klopfenstein, 2005; Milner, 2006a). Minority teachers may have more positive expectations for minority students' achievement than non-minority teachers, and Black male educators as role models can improve educational outcomes for diverse students (Hunt Institute, 2021; Klopfenstein, 2005; Milner, 2006a).

Despite this initiative and supporting research, the percentage of Black educators continues to be low, which influences the Black educator-to-principal pipeline. In 2001, African

American teachers represented 6% of the public school teaching force, whereas African American students represented 17.1% of the public school student population (Orfield & Lee, 2004; Tillman, 2004). By 2021, the disparity remained: African American teachers represented 7% of the public school teaching force, while African American students represented 13% of all students (NCES, 2017). Noting the importance of the task as related to North Carolina's students, the DRIVE report notes, "Whatever they see is what they'll be" and, conversely, "Whatever they do not see is not what they will strive to be" (Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 3). These comments are based on research that will be discussed below.

A study by Bartanen and Grissom (2019) supported the need to increase teacher racial diversity. In their study, they shared that Black principals increase the probability that a newly-hired teacher is Black by 5-7 percent and also decrease the mobility of Black teachers, thereby increasing their retention rates by 2-5 percent. Their study supported the importance of diverse school leadership positively influencing hiring and retaining a diverse teaching staff. These impacts could positively impact the diversity of educators within the teacher-to-principal pipeline.

Lived Experiences of Black Male Principals

The literature on Black male administrators is limited (Henderson, 2015; Ononuju, 2016; Smith, 2019; Tillman, 2009; Younis, et al., 2022). In a qualitative study investigating the leadership practices of three Black male principals. Ononuju (2016) listed several shared areas of focus: Goal development, harnessing staff energy, facilitating communication, instructional management, commitment to educating African American children, compassion for and understanding the students they work with, and confidence in the ability of all African American children to learn.

In addition to a common focus, the three study participants were also similar in that they were all from the areas where they worked and attributed their success to their having social capital and an intimate knowledge of the people and the community (Ononuju, 2016). Ononuju (2016) described an incident in 1971 when students walked out of a high school to protest having no Black teachers or administrators of color. Their principal and vice-principal were removed and replaced by a White principal and a Black vice-principal. "Mr. Blackshire," the alias of one of the three study participants was hired as the vice principal because they "knew that they needed somebody big and Black in there that could help control the kids" (p. 103). Not only was he "big and Black" but was native to the community. He eventually became the principal and attributed his success to his love for the students, commitment to the community and desire to hire a diverse staff .

Research articles on the lived experiences of Black male principals are scarce. *Google Scholar* and *ERIC* searches using "Black male principal" yielded minimal results. In a 2014 qualitative study, Moultry (2014), a Black male educator, identified common motivations for pursuing the principalship. Five common motivating factors were: Love for children and the desire to make a difference in their lives; the perception that their upbringing was an asset to their effectiveness; guidance from people around them; belief in their ability to hire quality teachers; and their ability to care and build relationships. In this study, Moultry (2014) shared his story growing up in an urban setting and described his journey from college to educator to principal. His motivation aligned with the motivational factors given in the study.

Grubbs (2021) conducted a qualitative study of five Black male principals to better understand their experiences. One of the observations he drew from his study was that Black male principals were typically employed in schools with inadequate funding, outdated

curriculum materials, subpar facilities, and non-fully credentialed teachers. Black principals are also heavily involved in helping students overcome socio-emotional traumas which often take them away from the "core business of education" (p. 36). Grubbs' (2021) study revealed ten major conclusions:

- Black male principals were tasked with pushing students beyond deficit thinking.
- Black male principals often lead low performing, high poverty schools and most often do not get the support they need to help deal with discipline and student behaviors.
- It is a challenge for Black male principals to focus on instructional leadership, teaching and learning due to a lack of social services, counseling, and behavioral health support.
- Black male principals still report challenges leading predominantly White staff and often have their intelligence and instructional knowledge questioned.
- Black male principals received less support than White principals and need to work twice as hard to gain the trust of district administration and the teachers they lead.
- Black male principals had to intentionally search for and find other Black male principals to serve as mentors because they felt that local non-Black mentors could not relate.
- A prevalent thought is that Black male principals continue to lead schools with limited resources and financial support.
- Black male principals experience high levels of macro/microaggressions from White staff.

- A common thought is that code switching (how Black men navigate in and out of White mainstream cultural environments) is part of Black male principals' daily experiences.
- The life experiences of Black male principals influence their leadership styles and situational leadership is the norm (Grubbs, 2021, p. 110).

Such studies (Grubbs, 2021; Lomotey, 1987; Milner & Lomotey, 2021; Smith, 2021) focused on the lived experiences of Black male principals and revealed that they are relational, focused on parent and community involvement, building nurturing environments for students, and committed to students' academic performance. Many Black male principals possess leadership qualities that have been influenced by their lived experiences. According to researchers (Lomotey, 1987; Milner & Lomotey, 2021; Smith, 2021), their leadership qualities are influenced by their childhood experiences. Many view their leadership as a ministry and endeavor to protect students socially and emotionally. They are also able to distinguish between education and schooling, which was defined as "a societal imperative necessary for the maintenance of existing relations of power and privilege" (Milner & Lomotey, 2021, p. 166). Education, conversely, was "a process that locates the members of a culture within their cultural history, facilitates the transmission of knowledge, and affirms the cultural identify" (Milner & Lomotey, 2021, p. 166). The low number of Black male principals nationally and in rural North Carolina schools can deprive students of the benefits listed above.

Concerns About the Black Male Teacher-to-Principal Pipeline

Bristol and Goins (2019) described the barriers that hinder Black male educators, and found that Black males were only "2% of the [national] teacher workforce" (p. 52). The team wrote that Black male teachers and principals described sometimes being perceived by their

colleagues and subordinates as incompetent, non-credible, and lacking intelligence and instructional knowledge.

Bristol et al. (2019) and Grubbs (2021) also noted a variety of barriers and challenges facing Black male educators and principals. For example, when workers are a numerical minority (such as Black male teachers and principals in schools), they may experience boundary heightening, a phenomenon which exploits workers. A few examples include the accentuation and exaggeration of cultural differences, a lack of trust, respect, and communication, macro/microaggressions, and the expectation to do or achieve more with less human and financial capital.

Because most principals come through the teaching ranks, an increase in Black male teachers is needed in order for there to be an increase in Black male principals. King (1993) expressed the critical importance for students to see that teachers of color exist and can assume leadership roles in schools as schools can influence student worldviews. King (1993) reiterated a perspective that there is a need for representative role models to help ensure that student aspirations, achievement levels, and sense of self-worth advance rather than diminish. Without sufficient exposure to minority teachers, students of all colors and nationalities may characterize the teaching profession and the academic enterprise generally as better suited to Whites since the predominant race of professionals in the field of education has been and continues to be White.

If students fail to see teachers of color, especially Black male teachers, they are less likely to aspire to become teachers. If they do not pursue education, then the number of Black male teachers in the principal pipeline will remain insufficient. A study by Brown and Butty (1999) identified factors that predicted the educational and career aspirations of these teachers. Their study suggested that two main factors influenced educational and career aspirations of

Black male teachers. These were the desire to impart knowledge and choice of undergraduate majors. The authors deduced that these two factors influenced recruitment and retention of Black male teachers and could also encourage these men to pursue a graduate degree in education or seek positions of greater responsibility within public school systems. A decade later, Byrd et al. (2011) still found the shortage of African American male teachers to be catastrophic and the racial homogeneity of the teacher workforce has never been more apparent.

Unintended Consequences of *Brown* and Historical Context Following *Brown*

Blacks visualized education and schools as tools to help liberate themselves from the ills of society. In a 1930 address to the segregated Alabama State Teachers Association (ASTA), Dr. John Hope, a notable civil rights leader and president of Morehouse College said, "The need of the Negro is pressing" and "if they are going to work out of it at all, it will have to be done through teachers" (Hale, 2018, p. 444). Black educators worked diligently to protect the interest of their Black students. However, as a result of the *Brown* ruling, "the law did not protect Black teachers and administrators from being fired and systematically pushed out of their profession" (Oakley et al., 2009, p, 1576).

There were numerous unintended consequences as a result of desegregation. For example, before 1954 between 71,000 and 82,000 Black teachers taught over 2 million students across the country. Within a decade of desegregation 38,000 teachers lost their jobs and over 39,000 more lost their careers by 1972 (Hale, 2018; Peters; 2019; Tillman, 2004). These numbers constitute a loss of 46% of all Black teachers within two decades following *Brown* (Hale, 2018; Peters, 2019; Tillman, 2004). Hale (2018) theorizes that this is due in part because, "African Americans were essentially not incorporated into the reconstructed and desegregated system of public education that developed in the wake of *Brown*" (p. 451). In 1963, North Carolina had

227 Black principals but only eight in 1970. In Arkansas, the number of black principals decreased from 134 to 14. In 1965, South Carolina had 114 Black principals and 13 in 1970. From 1968 to 1970, Tennessee's number of Black principals went from 73 to 17 (Grubbs, 2021, p. 32).

Smith (2021) found that documentation of the historical contributions of Black educators and Black principals prior to *Brown* is scarce. Documentation of the lived experiences of Black male principals is even more rare. There was a time when the Black principal was the 'linchpin' in Black communities (Smith, 2021). Before *Brown*, this is reported to have been the case. Black male principals embraced their role as protectors and defenders in their communities (Smith, 2021). According to Hudson and Holmes (1994), "the loss of African American teachers in public school settings has had a lasting negative impact on all students; partly because *Brown* was implemented by White American policy makers" (p. 389) and as a result, African Americans failed to receive the results they envisioned following the *Brown* decision.

There once existed a noticeable concentration of Black educators and administrators in our nation's schools, especially in the segregated states in the Southeast. Almost 38,000 Black educators and administrators were dismissed between 1954 and 1965 in 17 Southern states following *Brown* (Hale, 2018; Peters; 2019; Tillman, 2004). There has been a drastic decrease in the number of Black educators from then to now, and the Black teaching force continues to decline significantly despite numerous national efforts to reduce this shortage (Milner & Howard, 2004). According to data from the NCES *School and Staffing Survey* (2012), only 10% of the 89,810 principals in the nation were Black. The 2015-2016 *National Teacher and Principal Survey* (NCES, 2016) reported that of 90,410 U.S. principals, only 7.8% were Black

males. From 1993 to 2018, the national average of Black principals in the U.S. never exceeded 11% (NCES, 2020). These low percentages, however, were not always the case.

Fenwick and Akua (2013) concluded that the African American teacher shortage is not a new problem and its repercussions for the school leadership pipeline was sure to manifest. There is data from 1975-1985 reporting that the number of Black students who chose teacher education as a major in college declined by 66% (Tillman, 2004). From 1984 to 1989, new teacher certification requirements and teacher education program admission requirements resulted in displacing 21,515 Black teachers (Tillman, 2004). By 2001, African American teachers represented only 6% of the public school teaching force, whereas African American students were 17.1% of the public school student population (Ethridge, 1979; Hudson & Homes, 1994; Lee & Orfield, 2004; Tillman, 2004).

Fenwick and Akua (2013) wrote that in the South, the issues of shortage and under-representation have their roots in desegregation efforts. They found that desegregation, while an important and necessary civil rights achievement, ushered in unlawful firings and displacement of tens of thousands of African American teachers and principals, many of whom were males (p. 236). Hale (2018) wrote:

> White school officials made the message clear that open and public endorsement of the Civil Rights Movement would not be tolerated and the contracts of Black educators and principals who advocated for equity and equality did not have their contracts renewed. Black educators fought for their jobs individually and corporately through teacher associations; however, states openly dismissed or suspended teachers for open affiliation with "dissident associations'' (Hale, 2018, p. 450).

The results and rights envisioned after *Brown* were more elusive than ever. All statistics still reinforce the understanding that our nation's schools continue to experience the fallout from the decimated pipelines of students-to-teachers, and teachers-to-principals (Fenwick & Akua, 2013).

Benefits of Black Male Principal Leadership

Historical evidence exists that supports the benefits of diverse school leadership prior to *Brown*. African American communities benefited from the presence of Black principals and educators. Walker (2000) contended that, the social, emotional, and academic success of Black children were at risk as a result of *Brown* and though schools in the South were segregated, they were valued by the Black community. For many African American students, teachers represented surrogate parents who acted as disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and overall advocates for their academic, social, cultural, emotional, and moral development (Milner & Howard, 2004). According to Milner (2006a), much can be learned about the successes of Black teachers with Black students. He contends that an increase in the Black teaching force could "potentially be advantageous for Black students and all students" (Milner, 2006a, p. 101) thus positively influencing the Black teacher-to-principal pipeline.

Boucher (2015) used the sociological concept of homophily, which is the tendency of similar individuals to associate and interact more positively with each other. The researcher argued that it is a prominent feature of social networks and that the structure of the social networks in which individuals interact has been shown to significantly influence many social outcomes such as segregation, information transmission, and learning (p. 235). This concept is useful for this study as it reinforces other research supporting the benefits of Black male principals.

Considerable research suggests that all students, but especially Black students, benefit from Black teachers and administrators (Fenwick & Akua, 2013; Hawley & Nieto, 2010; Howard, 2010; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Lomotey, 1987; Milner, 2006a; Smith, 2021). Pollard (1997) found that similarities between African American children and Black principals fostered care and concern. Howard (2012) also confirmed the impact of African American male faculty on the educational experiences and development of African American male students. Howard (2012) concluded that the congruence of race and gender provided the opportunity for adolescent African American boys to expand their possibilities as they established an identity that feels most authentic and true to self. African American men in school leadership are able to help African American male students understand what it means to be both African American and male. Further, they can help African American male students understand the ways in which they are both gendered and racialized within and outside the school and offer support on how to navigate this process (Howard, 2012).

Fenwick and Akua (2013) found that Black male principals can eradicate negative stereotypes about African American men by believing that academic and social benefits would accrue to students who experienced this exposure. The investigators suggested that all children benefit from experiencing a diverse school staff because this diversity teaches them the vital lesson that intellectual authority is not exclusively White.

Historical and Current Challenges Facing Rural Education in America

Biddle and Azano (2016) explained ‘place’ as the field of education research developed. Place is the meaning one gives to space; the focus of this study is on schools in rural space. Agreement has fluctuated over whether the concept of place is a valuable lens through which to view educational issues (2016, p. 300). In their research on rural education and rural schools,

Biddle and Azano (2016) described rural school districts as those located in areas that lacked urban amenities and were characterized by the absence of population, assets, and culture. Rural has been described as the antithesis of modernity and as places where industrial progress is slow (p. 314). Before the *Brown* decision, most southern public school districts were rural. In addition to desegregation and civil rights issues, a variety of problems plagued rural schools. They commonly had difficulties adapting to changing circumstances and educating "for a future in which sustainability of rural life [was] uncertain" (p. 300). 'Rural' is not a monolithic term but is influenced by geographical context and, according to Younis et al. (2022), is difficult to understand without truly knowing the place.

The limited percentage of Black male principals is seen throughout the U.S. but is especially evident in rural areas. North Carolina is no exception, as the state is predominantly rural, having a large number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties. While *Brown* had a major impact on the rural south, desegregation has not been the region's sole educational challenge.

Since the early 1900s, rural America has experienced many challenges. These challenges have included economic decline, boom-and-bust cycles of opportunity for young graduates, increased fiscal constraints, eroded tax bases, and budget cuts (Biddle & Azano, 2016). During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the U.S. Commission on Country Life issued a report outlining ways to make rural life in America more attractive. As a result of the report, prominent education reformers, "deplored the state of rural schools, referring to them as the 'rural school problem'" (Cubberly, 1912, p. 75).

The 1909 Country Life Commission produced a report that identified and defined the rural school problem as teacher recruitment, retention and training (Biddle & Azano, 2016). From 1909 to 1944, the rural school problem was evident and, in 1944, the first White House

Conference on Rural Education was convened and standards for every child were established. These were:

- An education that bridged the gap between home and school
- Health services
- Vocational guidance
- School lunches
- Public transportation
- Sufficiently prepared teachers and school leaders who understood rural life. (Biddle & Azano, 2016, p. 304)

One solution to the rural school problem included recruiting and training rural teachers to provide a better education in hopes of decreasing youth migration to cities (Biddle & Azano, 2016). As in the past, rural schools face unique challenges today. Rural communities continue to experience young people leaving, usually as a result of local economic decline. A multitude of factors have contributed to 'rural' being considered by many to be the antithesis of modernity and progress (Biddle & Azano, 2016).

Theoretical Frameworks

Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory

What makes Black male principals working in rural North Carolina school districts commit to their current role? Shortly following the first White House Conference on rural education, researchers began investigating human motivational factors towards work. Specifically, they investigated what factors contributed to job satisfaction. Flanagan (1954) formulated the critical incident method for a motivator-hygiene theory. Flanagan's critical incident technique observed the influence of behavior on several domains. Two of these involved

both motivation and leadership attitudes of workers. More specifically, the critical incident technique involved a set of procedures that aided in collecting data for analyzing behaviors that revealed objective truths about worker performance. Flanagan's (1954) study was done based on selection process of pilots during World War II because "too often, statements regarding job requirements are merely lists of all the desirable traits of human beings" (p. 329).

Herzberg's (1959) theory emerged from Flanagan's. Herzberg (2017) studied human behavior and was interested in discovering sources of human motivation in light of contradictory research. For example, before 1954, it was assumed that policies and/or interpersonal relations contributed to worker satisfaction. Herzberg (1959, 2017) researched the sequence of events technique and termed them "critical incidents." In the study, Herzberg (1959) asked workers to describe a time when they felt good or bad about their work. The results showed that people were dissatisfied by hygienes, environmental/external factors. These findings might lead one to think that if hygienes contributed to job dissatisfaction, then the absence of or changes relating to the external factors would contribute to job satisfaction. However, this did not prove to be correct. Herzberg's (1959, 2017) work revealed that worker satisfaction originated from internal or intrinsic factors known as 'motivators'.

Herzberg (2017) found that it was important to understand the motivation of work. Herzberg (2017) found that a worker's attitude toward their work was influential toward motivational factors. Using this framework, the researcher for this present study investigated and analyzed the effect of Black principals' attitude towards their work and how it influenced their decision to work where they do. This researcher conducted interviews to uncover motivational factors and determine if any themes aligned with the motivator-hygiene theory. The researcher anticipated that the qualitative data collected from participant interviews would identify the

'hygienes' and 'motivators' of Black male principals working in rural North Carolina school districts.

Critical Race Theory

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, as rural school districts were experiencing the loss of talent to fill teacher vacancies due to the lure of "modern town life" (Biddle & Azano, 2016, p. 307), thousands of highly qualified Black educators were also being demoted or fired in the aftermath of *Brown*. Biddle and Azano (2016) wrote that between 1900 and 1945, as rural schools lost teachers, over a third of their replacements had no professional preparation and many did not have a high school diploma (p. 307). However, after the *Brown* decision:

> Many educators across the Southeast, who were the most progressively educated professionals in the communities they served, earned degrees in higher education from premier universities across the nation from programs such as the University of Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Cornell, New York University, Morehouse College and Fisk University and were not only dismissed but were simply not hired (Hale, 2018, p. 451).

Teacher education programs for Black educators in the 1920s and 1930s facilitated an intellectual climate that fostered critical insight (Hale, 2018). According to Bristol and Goins (2019), they were perceived by their White colleagues to be incompetent. Milner and Howard (2004) cited that "with desegregation came massive layoffs and demotions (p. 286). They reported that skin color was of more significance than competence. For some Black teachers, desegregation meant that their skin complexion was examined in order to decide whether they were worthy of being moved to all-White schools" (Milner & Howard, 2004, p. 289). There was the belief that darker-skinned teachers were 'too different' and lacked the intellectual capacity and ability to teach effectively. As a result, the "best" Black teachers were forced to move into

integrated schools (Milner & Howard, 2004, p. 289). This attitude can be traced to deeply rooted prejudices inherent as far back as the 1800's.

King (1991) cited the U. S. Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* ruling of 1857:

> They had for more than a century before been regarded as so far inferior that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. This opinion was at that time fixed and universal in the civilized portion of the white race. It was regarded as an axiom in morals as well as in politics, which no one thought of disputing and men in every grade and position in society daily and habitually acted upon it without doubting for a moment the correctness of this opinion (King, 1991, p. 133).

"They" in the quotation above referred to Black Americans, which comprised 2% of the American teacher workforce at the time. This is a clear indication of the depth of the bias within the system of this country.

In a study by King (1991), a short survey was given to education students to assess their knowledge and understanding of social inequity. Analysis of their short essay responses revealed how their thinking reflected their internalized ideologies that both justified the racial status quo and devalued cultural diversity. Assuming educators with similar ideologies enter the teacher-to-principal pipeline, then one can deduce that these beliefs can influence hiring, which in turn could prevent Black male educators or principals from attaining promotion.

The racial status quo referenced by King (1991) can be attributed to "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequities and exploitations by accepting the existing order of things as given" (p. 135) and a subjective identification with an ideological viewpoint that allows no other vision of society. This is termed

dysconscious racism and is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges.

Present employment demographics of educators make clear that our nation's schools are still experiencing the fallout of the disruption of the pipeline for Black male educators to advance to school leadership (Fenwick & Akua, 2013; Hale, 2018; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Milner & Howard; Peters, 2019). Dysconscious racism, critical race theory (CRT), and interest convergence theory can provide insight to the longstanding problem of Black male under-representation among principals in our nation's schools.

CRT, though not a theoretical framework in this study, complements Bell's (1980) interest convergence theory. Therefore, a brief list of its conclusions would assist in appreciating the background of Bell's work. Five recommendations have emerged from the work of CRT scholars, such as Khalifa et al. (2013). They recommend:

- Admitting that racism is an invisible norm and White culture and (privilege) is the standard by which other races are measured.
- Understanding that racism is socially constructed and expanded; an inclusive worldview is required for true social justice.
- Acknowledging the unique perspectives and voice of people of color as victors of oppression in racial matters and valuing their story telling as a legitimate way to convey knowledge.
- Engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue and discourse to analyze race relationships.
- Understanding that racism is systematic, and that many current policies and laws are neither ahistorical nor apolitical and are designed to privilege Whites and marginalize minoritized groups. (Khalifa et al., 2013)

As noted earlier, “the limited presence of African-American teachers is a current challenge displaying little promise of solution in this country” (King, 1993, p. 115). CRT advocates against the slow pace of racial reform in the United States. As “schooling in America purports to prepare citizens, CRT looks at how citizenship and race interact” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). Ladson-Billings (1998) wrote that CRT began with the idea that racism is a normal and a permanent fixture of American life, and that an inclusive worldview would be required for true social justice (Khalifa, 2013).

Bell’s Interest Convergence Theory

Bell (1980) wrote that because no conflict of interest actually existed between the races, in the years leading up to 1954, the *Brown* decision was inevitable. In other words, “the concession was motivated by self-interest and not simply grounded in disposing social inequalities (Khalifa, 2013, p. 492). Bell (1980) rejected the possibility that *Brown* was based on the declaration that the Fourteenth Amendment barred all racial lines in legislation. This amendment granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans. However, regardless of the *Brown* decision, equal citizenship, civil rights, and legal rights were not equitable. Interest convergence theory suggests that because the interests of Blacks and Whites converged (or aligned), the courts ruled in favor of *Brown*. Black people wanted quality schools and integration, while the United States wanted to reap economic and political advances at home and abroad, as well as repair U.S. prestige and leadership that had been damaged by segregation (Bell, 1980); thus, a convergence of interests. Conversely, had there been a conflict of interest between the two races, Bell (1980) theorized that the U. S. Supreme Court may not have ruled as it did. Interest convergence theory highlights the disappointments of the *Brown* decision and why

desegregation did more harm than good in some ways, such as the rapid reduction of Black teachers and principals in public schools.

Bell found a longstanding divergence of Black and White interests concerning public schools and believes that as a result, inequities continue to exist and contribute to the under-representation of Black males in the pipeline to school (and school district) leadership (Fenwick & Akua, 2013). Interest convergence theory is a component of CRT, which was part of Bell's early work and developed as a result of conversations among legal scholars of color who were dissatisfied with the pace of racial reform in the country (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Many critical race theorists supported Bell and contended that civil rights laws served the interest of Whites (Ladson-Billings, 1998). They asserted that civil rights laws and policies pass and receive support when the interests of Whites intersect with those of Blacks (Ladson-Billings, 1998). For example, before 1992, the state of Arizona refused to acknowledge a holiday to honor Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was the opinion of state officials that the holiday would be too costly. As a result, there were large scale boycotts which provided an economic threat to state revenue. The holiday became law in Arizona in 1992 because the state's interest (revenue, which was reduced due to the boycotts), converged with that of the Black community to honor Rev. King (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Bell (1980) wrote that due to the long divergence of Black and White interests concerning public schools, inequities continue to exist. Fenwick and Akua (2013) shared that

> African American male teachers are underrepresented in the pipeline to school district leadership. Prior to the Brown decision there was an abundance of Black educators and Black administrators; however, from 1954 until now, there has been a consistently steady decline. (Fenwick & Akua, 2013).

In this study, the researcher analyzed the motivations of Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina school districts and considered whether job satisfaction and/or interest convergence influenced their decision to work, serve, and remain in their current location. Interest convergence theory proposes that the interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will occur only when it converges with the interests of Whites (Bell, 1980).

Effective school leadership is important in student learning. Wood et al. (2018) contended that administrators, a key factor in supporting student achievement, are very difficult to recruit and retain in rural areas. They note that an effective principal is necessary for an effective school and "can articulate a vision that will engage teachers, parents, the district, and the larger community in the long term" (Wood et al., 2018, p. 1).

There are some who believe that effectiveness in leaders should take precedence over race, gender and ethnicity, and display neutrality. Hawley and Nieto (2010) examined several common beliefs in education. One was, "To be fair to all students, one should be color-blind and ignore racial differences" (p. 67). Khalifa et al. (2013) shared that concerning educational leadership, there is a prevailing view that only one way to lead school for all students is valid. CRT scholars note that such "colorblind approaches do not work" (p. 490). Prevailing thinking is that scholarship should be data-driven, neutral, and objective. Although color-blindness is beneficial when it means that people do not discriminate on the basis of race, it can have negative consequences when educators refuse to see their students' racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences (Hawley & Nieto, 2010).

Despite the *Brown* ruling, Bell and other researchers have found that Blacks have not experienced educational equity. In addition, the courts have been unable to positively impact the necessary social reform to implement *Brown* (Ethridge, 1979; Hudson & Holmes, 1994). Interest

convergence theory highlights the disappointments resulting from the *Brown* decision and suggests that the desegregation that followed did more harm than good. Bell added that the *Brown* decision was not supported by the President or Congress and was not enforced consistently in all states.

Bell (1980) wrote that Wechsler (1959) questioned the appropriateness of the *Brown* decision and pointed out the shortcomings of the decision. Wechsler wrote that, "courts must be genuinely principled, resting with respect to every step that is involved in reaching judgment on analysis and reasons quite transcending the immediate result that is achieved" (p. 520). Wechsler (1959) questioned the court's reasoning and implied that empowering and guaranteeing equity and equal educational opportunities for Blacks was not related to the decision. Wechsler's early analysis that *Brown* had little to do with the Fourteenth Amendment and was instead based on the idea that "segregation caused injury to Black children" (Bell, 1980, p. 521). In that light, segregation was a denial of equity, which Bell described as "untenable" (p. 521).

Wechsler's challenge to *Brown* was whether Blacks were interested in associating with Whites, or if they were interested in equality. Bell (1980) argued that though many Whites agreed that Blacks were citizens and entitled to constitutional protection against racial discrimination, few were willing to recognize that segregation could not be effectively remedied without altering the status of Whites. Bell (1980) understood that true equality would require Whites sacrifice their "racism-granted" privilege. Bell's interest convergence theory meant that the interest of Blacks in achieving equality could be reached only when it converged with the interests of middle- and upper-class Whites (Bell, 1980). Thus, Bell argued that *Brown* was not about creating legislation that would benefit, uplift, and empower Blacks.

The *Plessy v. Ferguson* case at the end of the nineteenth century enforced the 'separate but equal' doctrine for decades, but in 1954 there was a shift from the fight for equality to the

commitment to desegregation. Bell (1980) argued that the *Brown* decision was of economic and political value to Whites. Segregation was not seen as a hindrance to Black equality, but rather a barrier to Southern industrialization (p. 525). Bell (1980) believed there to be a steady divergence between Black and White interests over public education and therefore concluded that inequities would continue to exist. He supported Wechsler's fear that, "if there is not a change of course, the purported entitlement of Whites not to associate with Blacks in public schools may yet eclipse the hope and the promise of *Brown*" (p. 528).

Summary

Researchers found that Black male principals are under-represented both nationally and in North Carolina. Their participation in the education work force since *Brown* has continued to decline. Research supported the belief that all children benefit from experiencing a diverse school staff because diversity teaches children that the role models of intellectual authority are not exclusively White (Fenwick & Akua, 2013). Further, findings from other studies suggested that the professional experiences of Black male principals in rural areas can be characterized as challenging. The challenges include:

- Schools generally, and especially rural schools, are increasingly segregated (Ayscue & Woodward, 2014)
- High levels of poverty and student underachievement
- Schools are underfunded and under resourced
- Success warrants rewarding opportunities to perform similarly in other challenging situations (Alston, 2018; Anderson, 2009)

This literature review found that the number of Black male principals in U.S. schools continues to be low for various reasons. The literature reviewed for this study has been sorted by theme and each of these themes is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Sources from the Literature

Themes	Sources
Recent national and North Carolina data on the demographic make-up of school principals & the NC Drive Task Force	Cash, 2021; Hunt Institute, 2021; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020; NCDPI, 2020; Public Schools of North Carolina, 2019
Lived experiences of Black male principals	Grubbs, 2021; Henderson, 2015; Lomotey, 1987; Milner & Lomotey, 2021; Moultry, 2014; Ononuju, 2016; , Smith, 2019; Smith, 2021; Tillman, 2009; Weiner & Holder, 2019
Concerns of the Black Male Principal Pipeline	Bartanen & Grissom, 2019; Bristol & Goings, 2019; Brown & Butty, 1999; Brown, Byrd et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999; Fenwick & Akua, 2013
Unintended consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* and Historical Context of U.S. Black Educators	Alexander & Alexander, 2019; Ethridge, 1979; Fenwick & Akua; 2013; Fultz, 2004; Hale, 2018; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; King, 1993; Milner & Howard, 2004; Oakley et al., 2009; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Peters, 2019; Tilman, 2004; Walker, 2000
Residual benefits of having Black male principals	Alston, 2018; Anderson, 2015; Bartanen & Grissom, 2019; Boucher, 2015; Fenwick & Akua, 2013; Hale, 2018; Hawley & Nieto, 2010; Howard, 2010; Howard, 2012; Klopfenstein, 2005; Lewis & Toldson, 2013; Lomotey, 1987; Milner & Howard, 2004; Milner, 2006; Milner & Lomotey, 2021; Pollard, 1997; Smith, 2019; Smith, 2021
Historic and contemporary descriptions and challenges facing rural education in America	Anderson, 1978; Ayscue & Woodward, 2014; Biddel & Azano, 2016; Cromartie & Buchotltz, 2008; Cubberly, 1912; Hardre' & Sullivan, 2008; NCDOC, 2022; NCES, 2006; NCES, 2013; Wood et al., 2018; Younis, et al., 2022
Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory	Flanagan, 1954; Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971; Herzberg, 1959, 2017; Siemens, 2005

Bell's Interest Convergence & Critical Race Theory, Dysconcious Racism	Alston, 2018; Bell, 1980; Khalifa et al., 2013; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1998

The next chapter details the methods used to collect and analyze the data collected in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Study and Design

The researcher utilized an interpretive, qualitative method to investigate the motivational factors affecting Black male principals in rural North Carolina. Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory (1959) and Bell's interest convergence theory (1980) are the theoretical frameworks for this study.

Ravitch and Carl (2021) defined qualitative research as using interpretive research methods to understand individuals, groups, and phenomena in contextualized ways to understand how people make meaning of and interpret their lived experiences. This study aligns with the criteria for a case-study described by Hancock, Algozzine, and Lim (2021) in that it:

- Focused on describing, documenting, or discovering characteristics of an individual, a group of individuals, an organization, or phenomena.
- Provided data to answer questions that focus on describing, documenting, or discovering characteristics of an individual, a group of individuals, an organization or phenomena under investigation.
- Included data collection strategies such as participant observation, interviews, field notes, and on-going analysis, which are appropriate for and consistent with the purpose of the research.
- Met expectations related to validity, reliability, and manageable generalizability.
- Included data handling strategies such as categorizing, recombining, and cross-checking appropriate for and consistent with the purpose of the research.
- Provided data to answer questions and lead to conclusions that will support theory expansion and improved practice (Hancock, Algozzine, and Lim, 2021, p. 6).

Case-study research is also useful for understanding complex social issues from the perspectives of participants (Yin, 2018). Therefore, a case-study approach is appropriate for this study as the researcher sought to discover, describe, and interpret the lived experiences affecting Black male principals in rural settings in North Carolina.

Subjectivity Statement

I am a Black male principal with 23 years of experience as an educator. My teaching career started in 1999 in one of the largest high schools in Wake County, NC, where I taught high school biology. I was hired immediately by an innovative and progressive principal who mentioned the school's need for Black male teachers. I was given a very brief walk-through, quickly introduced to staff, shown my "work space," and given my assignment. I had four classes of college preparatory biology and assigned to 11th and 12th grade students who had taken the class several times and were still failing. I remember my new principal looking me in the eyes and saying that he knew the moment he met me that I was "his guy for the job."

Towards the end of a very challenging semester, I accepted an opportunity to return home to Cleveland County, NC and serve in the school district where I had attended school. I served as an administrative assistant in one of the local elementary schools. I met my new principal during a new employee orientation session, and it was there that she shared that my assignment was to support the school administrators and help them provide support to their challenging at-risk population of students. In this new assignment, I found myself in a role similar to my initial teaching job.

After working intentionally and diligently to highlight my intelligence and the range of my talents and skill set, I was able to convince my principal to give me an opportunity to pilot two academic enrichment programs: one for students considered at-risk and another for those

considered academically gifted. It was my desire to show my principal that I could be an asset to all students and not just those who were considered at-risk. Throughout my career, I felt the need to prove to my leaders that I could educate students to become top performers.

After a year in the administrative assistant position at the local elementary school, I moved on and taught eighth-grade earth and environmental science at a local middle school. After being in that role, I was one of three teachers selected to pilot an alternative school program to serve students who received short- and long-term suspensions. During that time, I often questioned why I was consistently given challenging assignments that involved working with at-risk students instead of working with top-performing students.

After four years of serving at the alternative school, the principal of a local high school asked me to teach math. During my time working for the alternative program our test scores were sent back to our students' home schools. Our math and science scores were far above expectations. Principals wanted to know who was responsible for teaching their suspended students. They found out that it was me, and I was offered a position at one of the local high schools. I was given the opportunity to teach geometry and advanced functions and modeling (AFM). At the end of my first year there, the principal who hired me was offered a district administrator position and a new principal was appointed to replace her. The new principal provided a new assignment for me. She assigned me to teach technical math and a newly structured AFM class, both designed to capture at-risk 11th and 12th graders who needed a final math credit to graduate. I was placed again in a 'savior' role. I have served as a school administrator for 11 years: one year in a middle school, six years in high schools, and four years at an intermediate school serving 5th and 6th graders. Five of the six administrative roles for which I was hired specifically required working with at-risk students.

My time in education has given me experiences that have influenced my perspective of Black males' roles in education. I am a former Black male principal serving in a rural North Carolina school district who desires to study the motives of other Black male principals serving in similar districts in the state. I therefore hope to minimize the effect that my experiences may have on interpreting the data from my study. I am, however, aware of my subjectivity in this area. Consequently, I used two additional peer reviewers to assist with the data analysis who were not Black male principals and who both held doctoral degrees (one from Gardner Webb University and one from the University of Maryland).

Peshkin (1988) wrote, "When… subjectivity remains unconscious," they insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stake (p. 17). I do not want to be "tied to viewpoints" (p. 17) that I did not realize were being introduced during the research process. I want to be transparent and assure participants and future readers of the emphasis on the truthfulness of my research. I seek to limit my subjectivity to not mute the emic voice (p. 21), the voice of the lived experiences of the participants, by listening intently and silently during the interviews and utilizing analytic memos immediately following the participant interviews (Saldana, 2013).

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher analyzed motivational factors affecting Black male principals working in rural North Carolina public school districts. The following research questions guided the research:

RQ1. What factors are associated with job satisfaction and professional motivation for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

RQ2. What factors are associated with job dissatisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

RQ3. How do race and gender intersect with job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction factors for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

Participants

Purposeful, convenience, and snowball sampling were utilized in order to identify ten black male principals serving in rural NC school districts. Purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher selects participants because they have specific characteristics, knowledge, and experiences that are needed to address the research questions. Convenience sampling means that the researcher has relatively easy access to participants, often because of pre-existing relationships. Snowball sampling, or asking already identified participants to help identify additional participants, can also be an effective way to increase the study's sample size (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

It was a requirement that each participant identify as a Black male who worked as a principal in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 school district in North Carolina. Due to the small number and concentration of Black male principals working in such counties, and in order to preserve the privacy of participants, county names were not used. There was no attempt to limit participation by using additional factors such as years of experience, degrees, or the grade span of the schools to which the participants are assigned.

Some participants identified for this study were professional acquaintances of the researcher as a result of their participation in the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals Association and the North Carolina Association of School Administrators programs and conferences. The researcher believed that initially approaching individuals with whom they already had some familiarity would increase participation and encourage them to be forthright in

their responses. Additional participants were sought through snowball sampling. Those who agreed to participate were asked to identify additional participants.

Setting

The participants' work residences were instrumental to the selection process. It was a requirement that the county where the participants served be classified as either Tier 1 or Tier 2 as defined by North Carolina General Statute §143B-437.08. In addition, the researcher sought participants from across the eight North Carolina educational regions: Western Region; Northwest Region; Piedmont-Triad Region; North Central Region; Northeast Region; Southwest Region; Sandhills and Southeast Region. Participants in this study were identified by using the name of the region in which they serve and a numeric code (e.g., Sandhill Region Participant #1, Southwestern Region Participant #2 etc.). The following table provides an overview of the five participants.

Table 3

Research Participant Overview

Demographic	Participant #	NC Work Region
Black male principal	1	Southeast Region
Black male principal	2	North Central Region
Black male principal	3	Southeast Region
Black male principal	4	Northeast Region
Black male principal	5	Southeast Region

Data Collection

The interview protocol for this study involved a semi-structured, one-on-one interview with each participant. According to Hancock et al. (2021), semi-structured interviews are helpful because they allow interviewees to express themselves openly and from their own perspectives rather than those of the researcher. With the semi-structured interviews, the researcher asked predetermined but flexibly worded questions. The researcher asked follow-up questions to probe more deeply into issues of interest. This enabled the researcher to obtain data needed to answer the research questions (Hancock et al., 2021).

A protocol for data collection was developed for this study. The researcher sent recruitment emails to ten selected Black male principals in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to invite them to join the study (see Appendices E & F). The researcher then contacted those who agreed to participate and scheduled individual interviews at times that were convenient for them. A 45-to-60-minute, semi-structured, virtual interview was held with each participant using *Zoom*. Conducting virtual interviews addressed health precautions that existed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual interviews allowed participants from across North Carolina to more easily be included in the study. Additionally, the use of *Zoom* meant that each interview was easily recorded and transcribed.

A series of interview questions were developed (see Appendix D). These questions were divided into three categories. The first category was related to demographics. Specifically, participants were asked to verify their racial/ethnic group and gender. Additional demographic questions addressed professional service, marital and parenting status. While years of service, marital, and parenting status were not used to limit participation, this data was helpful in that it provided a more thorough description of the participants. However, due to the small number of Black male principals in the educational regions, and in order to anonymize the data, much of the

demographic data was not included in this study. The second category of interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of factors affecting their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The third category of questions sought to discover if participants' perceived that their race and/or gender intersected with their sense of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study used guidelines from Saldana (2013). An iterative process of constant comparative coding was used that involved multiple rounds of reading and coding interview transcripts. *Quirkos* was the software platform used to code and organize themes. While reviewing the interview transcripts, the researcher used *Quirkos* and two peer reviewers to identify new codes while continually reflecting upon codes already found. The researcher sought to use these reflective processes to capture the essence of each interview, thereby making sense of the participants' experiences.

A word-for-word transcript of each interview was developed using Zoom transcription technology. The use of these transcripts enhanced the accuracy of analysis. The researcher was then able to review each interview multiple times and arrange the parts of the interviews in a systematic order. Once a transcript was developed, a secure copy was sent electronically to the participant along with the video. They were provided an opportunity to provide clarification and edits.

Analytic memos were part of the data analysis process. These memos were written at the conclusion of each interview. Saldana (2013) compared analytic memos to a form of journal entry, providing the researcher a way to immediately capture thoughts about the participants, the process under investigation, and the interview itself. Saldana (2013) encouraged researchers to

write these memos as if they were writing a letter to a friend. The style of writing can be informal because the key is for the researcher to capture what they are thinking.

Anonymized PDF versions of the interview transcripts were provided to the peer reviewers which they were instructed to print and use for reading and marking. The use of hard copies allowed the researcher and the peer reviewers to engage in a process Saldana (2013) called preliminary jotting. This simply means that the researcher and peer reviewers were able to quickly make comments, highlights, and underline the transcripts. Multiple readings of each transcript were done. First, an uninterrupted reading took place in which no coding occurred. This forced the researcher and the peer reviewers to reflect upon what was said while resisting the temptation to immediately begin coding. The coding process began with the second reading of the transcript.

As the transcripts were read for the second time, the researcher and the peer reviewers met via *Zoom* and collaboratively divided the transcripts into manageable parts. This process involved marking individual paragraphs or other logical transitions between topics during the interviews. The researcher and the peer reviewers then discussed the content, engaged in preliminary jotting, wrote quick comments, underlined, or highlighted key phrases.

Three rounds of inductive coding occurred in this study, meaning that the codes were revealed and lifted from the participants' words and descriptions rather than from predetermined codes. The initial cycle of coding involved analyzing discrete parts of the transcripts. This initial cycle primarily involved the use of in vivo codes. In vivo coding meant that the participants' words were used as codes. Some descriptive coding also occurred. Saldana (2013) noted that descriptions of what occurred during the research was helpful. The entire transcripts were copied

and pasted into *Quirkos* and definitions and related examples of participants' direct quotations were highlighted and pasted into codes that were identified (i.e., 'quirks').

A second coding cycle was also used to re-organize and re-analyze the data that were coded during the initial cycle. The goal of this cycle was to develop a sense of categorial or thematic organization from the first round of coding. Pattern coding and axial coding was used during this second cycle. Pattern coding meant that the researcher and the peer reviewers examined the existing codes, sought to categorize similar codes into explanatory or inferential codes that identified emerging themes. Pattern coding was used to group similar codes into a smaller number of sets of themes. Likewise, axial coding sought to reassemble the data that were broken apart during initial coding with a focus on determining which codes in the research were the dominant ones and which were less important. Thematic coding was then used as a culminating step to seek similarities between the categories that were identified.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Specifically, they noted that trustworthiness meant that data collection and interpretations were truthful. In other words, trustworthiness relates to the accuracy and authenticity of qualitative research, serving as one way by which qualitative researchers can establish that their work is worthwhile. Through its focus on dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity, trustworthiness provides a rationale for others to accept the research findings. Their suggestions for carrying out qualitative research in a manner that enhances credibility guided this study were incorporated. First, the researcher provided detailed explanations as to how all aspects of the study were conducted. Descriptions of participants were limited so as not to compromise anonymity. Next, word-for-word transcriptions of the recorded

interviews served as the data used for analysis. Multiple readings of the data were done, along with multiple rounds of coding to enhance understanding and analysis.

A form of member checking was used as participants were provided with the *Zoom* recording and the transcript of their interviews and given the opportunity to provide any clarification. A form of external auditing was done. The researcher sought ongoing feedback from the dissertation chair and committee about all aspects of the study. Finally, direct quotations from participants, along with snippets of what was said during interviews, were used to illustrate categories and themes identified by collaborating with the two peer reviewers who both had earned doctorates and were not Black male principals.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted according to the highest standards for protecting human subjects. The study followed all guidelines of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and began only after receiving approval from the IRB. Each participant received an informed consent form (see Appendix G). Risks to participants were minimal. Participants and their responses were anonymized by using an identification code. The researcher the peer reviewers and the dissertation chair were the only people with access to data generated by this study. All data for this study were stored in a password-protected *Google* folder secured by the researcher. Participants were notified during the initial contact that their participation was strictly voluntary. Immediately before beginning the interview, participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Summary

Numerous studies support the benefits of and need for greater diversity among principals in our nation's schools. The researcher addressed the motivational factors affecting Black male principals in rural North Carolina.

This study sought to understand the experiences of Black male principals in Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties in North Carolina and how race intersects job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A basic, interpretive qualitative case-study methodology was used. This chapter described the research questions, the methods used for data collection and analysis, and the participants and settings for the study. Issues related to the protection of human subjects and the trustworthiness of the study were also addressed. Findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this basic, interpretive qualitative case-study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male school principals in rural NC school districts. In this study, the researcher examined factors that motivated Black male principals to serve in rural North Carolina counties. This study contributed to a lack in the literature on this subject. It was the researcher's hope that insight gained from this investigation would positively impact recruiting, mentoring, coaching, and retaining Black male principals in such districts and potentially others as well. This chapter gives the findings of this study related to the research questions. The research findings are organized in a way that calls attention to the credible themes found in participant interviews. The findings are presented using interpretive thematic analysis.

Themes and Findings by Research Question

RQ1: What factors are associated with job satisfaction and professional motivation for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

What motivates Black male principals working in rural North Carolina school districts to commit to their current roles? Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed several themes related to the first research question. Data derived from the transcripts revealed that research participants obtained satisfaction and were professionally motivated by the following: Their ability to embrace their profession and work assignment as a major component of their identity; their belief that they had a moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural North Carolina communities; their belief that they could initiate systems change and have a greater impact on students' lives and achievement beyond the four walls of the classroom.

Profession and Work Assignment. The initial interview questions required participants to formally introduce themselves and share about their families (see Appendix D). The researcher wanted to know how the participants would introduce themselves if asked to do so. As related to RQ1, analysis of research participant interviews revealed that their ability to embrace their profession and work assignment were satisfaction factors. Four of the five research participants mentioned their name and that they were the "proud principal of" their current school. Participant 2 was the only principal who omitted his title as principal in his response. He stated that, "I typically don't say that I'm a principal." He shared that, "I typically name like all different parts of my identity: a Black male, a brother, a friend, a son" and because he was a Black male, he did not want to simply say that he was a principal. He wanted people to understand, "what he was up to in the world" which, according to him was "beyond the role of school" and that he was, however, "excited about" what the "future could be for young people."

The second interview question (see Appendix D) asked participants about their families. All participants had taken pride in their role and responsibility as principals. When asked about their families, four participants discussed their personal and family ties and/or perspectives about education. Participant 1 shared that he was raised by his mother who was a classroom teacher for 39 years. This allowed him to see the inner workings of the school system. He confessed that his passion for education and his identity as an educator were highly influenced by observing his mother and watching her "navigate through the classroom." He said that "education [ran] through [his] blood." Participant 3 introduced himself as the "proud principal" of his current school and, like Participant 1, included his family's ties to and perspectives relating to education. He stated that his wife served as an educator and they both shared the perspective that, "there's

no getting around teaching… and in my house, it's all about teaching" which is "the mainstream for [his] household" and, for them, "family and education sort of runs right there together."

When asked to share about their families, Participants 2 and 4 explained their families' conviction that education was the way out of poverty. As Participant 4 shared about his family, he went into depth explaining that his father, who was a farmer, did not want him or his siblings to work while they were young, but to focus entirely on education so that they could eventually go to college and "have a better life." Participant 2, the only participant who did not have North Carolina roots and did not share his role as principal during his formal introduction, explained life growing up "in the depths of poverty [on the southside] projects" of an urban city in Virginia. He expressed gratitude for his family who made sure he had everything he needed when life got hard and encouraged him to "take a chance and go to college" which he explained was his "clear lane out of the depths of poverty." When asked to formally introduce themselves and share about their families, all participants included education as a major component of their personal and family identities. Educator was not simply their profession, but a major component of their personal and family identities. Each participant expressed satisfaction in the ability to embrace their profession and work assignment as a major component of who they are.

Moral Obligation to Be a Mirror, a Window, and Advocate for Students. A second theme relating to Research Question 1 was that a source of motivation and satisfaction came from performing what they saw as their moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural counties in North Carolina. Four of the five participants were native to rural North Carolina. However, all five noted their rise from impoverished beginnings and as a result, felt morally obligated to give back. Each participant, when asked to talk about their families, explained the dynamics of their childhood. Three of the

five participants were raised by single mothers. These shared characteristics and experiences provided context to support the participants' claim that they identify with the lived experiences of many of the students they serve and are equipped to serve as mirrors. This phenomenon supports the second revealed theme that these Black male principals shared the belief that they possess a moral obligation to serve students from marginalized rural North Carolina communities.

Participant 1 openly discussed the challenges of serving in low income rural communities and shared that, "I never, you know, ran away from the assignment that I felt was my assignment to help rural students." When asked why he chose to become an educator and transition from the classroom to administration Participant 3 explained that he was "fully persuaded, not to be convinced otherwise," that [serving in his role] was his niche. Every participant mentioned their love for children as well as the need to "truly give back to society." Participant 1 shared that "working with young people who have no idea who they want to become, and [being able] to help them get there is one of my, you know, most passionate and most fulfilling parts of my job." He, and other participants, mentioned the joy of "empowering students that look like me" and they wanted to serve the students that they thought "needed [them] the most." They see themselves as mirrors and windows for their students and expressed their position that they understood students in rural settings and were able to be the voice and the "factor for them to reach opportunities they would have never imagined." Participant 1 expressed that his desire was to "set a foundation and a buoy for other students that looked like [him]."

Participant 2 shared the experiences he had with his middle school and high school principal, who was a Black male. His stated that his principal served as a mirror that "allowed me to see a future beyond just like sports." He expressed his appreciation for the principal's

ability to “see me beyond all the other stuff; my data, my discipline, and academic performance at the time” and challenged him to do the same and “invited [him] to go to school and continue to work.” He shared that through the inspiration of this principal, he “went to school” and “found a really real passion for young people” and the desire to catalyze “really bold outcomes for young people at the classroom level.” Participant 2 also shared his admiration for his former principal who “was incredibly relatable, would spend time in our neighborhood, was sharp, real clean, and drove an Audi” and that “he gave us like an image [a window] of like what our lives could become.”

Participant 5 described himself as “a kid who was unique and different.” He mentioned that “people would say that I was bad, but I would say that I was inquisitive and asked a lot of questions.” He considered his current students as a reflection of who he was as a student. He said that when he was a student “he had a mind of his own, would say what he felt like saying without thinking” and “that’s typically what I see in my kids today.” He drove an hour each day to get to work and believed that he has a lot to offer by “being in the trenches, working in and giving back where [he] came from.”

Participant 4 expressed the need for elementary students to see Black male principals in leadership. He spoke about the look of astonishment on the faces of his PreK and kindergarten students when they see him for the first time in their classrooms. While he understood that they are new to the school experience, he shared that when he enters a classroom, they often ask, “Who are you?” He said that it often takes them a while to “process having a Black male in their classrooms, walking around the school building with a necktie and jacket on every day.” He believes that “it is important that we are in the building,” serving in capacities other than “custodians or bus drivers. . . We need Black males in our system in leadership positions” so that

students can see that "we are capable" and that they too could serve in a school leadership capacity one day. Each of the five research participants expressed satisfaction in serving as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural counties in North Carolina.

Initiate Change and Have a Greater Impact on Students' Lives. A third theme relating to RQ1 was the shared belief that they could initiate systemic change and have a greater impact on students' lives and achievement beyond the classroom. When asked why they chose to become educators and what influenced their decision to transition from the classroom to school administration, this theme was revealed. Participant 1 explained his desire to be an "agent for scholarship and change for students deemed as non-competitive."

Though these sentiments also apply to RQ2, they provide context to suggest that students attending school in rural, low wealth counties often lack "the same access as those of urban or suburban school districts." Participant 1 wanted to be an agent of change and access. He also shared that he felt compelled to catalyze a greater focus "on the technical arts and on getting students more focused on a STEM mindset" by focusing on the four E's: employment, entrepreneurship, enrollment, and enlisting. He believed that rural students needed to be better prepared for post-secondary endeavors and that he could help them by "getting to know them as a leader in developing their leadership skills." He expressed that he "wanted to see them [outside] of school and help them nurture areas where they might need to grow" and felt that "administration gave [him] more of that opportunity" than he had in the classroom.

All participants shared their support for the need to find a more systematic way to "get down to the root causes of students' struggles and identify ways to eliminate barriers to the learning and development processes." It was their belief that students of color, as a result of

current systems, are often "mislabeled because of their behaviors." As Participant 5 explained, many factors have been ignored, such as "mama worked 16 hours, boyfriend was molesting the child, or they had to take care of the baby brother or baby sister, or they don't have no food in the house." They believed there is a need for more socio-emotional learning support so that schools can do a better job providing resources for students who are dealing with all "that's going on behind closed doors." Participant 1 shared that "the social emotional learning piece is so essential, but so many people fail to recognize it for what it can bring to the classroom, especially for students of color." Participant 2 shared his perspective that students were not just dealing with the consequences of "poor family decisions" but systems that perpetuated "real strongholds that prevented us from moving beyond our current circumstances." His focus was on how to "create deep systems change."

The research participants believed that they had "agency and power" to initiate systemic change. Participant 2 expressed his disdain with considering himself a "to me" person, meaning he did not allow external factors to define or limit him, but had a "by me or through me" mindset which challenged him to have a growth mindset in the midst of every circumstance and challenge. This resulted in serious "conversations about the ills and errors of the system" such as "school cultures and climates [which] are not conducive for "building relationships and the rapport with students" that would positively influence students' achievement. Participant 1 liked to "push within [his] staff" the need to create an "environment and an atmosphere that welcome students, regardless of where they are." Participant 5 expressed the need to "shift mindsets." He shared that he "feels confident in the fact that he can help shift those mindsets" and influence much needed system improvements "when it comes to educating our Black children."

Each participant believed that schools needed leaders "willing to push the demands of systems that don't work" as it related to student interactions and support, student achievement, professional development, and resource allocation. These topics are discussed further during the analysis of research questions two and three.

RQ2: What factors are associated with job dissatisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

The researcher sought to understand what factors contributed to job dissatisfaction for Black male principals in rural school districts in North Carolina. Transcribed data revealed the following themes relating to this research question: Perceived low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students, and human capital and resource inequities in rural North Carolina counties.

Low Expectations and Deficit Perceptions of Schools and Students. Participant 1 expressed his frustration that "a lot of times in rural education our parents and stakeholders are not looking for their students to make straight A's." In his county, he shared that "parents just want to feel that their students are in a great place to learn, be safe, and enjoy." He expressed his discontent with the lack of emphasis on and low expectation for students to achieve at high levels. He shared that it was necessary for his school to place "a very strong emphasis on AP and honors classes" and to recruit students who were "not really pushed" or encouraged to pursue an honors or AP path. He attributed the lack of academic tenacity to the lack of rigor and preparation in the middle grades. He believed that it was his duty to utilize his school's academic structure and model to prepare students to embrace a more rigorous high school curriculum by implementing courses into the middle school curriculum. It was a moral imperative for him to expose students to higher levels of rigor in order for them to see that they "could do the work,"

defy the narrative that they "were at the bottom of the academic totem pole" and "be competitive with their White and Asian counterparts." He served to "break the stereotypes, break the cycle and truly display the potential that students from rural counties actually have."

The participants shared the belief that their students "need[ed] someone that believe[d] in them who actually understood exactly what struggles they [were] facing." There was a common theme that not only did rural students need champions and cheerleaders but these districts needed them also. There was the feeling "that rural schools were historically and currently underrated, underpromoted and underrepresented." They felt that that time was over and, according to Participant 4, their students could perform just as well as students from "the charters" or the "larger school districts." Participant 3 shared that he spent a significant amount of time encouraging his teachers who work with parents "who can't always see the potential of their children." He explained that his teachers often get discouraged "because of wanting more or seeming to want more" for the children they work with than do their parents. He stated that he consistently explains to his staff that "our job is to give [our students] everything that we can regardless of the obstacles," even if the parents are the obstacles. During his interview he smiled and said that as it pertained to student's growth "this is why we put in the work and [are not] bothered by hinderances, we stay focused, and we stay the course."

Human Capital and Resource Inequities. Each participant cited human capital and resource inequities in rural North Carolina counties as a dissatisfaction factor. When asked to share the journey from his previous role as assistant principal to principal, Participant 1 highlighted his shift from working in a Tier 3 county as an assistant principal to the Tier 1 counties he has worked in. He stated that, "I got to see how different the worlds were, and they were only separated by seven miles." In the Tier 1 counties he worked in, he was proud of the

accomplishments, but was disappointed that "our school systems [have to] turn water into wine" and that there was such a need for them to be "very resourceful people." He expressed that resourcefulness was necessary in order to "continue to make miracles happen in the classroom."

A common belief has been that students in rural North Carolina counties had fewer resources. When participants were asked if they believed they had everything they needed in order to be successful, four of the five participants said, "no." Participant 2 suggested that additional funding via grants and other philanthropic support was the norm for schools in Tier 1 counties. Participants 1 and 2 expressed that "the rural student doesn't deserve less, just because they have less." It was their belief that students from low SES communities needed more, and it was their obligation to try to provide it.

Each participant discussed poor leadership in their districts as a dissatisfaction factor. They discussed the challenges that rural districts have recruiting and empowering quality staff. When asked how he would craft his recruitment appeal to solicit more Black male principals to his district, Participant 5 shared that he was divided. When asked why, his response was, "I have the luxury of comparing two districts." He proceeded to share that "in the previous district [where I came from] they offered more PD (professional development)." He stated that "they pour more into their leaders and send them places and I have yet to experience that" and "where I'm at now, we [only] have monthly meetings."

Participant 1 shared similar sentiments relating to dissatisfaction about human resources. Though he acknowledged the nationwide challenge of recruiting high quality staff in schools, he expressed that Tier 1 schools "take the biggest hit" when it comes to attrition and turnover. He discussed the challenges of "not being able to keep teachers in the building and in the school system" as a result of their retreat to "other jobs or other school systems that may be able to

incentivize their employment that much more than what Tier 1 schools can offer." Participant 5 shared that at the time of the interview he had five positions open with the "majority in tested areas" that he had been unable to fill.

Only one participant was in a new building. Of the four participants who were not in new buildings three were grateful for *Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief* (ESSR) funds that schools received during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants 3, 4, and 5 received ESSR funds that helped fund major structural and aesthetic improvements at their schools.

The five research participants spoke about perceived low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students as 'hygiene' factors. Human capital and resource inequities were also mentioned as elements of dissatisfaction. In the next section, the researcher addresses the impact of race and gender as they related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors.

RQ3: How do race and gender relate to job satisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed several themes related to the third research question: Satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors relating to embracing the challenge to prove that Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina counties were educational leaders and more than disciplinarians; the satisfaction of being able to advocate for marginalized students in rural communities; handling the dissatisfaction factors of working with staff who were indifferent, disconnected, less empathetic and lacked cultural competence; and the dissatisfaction of dealing with macro/microaggressions and inequitable interactions with district leadership.

The Challenge of Proving Black Male Principals are Educational Leaders. The challenge to prove themselves as educational leaders and more than disciplinarians was both

motivating and frustrating for participants. Participant 1 expressed divided feelings. During his response to RQ3, he stated that, "I believe that still there's a level of doubt in the capacity that Black male leaders can provide outside of discipline." He explained his efforts to ensure that his teachers understood that he was not there just to be the disciplinarian but to be the instructional leader that had the capacity to point them in the right direction and provide culturally relevant "facilitative measures and methodologies" that would be useful for them to incorporate in their classrooms. He believed there was a level of approval that needed to be met as to whether Black males were adequately intellectual and organized enough to "keep the needs of teachers, students and other faculty members in line." According to him, "there's another layer that [he, along with every Black male principal] are expected to perform.

Participant 2 called that layer "the invisible tax." He expressed his sentiments by saying, "like most Black men and most like, Black principals, we are often given the invisible tax, like we come in [and] we're supposed to be responsible for school culture, climate, discipline [but not instruction]." He made reference to the "Lean On Me" narrative as the banana peel that had been shaped around the phenomenon of Black male principals. Though discontented with that paradigm, he embraced the challenge to alter the culture and the narrative.

All participants felt they had to do more in order to prove they were capable of being an effective instructional leader. Participant 3 shared that "everything [for Black male principals] has to be perfect." According to him it was imperative that he "performed on a higher level." Similarly, Participant 4 shared that not everyone "perceives you as being [an instructional leader] in the leadership position." He, as well as the other participants, had to control the narrative so as not to be "perceived as [only] the disciplinarian" and manager responsible for "books, buses and

behaviors." Though frustrated, they found satisfaction defying the narrative and highlighting their ability to be instructional leaders.

Advocating for Marginalized Students while Dealing with Staff. Each participant embraced the opportunity to advocate for marginalized students in rural communities while simultaneously having to deal with dissatisfaction factors of working with staff who were indifferent, disconnected, less empathetic, and lacked the cultural competence to effectively serve students. Participants expressed satisfaction with being able to "understand the background and history" of their students. Four of the five principals had indigenous rural roots and all five were raised in poverty. Participants 1, 3, and 5 all agreed that they were "so much more invested" in serving their counties due to their indigenous ties. They considered their "upbringing and [own] educational experience" as an asset to the communities they served and as a result believed that the students needed "someone that believed in them and understood exactly what struggles they were facing."

Participants 1, 2, and 4 questioned the cultural competence of many educators and believed their presence helped mitigate barriers to student success. Participant 1 stated that he believed "tone and the way educators approached students meant a lot to students of color." He shared the belief that when certain situations involving students are approached inappropriately, the desired outcomes are not realized. Participant 2 equated culturally relevant tone as "the language of community" and he, along with Participants 1 and 4 shared that their ability to speak the language of community makes them effective in their role as principals. Participant 4 said that "for our Black children, teachers don't understand the culture and don't understand how to relate to our kids." He then explained a few examples of teacher-student interactions that supported the thoughts that tone and language of community matter.

Participant 4 believed that his presence was essential to his school's significant 20% reduction in office referrals over a two-year period. He does not believe that a leader of a different color could have had those results. His opinion agreed with Participant 2's belief that because they were "incredibly relatable" and shared identities with their students, it was easier for them to "build trust" much faster than a non-Black male principal. During his interview, Participant 2 shared that the willingness and level of student trust, resulting from "corresponding bias" gave them an advantage that "allowed [them] to navigate certain nuanced situations in ways that other leaders would not have been able to." Analysis of participant interviews provided data to support that they experienced both satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding the opportunity to advocate for marginalized students in rural communities.

Dissatisfaction with Macro/Microaggressions and Inequitable Interactions with District Leadership. Transcripts from participants revealed dissatisfaction due to macro/microaggressions and perceptions of inequitable standards by district leadership. Three participants expressed their belief that the task of being a Black male principal "definitely comes with a lot more responsibility and pressure." This sentiment agrees with the "hidden tax" mentioned by Participant 2. They believe that their job "comes with more scrutiny." Participant 1 stated that "when you drop the ball and when you do show elements and times in which you are human, and you don't make the right decisions" the consequences are more immediate and greater. He felt the need to always be two steps ahead of the game, similar to Participant 3 who said, "you almost always feel like you have to keep your guard up; have to be on queue" because "you have to understand that there is a different standard." He also shared that as a Black male leader you have to be aware of the following: You have to handle every situation carefully; you have to be mindful of your tone; you have to be mindful of body language and gestures; and you

have to watch what you say and how you say it. He believes that for Black male principals, "everything is under investigation".

Three participants shared discontentment with having to "conform [their] ways of thinking to the way some of their counterparts [did] in order to be successful" and "not receive scrutiny from leadership or their staff" and "to get the buy-in [they] truly deserved." Participant 2 stated that he was "always living in a space where his identity was often very salient" and the burden to balance protecting his identify and serving in his role became exhausting. Participant 1 explained that "some people can't see past the color of my skin." For him, that is motivation he uses to "keep moving forward in this work." He said that "he understands the challenges that have been set before [him] and has understood them since his days as a scholar "sitting in the seat of [his] students." He "knew that [he] was not going to be favored in life so he focuses on understanding his role to lead students of all colors." Participant 3 shared that he "doesn't feel like there's anyone else in this entire world that has to work under the pressure that a Black male principal has to work under." However, he says that he takes nothing personally and stays focused on doing the right things and asking the right questions.

Lastly, the participants perceived inequitable treatment by district leadership. During four of the five interviews, the principals shared stories of inequitable standards by district leadership. They told of instances where they felt they were not treated fairly or equitably by their district leaders. They felt that "principals of a different color", according to Participant 3 would have "nothing said to or done to them." The narratives of the inequitable standards occurred in four out of the five interviews and were all situational.

Summary

This chapter provided detailed responses to interview questions that addressed the three research questions. The research questions addressed the motivational factors that influenced the participants' decision to work in rural North Carolina. The three research questions were designed to uncover factors associated with job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and motivational for five Black male principals serving in rural counties in North Carolina. The questions were also designed to investigate the intersection of race and gender with job satisfaction or dissatisfaction factors among the research participants.

The chapter analyzed participant responses to twelve open ended, semi-structured interview questions. The analysis and evaluation of the responses revealed open and axial codes which, through further analysis revealed themes that were interpreted with consideration given to the two theoretical frameworks used in this study: Herzeberg's motivator-hygiene theory and Bell's interest convergence theory. Implications associated with the research findings and recommendations for further research are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this basic, interpretive qualitative case-study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male school principals in rural North Carolina school districts. As part of this exploration, the researcher examined factors that motivated Black male principals to work in rural NC counties. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of five Black male principals who, of the 115 LEAs, serve in rural North Carolina counties. This chapter summarizes the research findings, highlights alignment of this research to other studies and the implications relating to ideals and concepts from the literature. It also discusses limitations as well as recommendations for future research.

Overview of Findings

It was the researcher's intent to investigate the motivational factors affecting Black male principals in rural North Carolina. There are not enough Black male principals in U.S. (and North Carolina) rural schools. Weiner and Holder (2019) stated that an effective principal is critical to school success and often difficult to find in many schools. Among the few Black male principals working in North Carolina, some have chosen to work in rural areas of the state. There is research that suggests that capable and qualified Black male school leaders are hard to find. However, it also suggests that there are potential candidates of color that can be identified through untapped resources such as the *Diverse Top 100* database (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, n.d.). While the number of potential Black male candidates is proportionally low, research suggests candidates do exist. For example, Appendix A includes numbers from this database, showing the results of a search for African American education majors who earned a masters' degree. The 2020-2021 data reveals 2,049 potential Black male educational leaders (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, n.d.) that could be recruited to serve in North Carolina

schools. According to Darling-Hammond and Berry (1999), the nation must replace much of its current teachers, and this recruitment period will have major implications for educational quality, equality, and the distribution of human resources. Not only could the *Diverse Top 100* database reveal a diverse array of potential principals but also a diverse array of teachers to feed the teacher to principal pipeline.

The highest concentration of Black male principals serving in North Carolina serve in rural, low wealth, high poverty counties (see Appendix B). The researcher wanted to know if this phenomenon was due to participant choice or if there were other factors contributing to their location. Herzberg (2017) found that it was important to understand the motivation of work. In the midst of nationwide staffing challenges within the education profession, this research is timely and relevant. Using Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory and Bell's interest convergence theory, the researcher investigated the lived experiences and analyzed the motivational factors of Black principals' attitude towards their work and how it influenced their decision to work where they do.

The researcher questioned whether Herzberg's hygienes, defined as external factors that contributed to job dissatisfaction or motivators, defined as internal, intrinsic factors that increase the probability of satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959, 2017; Seimens, 2005) influenced their decision to work in their current position. In the researcher's subjectivity statement, he shared his experience and observation that many Black males in education are sometimes placed in challenging roles. The researcher also wanted to know if "interest convergence" influenced Black male principal placement.

Transcription analysis took place with the three research questions in mind. The following themes were abstracted from the participant interviews. The factors associated with

job satisfaction and professional motivation for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina were:

- Their ability to embrace their profession and work assignment as a major component of their identify.
- Their belief that they had a moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural North Carolina communities.
- Their belief that they could initiate systems change and have a greater impact on students' lives and achievement beyond the four walls of classroom.

Factors associated with job dissatisfaction for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina were:

- The perceived low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students from rural counties in North Carolina.
- Human capital and resource inequities in rural North Carolina counties.

How do race and gender intersect with job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction factors for Black male principals in rural counties in North Carolina?

- Race and gender intersected with satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors with regards to embracing the challenge to prove that Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina counties were educational leaders and more than disciplinarians.
- Race and gender intersected with the satisfaction of embracing the opportunity to advocate for marginalized students in rural communities while dealing with the dissatisfaction factors of working with staff who were indifferent, disconnected, less empathetic and lacked cultural competence,

- Race and gender intersected with the dissatisfaction of dealing with macro/microaggressions and inequitable interactions with district leadership.

After multiple rounds of in vivo coding, each followed by consultation with two peer reviewers, the researcher concluded that all participants were intrinsically motivated to serve where they do. Each participant expressed a moral obligation to give back to the rural communities where they served. Four of the five principals were native to the areas where they worked. Three of the four participants with indigenous roots shared that not only did they grow up in rural North Carolina but they also went to college in rural North Carolina, which made them even more invested in the challenge to lead a school in a rural district.

Participant 1 made several statements supporting his choice to serve in his current district. For example, "I realized that I wasn't serving the group of students that needed me the most." He transitioned from a Tier 3 county where he served as an assistant principal and accepted a position to serve as principal in a Tier 1 rural county in the Southeast. I was curious to know his rationale for the transition and he shared that he moved because he "definitely wanted to serve in rural capacities."

Participant 2, the only participant who was not from rural North Carolina shared that through his journey from college undergraduate to the education profession, he fell in love with the work. He expressed that he had "been on the receiving end of equity all of his life" and while working with an education organization that concentrated on serving children from high poverty, low wealth communities, he became interested in the work and committed to do his part to create deep systems change for young people in rural communities.

Participant 3 expressed that he had found his niche and principals 4 and 5 expressed that rural communities were "all they knew." The love for the students, the challenge to change the

narrative regarding rural students and school districts, and the belief that they could initiate systems change motivated the research participants. There was no data to conclude or suggest that interest convergence was part of the motivation these participants work where they do. There were only two responses that might arguably support interest convergence. When asked why he chose to work in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 county, Participant 4 mentioned that "those larger districts had so many applicants to choose from, so in order to have a better chance to get hired, I applied for a job in a rural district." He later explained that he "was a small town guy and [he] liked small town stuff."

When participant 5 was asked why he chose to work in a rural Tier 1 school district he shared that, "I think people want to go where it's easy at and that's not my mentality," meaning he desired the challenge. Though motivated by intrinsic factors, he did share that he was solicited by his superintendent to go serve at a school facing some challenging circumstances relating to discipline, student achievement, and high teacher turnover. When asked if he believed that he was hired to enforce discipline, he responded, "I'm gonna be real with you. I think they hired me because I was a Black male." In this instance, it appears that the prerogative of the district to place a principal in this hard-to-staff school converged with this research participant's desire to be a principal. However, the data still supported the supposition that intrinsic factors were the source of his motivation, while external hygienes were the source of his dissatisfaction. Overall, the data suggest that all participants' motivation originated from intrinsic motivators, while the source of their dissatisfaction originated from external hygienes.

Research Alignment

Researchers have shown numerous benefits associated with having Black male leaders in schools. These were noted in Chapter 2. Before *Brown*, schools were segregated, but were valued

by the Black community (Walker, 2000). There is currently a deep level of apathy and poor achievement among students of color in many of our nation's schools. Each participant spoke to the increased level of engagement from students of color in their schools, which they attributed to their presence. Their responses agreed with claims that diversity in schools had positive impacts on students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement (Hunt Institute, 2021; Klopfenstein, 2005; Milner, 2006a).

Milner and Howard (2004) stated that for many African American students, teachers and administrators represented surrogate parent figures, counselors, role models and overall advocates. These same sentiments were expressed as satisfaction factors by each principal. Boucher's (2015) concept of homophily, the tendency of similar individuals to associate and interact more positively with each other, was supported in this study as the participants discussed the benefits of having a shared experience and being able to speak the language of community. They believed this positively influenced students to trust them and they felt that they have higher expectations for minority students' well-being than non-minority teachers. Data also aligned with the findings of Fenwick and Akua (2013) that Black principals could eradicate negative stereotypes. Each participant derived satisfaction from the challenge of taking control of the narrative relating to perceived low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students in rural counties in North Carolina.

Biddle and Azano (2016) gave meaning to the concept of "place", particularly rural space. They described rural as the antithesis of modernity and as areas characterized by the absence of many of the amenities found in urban areas. This narrative suggests that rural areas lack resources and often experienced the "out migration" of talent. Alignment exists for this

narrative in that four of the participants mentioned their dissatisfaction with inequitable human resource access and other allocations.

The DRIVE Task Force expressed concern about the minority student-to-teacher and teacher-to-principal pipelines. They wrote that, “Whatever they see is what they’ll be” (Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 3). All participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of Black male presence in school and district leadership. They each expressed the challenge of having to prove their ability to be an instructional leader. However, they were all satisfied with the challenge to prove their worth. They each expressed the sentiment that students of color needed to see them serving as a leader. Bartanen and Grissom (2019) found that racial diversity among teachers needed to be expanded. The team found that Black principals increased the likelihood that a newly hired teacher was Black by 5-7 percent. Increased diversity among school leadership could increase the diversity among with teacher pool, which could help diversify and possibly increase candidates in the teacher-to-principal pipeline.

The nineteenth century French novelist Karr wrote, “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” As the researcher explored factors contributing to employment satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the data corresponded with research on the lived experiences of Black male principals found in the literature. Ononuju (2016) concluded that Black male principals focused on goal development, harnessing staff energy, facilitating communication, instructional management, and commitment to the ability of African American children. This list aligns with the intrinsic factors revealed from the themes related to Research Question 1. Not only was there alignment with Ononuju’s (2016) study but with the study by Grubbs (2021), who observed that Black males were typically placed in schools with inadequate funding, outdated curriculum materials, subpar facilities and teachers who were not fully credentialed.

The data revealed themes for Research Question 2 confirmed Grubbs (2021) areas of significance. Three participants needed to use ESSR funds to pay for needed repairs and upgrades at their schools, and for meeting staffing challenges. They also mentioned the need to be "heavily involved in helping students overcome socio-emotional traumas" as a result of the lack of SEL support in their schools stemming from an inequitable distribution of resources. Lastly, Grubbs identified ten major areas of importance (2021) in his study and each aligned with a dissatisfaction factor among the five research participants. The results of the study yielded ten important findings: "(1) Pathways for Success; (2) Challenges Poverty/Support; (3) Instructional Leaders; (4) Challenges leading White Staff; (5) Trust; (6) Mentors; (7) Innovation/Finances; (8) Macroaggression; (9) Code-Switching; and (10) Black Male Identity" (Grubbs, 2021, iii).

Regardless of the dissatisfaction factors, participants were committed to leading their current schools due to internal motivational factors stemming from: their ability to embrace their profession and work assignment as a major component of their identity; their belief that they had a moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural North Carolina communities; and their belief that they could initiate systems change and have a greater impact on students' lives and achievement beyond the classroom.

Implications

The findings in this study catalyzed suggestions for practice, policy and further research. With regards to policy, leaders of local LEAs, NCDPI, the NC General Assembly and NC Legislators should seriously consider their position relating to diversity and inclusion. Because most principals come through the teaching ranks, an increase in Black male teachers is needed in order for there to be an increase in Black male principals. The researcher strongly suggests an in-depth analysis of the teacher-to-principal pipeline. It would be beneficial for NC policy makers

to revisit the Teaching Fellows Program and make an intentional effort to include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). If students fail to see teachers of color, especially Black male teachers, they are less likely to aspire to become teachers. If NC policy makers would focus on making the education profession attractive there could possibly be an increase in teacher candidate diversity which could residually help diversify the pool of potential principal candidates. If diverse students choose not to pursue education, especially Black males, then the number of Black male teachers and candidates of color in the principal pipeline will remain insufficient. The researcher recommends that district superintendents and HR directors lobby and encourage the NC General Assembly and state legislators to broaden and revisit policy surrounding the Teaching Fellows Program.

If district and state leaders embrace a position of neutrality then there could be no motivation to address the lack of school leadership diversity. The United States Supreme Court gave states the instructions to integrate schools as quickly as possible; however, because the local leaders failed to understand the need to keep leaders and teachers of color in these roles in newly integrated schools, change was delayed. Further research that supports the positive impact of Black male principals on student achievement is needed. Research exists that supports the notion that all students benefit from the presence of Black male teachers and leaders; however, a considerable amount of the research is qualitative in nature and may not withstand the scrutiny of those who embrace a position of neutrality. Many who embrace the position of neutrality suggest that the quantitative measures of the benefits are statistically insignificant. It is the position of this researcher that if advocates for greater diversity presented quantifiably significant measurable benefits of Black male leadership in our schools then change would take place

quicker. Therefore, it is suggested that rigorous research further investigate the benefits of Black male school leadership on a wider scale.

As mentioned during the overview of findings, there are potential candidates of color that can be identified through untapped resources such as the *Diverse Top 100* database (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, n.d.). While the 2020-2021 data revealed 2,049 potential Black male educational leaders (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, n.d.) the researcher understands the low probability of those candidates relocating to serve in the State of North Carolina. Though the *Diverse Top 100* database reveal a diverse array of potential principal candidates that could feed the teacher to principal pipeline, it is the researchers suggestion that local LEAs use that database to identify colleges and universities in close proximity and encourage HR directors to aggressively express interest in speaking with their graduates.

Herzberg's (1959, 2017) motivator-hygiene theory transcends professions. During and post-Covid-19, there was a mass exodus from the education profession, we must give attention to the nation's need to replace much of its current teachers (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). An investigation of the phenomenon of leaders as "mirrors and windows" along with the study of the motivational factors of Black male educators in general is worth pursuing. A quantitative or mixed-methods study of the motivations of Black male principals in either rural, suburban, or urban settings could provide further insight that could provide valuable information that could positively impact the educator pool. A mixed methods approach across several Southeastern states, including a Likert-style survey, as well as virtual interviews would provide for a much larger sample size that would increase the probability of generalizability. Rural school districts need effective leaders and could benefit from having a greater diversity of effective leaders in order for their students to compete in this new global economy. Considering the need to increase

eroding tax bases, it would be worth investigating the influence of the presence of diverse school leadership on the decision for graduates to remain or return, find employment and establish families in rural communities.

Conclusion

The number of Black male principals serving in North Carolina schools is disproportionately low. The highest concentration of Black male principals in the state of North Carolina work in low wealth, high poverty rural school districts. The researcher's personal experience as a school principal served as a catalyst for this study. In a district with 30 schools, he served for 8 years as the only Black male principal. The researcher noticed that Black male principal colleagues that he met during state conferences and events shared similar experiences. They were also few in number and served in specialty, low wealth, high poverty schools. These lived experienced served as motivators for this study. This study focused on the motivation of a sample of these principals working in rural North Carolina school districts. The purpose of this basic, interpretive qualitative case-study was to explore the lived experiences of Black male school principals in rural NC school districts. The researcher examined factors that motivated Black male principals to work where they did. Data analysis of the open-ended, semi-structured interviews revealed that the five participants served in their current schools and districts by choice. The data revealed that as far as job satisfaction factors, participants were satisfied and motivated to serve as a result of the following:

1. Their ability to embrace their profession and work assignment as a major component of their identity.
2. Their belief that they had a moral obligation to serve as a mirror, a window, and an advocate for students from marginalized rural North Carolina communities,

3. Their belief that they could initiate systems change and have a greater impact on students' lives and achievement beyond the four walls of classroom,
4. Embracing the challenge to prove that Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina counties were educational leaders and more than disciplinarians.
5. The satisfaction of embracing the opportunity to advocate for marginalized students in rural communities.

The data also revealed several job dissatisfaction factors:

1. The perceived low expectations and deficit perceptions of schools and students from rural counties in North Carolina,
2. Human and material resource inequities in rural North Carolina counties,
3. The challenge to prove that Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina counties were educational leaders and more than disciplinarians,
4. Working with staff who were indifferent, disconnected, less empathetic and lacked cultural competence,
5. Dealing with macro/microaggressions and inequitable interactions with district leadership.

This study contributes to the minimal body of research investigating Black male principals in rural schools. Considering current data trends and knowledge with regards to the number of Black male principals in rural North Carolina, the number of Black male principals in North Carolina remains low. Further study about these findings is warranted and needs to be part of the conversation regarding the state's public education. It is the researcher's hope that insight gained from this investigation would positively impact recruiting, mentoring, coaching, and Black male principal retention in these districts, and potentially all districts. To sum up these

findings, district leaders would be wise to look beyond their leaders and even their teachers and encourage their students of color to consider careers in education. This was where the seeds were planted for the researcher as well as four of the five Black male rural principals who participated in this study. In other words, we need to invest in and "grow our own" educational leaders of tomorrow!

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APPENDIX A

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	1	Grand Canyon University	AZ	1036	253	1137	1390	14%	34%
Master's degree	African American	Education	2	Relay Graduate School of Education	NY	449	128	520	648	23%	44%
Master's degree	African American	Education	3	Walden University	MN	312	52	259	311	18%	0%
Master's degree	African American	Education	4	Lamar University	TX	268	67	239	306	13%	14%
Master's degree	African American	Education	5	Liberty University	VA	244	60	243	303	13%	24%
Master's degree	African American	Education	6	Ashford University	CA	328	24	245	269	31%	-18%
Master's degree	African American	Education	7	University of Phoenix-Arizona	AZ	193	36	207	243	15%	26%
Master's degree	African American	Education	8	University of West Alabama	AL	150	44	192	236	18%	57%
Master's degree	African American	Education	9	Western Governors University	UT	187	44	179	223	2%	19%
Master's degree	African American	Education	10	CUNY Brooklyn College	NY	166	40	124	164	18%	-1%
Master's degree	African American	Education	11	Capella University	MN	143	15	148	163	17%	14%
Master's degree	African American	Education	12	Georgia State University	GA	171	33	118	151	25%	-12%
Master's degree	African American	Education	13	Johns Hopkins University	MD	124	28	122	150	15%	21%
Master's degree	African American	Education	14	Jackson State University	MS	119	18	121	139	48%	17%
Master's degree	African American	Education	15	Arizona State University Digital Immersion	AZ	86	25	112	137	6%	59%
Master's degree	African American	Education	16	National University	CA	86	48	84	132	5%	53%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	17	CUNY Hunter College	NY	106	31	100	131	9%	24%
Master's degree	African American	Education	18	Concordia University-Nebraska	NE	0	22	101	123	11%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	19	Mercer University	GA	106	21	101	122	34%	15%
Master's degree	African American	Education	20	Nova Southeastern University	FL	103	21	100	121	22%	17%
Master's degree	African American	Education	21	National Louis University	IL	63	13	104	117	10%	86%
Master's degree	African American	Education	22	William Carey University	MS	102	31	85	116	20%	14%
Master's degree	African American	Education	23	Georgia Southern University	GA	95	16	95	111	15%	17%
Master's degree	African American	Education	24	CUNY Lehman College	NY	91	31	75	106	15%	16%
Master's degree	African American	Education	25	Louisiana State University-Shreveport	LA	57	9	96	105	20%	84%
Master's degree	African American	Education	26	Touro College	NY	76	13	85	98	9%	29%
Master's degree	African American	Education	27	Ball State University	IN	84	12	82	94	5%	12%
Master's degree	African American	Education	28	North Carolina A & T State University	NC	97	22	71	93	40%	-4%
Master's degree	African American	Education	29	Delta State University	MS	72	18	68	86	29%	19%
Master's degree	African American	Education	30	George Mason University	VA	96	9	76	85	7%	-11%
Master's degree	African American	Education	31	Arkansas State University	AR	79	16	67	83	7%	5%
Master's degree	African American	Education	31	University of West Georgia	GA	96	16	67	83	16%	-14%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	33	Northcentral University	CA	73	21	61	82	24%	12%
Master's degree	African American	Education	33	The University of Texas at Arlington	TX	84	12	70	82	7%	-2%
Master's degree	African American	Education	35	Harvard University	MA	51	26	54	80	9%	57%
Master's degree	African American	Education	36	Belhaven University	MS	50	14	64	78	26%	56%
Master's degree	African American	Education	37	Mississippi College	MS	78	21	53	74	21%	-5%
Master's degree	African American	Education	38	Concordia University-Chicago	IL	89	21	52	73	7%	-18%
Master's degree	African American	Education	39	Bank Street College of Education	NY	0	13	59	72	14%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	39	DePaul University	IL	34	15	57	72	15%	112%
Master's degree	African American	Education	39	Georgia College & State University	GA	55	28	44	72	19%	31%
Master's degree	African American	Education	42	Old Dominion University	VA	76	12	59	71	16%	-7%
Master's degree	African American	Education	43	University of Central Florida	FL	55	10	60	70	11%	27%
Master's degree	African American	Education	44	CUNY City College	NY	73	13	56	69	10%	-5%
Master's degree	African American	Education	45	Teachers College at Columbia University	NY	60	25	41	66	6%	10%
Master's degree	African American	Education	45	University of St Thomas	TX	43	4	62	66	13%	53%
Master's degree	African American	Education	47	Wilmington University	DE	60	18	46	64	11%	7%
Master's degree	African American	Education	48	Valdosta State University	GA	47	13	50	63	14%	34%
Master's degree	African American	Education	49	University of North Carolina at Charlotte	NC	55	8	54	62	17%	13%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	50	Loyola University Maryland	MD	73	14	47	61	12%	-16%
Master's degree	African American	Education	51	Montclair State University	NJ	33	15	45	60	8%	82%
Master's degree	African American	Education	51	North Carolina State University at Raleigh	NC	53	11	49	60	14%	13%
Master's degree	African American	Education	51	University of Louisville	KY	43	22	38	60	12%	40%
Master's degree	African American	Education	51	University of Nevada-Las Vegas	NV	45	12	48	60	9%	33%
Master's degree	African American	Education	55	University of North Carolina at Pembroke	NC	45	7	52	59	21%	31%
Master's degree	African American	Education	56	Mississippi State University	MS	47	14	44	58	20%	23%
Master's degree	African American	Education	56	Pace University	NY	62	17	41	58	13%	-6%
Master's degree	African American	Education	58	New York University	NY	75	16	40	56	8%	-25%
Master's degree	African American	Education	59	Concordia University Texas	TX	66	21	34	55	20%	-17%
Master's degree	African American	Education	59	Long Island University	NY	56	12	43	55	9%	-2%
Master's degree	African American	Education	61	Alcorn State University	MS	43	14	40	54	49%	26%
Master's degree	African American	Education	61	Florida International University	FL	53	11	43	54	12%	2%
Master's degree	African American	Education	61	University of Mississippi	MS	45	16	38	54	19%	20%
Master's degree	African American	Education	64	Mercy College	NY	62	9	44	53	12%	-15%
Master's degree	African American	Education	65	Regent University	VA	75	10	42	52	16%	-31%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	66	North Carolina Central University	NC	43	11	40	51	41%	19%
Master's degree	African American	Education	66	University of Pennsylvania	PA	45	13	38	51	8%	13%
Master's degree	African American	Education	68	Columbus State University	GA	52	8	42	50	25%	-4%
Master's degree	African American	Education	68	University of Memphis	TN	53	9	41	50	20%	-6%
Master's degree	African American	Education	70	University of Houston-Victoria	TX	0	4	45	49	15%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	70	University of Southern California	CA	39	9	40	49	5%	26%
Master's degree	African American	Education	72	University of Missouri-St Louis	MO	41	8	40	48	13%	17%
Master's degree	African American	Education	73	University of Arkansas	AR	0	12	35	47	11%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	74	Cleveland State University	OH	47	11	34	45	16%	-4%
Master's degree	African American	Education	74	Prairie View A & M University	TX	51	18	27	45	45%	-12%
Master's degree	African American	Education	76	Florida Atlantic University	FL	42	5	39	44	16%	5%
Master's degree	African American	Education	76	Kennesaw State University	GA	39	13	31	44	13%	13%
Master's degree	African American	Education	76	Purdue University Global	IN	0	9	35	44	16%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	76	Southern New Hampshire University	NH	0	9	35	44	8%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	80	George Washington University	DC	0	11	32	43	14%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	80	Lindenwood University	MO	47	7	36	43	13%	-9%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	80	Wayne State University	MI	66	10	33	43	18%	-35%
Master's degree	African American	Education	83	South Carolina State University	SC	0	8	34	42	50%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	83	University of Massachusetts-Boston	MA	39	17	25	42	13%	8%
Master's degree	African American	Education	85	Houston Baptist University	TX	49	5	36	41	27%	-16%
Master's degree	African American	Education	85	Northern Arizona University	AZ	0	11	30	41	5%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	85	The University of West Florida	FL	36	9	32	41	7%	14%
Master's degree	African American	Education	88	Gardner-Webb University	NC	43	9	31	40	26%	-7%
Master's degree	African American	Education	88	University of South Carolina-Columbia	SC	0	10	30	40	13%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	90	Marian University	IN	0	11	28	39	22%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	90	Saint Joseph's University	PA	0	9	30	39	10%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	90	University of North Texas	TX	49	11	28	39	7%	-20%
Master's degree	African American	Education	93	American InterContinental University	AZ	0	15	23	38	25%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	93	Sam Houston State University	TX	48	5	33	38	10%	-21%
Master's degree	African American	Education	93	Troy University	AL	0	8	30	38	22%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	93	University of Houston	TX	0	12	26	38	13%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	97	University of Alabama at Birmingham	AL	53	5	32	37	15%	-30%

Top 100 Degree Producers 2020-2021

DEGREE	RACE	DISCIPLINE	RANK	INSTITUTION	STATE	'19/'20	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	GRADS	CHANGE
Master's degree	African American	Education	98	St. John's University-New York	NY	50	7	29	36	11%	-28%
Master's degree	African American	Education	99	St. Thomas University	FL	0	11	24	35	26%	N/A
Master's degree	African American	Education	99	Texas A & M University-Commerce	TX	47	8	27	35	8%	-26%

(From: *Diverse Issues in Higher Education, n.d.*)

APPENDIX B

2022 COUNTY DEVELOPMENT TIER RANKINGS (§ 143B-437.08)

NEW TIER	COUNTY	Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita FY 2021-2022 Value	Rank	Population Growth July 2017-July 2020 % Change	Rank	Median Household Income 2019 Income	Rank	Unemployment 12 Mth Avg Oct 20-Sept 21 Rate	Rank	County Rank Sum	ECONOMIC DISTRESS RANK (#1 = most distressed)	2022 TIERS
	ALAMANCE	$89,155	32	5.02%	91	$57,963	80	5.11%	48	251	71	2
↑	ALEXANDER	$82,505	16	-1.01%	36	$54,960	72	4.46%	85	209	53	2
	ALLEGHANY	$159,224	85	-0.44%	47	$41,420	16	5.07%	49	197	50	2
	ANSON	$98,392	46	-4.72%	11	$40,826	15	6.44%	18	90	12	1
	ASHE	$158,609	83	0.50%	52	$41,542	17	4.26%	93	245	67	2
	AVERY	$269,347	98	0.24%	51	$45,823	30	4.26%	94	273	76	2
	BEAUFORT	$132,115	67	-2.00%	25	$49,410	48	4.98%	53	193	47	2
	BERTIE	$82,563	17	-6.29%	4	$37,899	4	5.79%	25	50	6	1
	BLADEN	$106,405	52	-4.74%	10	$42,260	18	5.78%	26	106	17	1
↑	BRUNSWICK	$213,524	93	10.09%	99	$63,712	87	6.25%	21	300	81	3
↑	BUNCOMBE	$159,363	86	3.08%	78	$55,448	73	4.73%	65	302	83	3
	BURKE	$84,213	20	-1.15%	35	$47,890	44	4.80%	62	161	32	1
	CABARRUS	$117,600	57	7.55%	97	$72,071	97	4.72%	66	317	89	3
	CALDWELL	$100,814	48	-0.47%	46	$48,512	46	5.29%	38	178	37	1
	CAMDEN	$116,803	56	3.76%	81	$69,610	93	4.14%	97	327	93	3
	CARTERET	$240,508	96	-0.47%	45	$60,058	82	4.29%	91	314	88	3
	CASWELL	$78,924	12	-1.65%	27	$51,240	55	5.65%	29	123	21	1
	CATAWBA	$116,392	55	2.15%	70	$53,688	67	4.95%	54	246	68	2
	CHATHAM	$156,881	82	5.89%	93	$70,258	94	3.85%	99	368	99	3
	CHEROKEE	$127,054	61	1.46%	64	$42,764	21	5.39%	35	181	40	1
↓	CHOWAN	$110,888	53	-1.32%	31	$47,126	40	5.14%	47	171	33	1
	CLAY	$178,605	90	-0.73%	38	$47,116	39	5.26%	42	209	53	2
	CLEVELAND	$98,051	45	2.51%	76	$46,012	32	5.68%	27	180	38	1
	COLUMBUS	$83,009	18	-4.84%	9	$39,531	8	6.65%	14	49	5	1
	CRAVEN	$99,088	47	-1.35%	29	$53,372	65	5.00%	52	193	47	2
	CUMBERLAND	$72,055	8	1.56%	65	$46,599	38	7.21%	8	119	20	1
	CURRITUCK	$258,837	97	8.75%	98	$70,699	96	4.37%	89	380	100	3
	DARE	$421,174	99	2.96%	77	$63,033	86	5.97%	23	285	77	2
	DAVIDSON	$89,957	34	2.09%	69	$53,924	68	4.89%	57	228	63	2
	DAVIE	$114,746	54	2.00%	68	$63,828	88	4.56%	75	285	77	2
	DUPLIN	$97,858	44	-5.98%	6	$44,929	26	4.53%	77	153	30	1
	DURHAM	$139,839	78	4.90%	88	$65,541	90	4.51%	80	336	94	3
	EDGECOMBE	$66,062	3	-3.84%	16	$40,784	14	8.52%	2	35	3	1
	FORSYTH	$101,648	49	2.29%	72	$53,054	63	5.23%	44	228	63	2
	FRANKLIN	$91,335	36	6.65%	96	$57,371	79	5.02%	51	262	74	2
	GASTON	$88,709	29	3.53%	79	$56,542	77	5.55%	34	219	57	2
	GATES	$91,623	37	-5.49%	7	$54,204	69	4.57%	73	186	44	2
	GRAHAM	$146,420	80	-2.47%	20	$45,813	29	7.15%	9	138	25	1
	GRANVILLE	$87,612	26	0.80%	58	$54,300	70	4.24%	95	249	69	2
	GREENE	$63,555	2	-1.67%	26	$44,648	24	4.27%	92	144	28	1
	GUILFORD	$101,841	50	2.49%	75	$55,820	76	6.02%	22	223	58	2
	HALIFAX	$81,714	13	-3.78%	17	$38,727	5	7.52%	6	41	4	1
	HARNETT	$70,064	5	3.57%	80	$55,619	74	5.57%	33	192	46	2
	HAYWOOD	$136,708	74	0.91%	59	$51,612	57	4.69%	67	257	73	2
	HENDERSON	$139,206	77	2.16%	71	$61,651	84	4.43%	86	318	91	3
	HERTFORD	$82,232	15	-6.28%	5	$42,374	19	6.33%	19	58	9	1
	HOKE	$71,994	7	1.62%	66	$48,420	45	6.77%	13	131	24	1
	HYDE	$449,398	100	-8.55%	1	$43,112	22	6.45%	17	140	26	1
	IREDELL	$139,872	79	5.32%	92	$68,308	91	4.92%	55	317	89	3
	JACKSON	$224,746	95	0.52%	54	$47,759	43	4.85%	60	252	72	2

APPENDIX C

2020-2021 Principal Demographics

2020-2021 Principal Demographics

			Female						Male							
LEA #	LEA Name	Economic Tier	African-American	Am. Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Two or More Races	African-American	Am. Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Two or More Races	Total	%age
010	Alamance-Burlington Schools	2	3				16		1				16		36	0.027778
020	Alexander County Schools	2					5						6		11	0
030	Alleghany County Schools	2					1						3		4	0
040	Anson County Schools	1	1				3		1				4		9	0.111111
050	Ashe County Schools	2					4						2		6	0
060	Avery County Schools	2					3						5		8	0
070	Beaufort County Schools	2	1				7		2				4		14	0.142857
080	Bertie County Schools	1	6						1						7	0.142857
090	Bladen County Schools	1	3				6		2				2		13	0.153846
100	Brunswick County Schools	3	1	1			9		1				8		20	0.05
110	Buncombe County Schools	3				1	25						16	1	43	0
111	Asheville City Schools	3	3				5						2		10	0
120	Burke County Schools	1	1				16						9		26	0
130	Cabarrus County Schools	3	3				17		1				21		42	0.02381
132	Kannapolis City Schools	3					4						4		8	0
140	Caldwell County Schools	1	1				12						12		25	0
150	Camden County Schools	3	1				2		1				1		5	0.2
160	Carteret County Public Schools	3					11	1					6		18	0
170	Caswell County Schools	1	2				2		1				1		6	0.166667
180	Catawba County Schools	2	1				13				1		13		28	0
181	Hickory City Schools	2	1				5		1				2		9	0.111111
182	Newton Conover City Schools	2	1				2						4		7	0
190	Chatham County Schools	3	2				8						9		19	0
200	Cherokee County Schools	1					7						6		13	0
210	Edenton-Chowan Schools	1					3						1		4	0
220	Clay County Schools	2					2						2		4	0
230	Cleveland County Schools	1	2				16		1				10		29	0.034483
240	Columbus County Schools	1		2			4		1				7		14	0.071429
241	Whiteville City Schools	1	1				3						1		5	0
250	Craven County Schools	2	4				11		3				7		25	0.12
260	Cumberland County Schools	1	32				28		14			1	15		90	0.155556
270	Currituck County Schools	3					8						2		10	0
280	Dare County Schools	2	1				5		1				4		11	0.090909
290	Davidson County Schools	2					23						13		36	0
291	Lexington City Schools	2	2				2		1		1				6	0.166667
292	Thomasville City Schools	2	1				1		2						4	0.5
300	Davie County Schools	2	1				9						2		12	0
310	Duplin County Schools	1	3				2						8		13	0
320	Durham Public Schools	3	24				11		13				7		55	0.236364
330	Edgecombe County Public Schools	1	2				5		4				3		14	0.285714
340	Winston Salem / Forsyth County Schools	2	20			1	29		9				19		78	0.115385
350	Franklin County Schools	2	6				3	1	1				5		16	0.0625
360	Gaston County Schools	2	4				30		2				18		54	0.037037
370	Gates County Schools	2	2				2						1		5	0
380	Graham County Schools	1					2						1		3	0
390	Granville County Schools	2	6			1	5	1	2				2		17	0.117647
400	Greene County Schools	1	1				1		1				3		6	0.166667
410	Guilford County Schools	2	47			1	37		18			2	25		130	0.138462
420	Halifax County Schools	1	4						5				1		10	0.5
421	Roanoke Rapids City Schools	1	1				3						1		5	0
422	Weldon City Schools	1	2						1				1		4	0.25
430	Harnett County Schools	2	4			1	16						7		28	0
440	Haywood County Schools	2					9						6		15	0
450	Henderson County Schools	3					11		1				10		22	0.045455
460	Hertford County Schools	1	2				2		2				1		7	0.285714
470	Hoke County Schools	1	4			1	2		3	2			2		14	0.214286
480	Hyde County Schools	1					2						1		3	0
490	Iredell-Statesville Schools	3	4				18		1				15		38	0.026316
491	Mooresville Graded School District	3	3				2		1				3		9	0.111111
500	Jackson County Public Schools	2					7						2		9	0
510	Johnston County Public Schools	3	7			1	19		5				14		46	0.108696
520	Jones County Schools	1					3						2		5	0
530	Lee County Schools	2	1			1	12						3		17	0
540	Lenoir County Public Schools	1	3				9		2				3		17	0.117647
550	Lincoln County Schools	3	1				16		1				5		23	0.043478
560	Macon County Schools	2					6						5		11	0
570	Madison County Schools	2					5						1		6	0
580	Martin County Schools	1	2				5		1						8	0.125
590	McDowell County Schools	2					11		1				2		14	0.071429
600	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	3	52		5	3	58	5	14		1		33		171	0.081871

610	Mitchell County Schools	1					3						4		7	0
620	Montgomery County Schools	2	2				8					1			11	0
630	Moore County Schools	3					17		1				5		23	0.043478
640	Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	1	4				8		9				8		29	0.310345
650	New Hanover County Schools	3	3				23	3	2	1		1	12	1	46	0.043478
660	Northampton County Schools	1	3				1		2				1		7	0.285714
670	Onslow County Schools	2					24		1				12		37	0.027027
680	Orange County Schools	3	5				2					1	4		12	0
681	Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	3	7				6		3			1	3		20	0.15
690	Pamlico County Schools	2					2						3		5	0
700	Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools	1	3				3		3				4		13	0.230769
710	Pender County Schools	3	2	1		1	6		2				6		18	0.111111
720	Perquimans County Schools	2					2						2		4	0
730	Person County Schools	2	2				5		1				3		11	0.090909
740	Pitt County Schools	2	2				18		6				9		35	0.171429
750	Polk County Schools	2					2						4		6	0
760	Randolph County School System	2	1				16						15		32	0
761	Asheboro City Schools	2	1				3	1	1				2		8	0.125
770	Richmond County Schools	1	1				8		2				4		15	0.133333
780	Public Schools of Robeson County	1	7	6			5		3	9			8		38	0.078947
790	Rockingham County Schools	1	3				11						8		22	0
800	Rowan-Salisbury Schools	2	3			2	18		4				8		35	0.114286
810	Rutherford County Schools	1					9						9		18	0
820	Sampson County Schools	1	1				8		2				7		18	0.111111
821	Clinton City Schools	1	1				2						2		5	0
830	Scotland County Schools	1	5				3						2	1	11	0
840	Stanly County Schools	2	2				13						6		21	0
850	Stokes County Schools	2					8						11		19	0
860	Surry County Schools	2					16						4		20	0
861	Elkin City Schools	(W1) & (S2)					2						1		3	0
862	Mount Airy City Schools	2					2						2		4	0
870	Swain County Schools	1					2						2		4	0
880	Transylvania County Schools	3					2						7		9	0
890	Tyrrell County Schools	1					2						1		3	0
900	Union County Public Schools	3	5			1	25		2				21		54	0.037037
910	Vance County Schools	1	6				3		5			1			15	0.333333
920	Wake County Schools	3	34	1		4	86	1	13			2	51	2	194	0.06701
930	Warren County Schools	1	2				1	1	2				1		7	0.285714
940	Washington County Schools	1	2				1		1				1		5	0.2
950	Watauga County Schools	2					3						6		9	0
960	Wayne County Public Schools	1	10				11		3				9		33	0.090909
970	Wilkes County Schools	1	1	1			12		3			1	4		22	0.136364
980	Wilson County Schools	1	6				9		3				8		26	0.115385
990	Yadkin County Schools	2					6						8		14	0
995	Yancey County Schools	2					5						2		7	0
			404	12	5	19	1,063	14	197	12	3	11	720	5		2,465

Source: NCDPI (Cash, March 24, 2021)

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. How would you respond if you were asked to introduce yourself in a formal setting?
2. Tell me about your family.
3. Why did you choose to become an educator?
4. What factors influenced your decision to transition into school administration?
5. How long did you serve as an assistant principal? Share with me your journey from your previous administrative assignments to your current assignment serving as a principal.
6. There are 115 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in North Carolina. Why are you serving in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 (rural, high poverty) district?
7. How does having a Black male principal impact the students in your school?
8. Describe times, incidents, or situations that cause you the greatest sense of satisfaction about your job. What is it about those situations that contributes to the sense of job satisfaction?
9. Do you believe that you have everything you need to successfully lead your school?
10. Describe times, incidents, or situations that cause you the greatest sense of dissatisfaction about your job. What is it about those situations that contributes to the sense of job dissatisfaction?
11. Describe times, incidents, or situations in which your job satisfaction was affected by the fact that you are a Black, male principal.
12. If there were principal vacancies in your district and you were a member of the recruiting team tasked to recruit other Black male principals to come work in your county, how would you craft your appeal? What would your appeal sound like?

APPENDIX E

Participant Recruitment Email

Greetings Mr. ( ),

I am Titus L. Hopper, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I have successfully defended my proposal to investigate "Motivational Factors Affecting Black Male Principals in Rural North Carolina" and I have received IRB approval to conduct my study. For this basic interpretive qualitative case-study, I am seeking participation from 6 to 10 Black male principals working in rural North Carolina counties.

Participation in this study would involve a 45 to 60 minute zoom interview consisting of 10 to 14 questions. The study will take place during the fall of the 2022-2023 school year. If you are willing to participate in this study please CLICK HERE and complete this short Google Form. Upon completion of the form, should you agree to participate, you will receive, via email, a consent form that will provide information regarding the purpose and implication of my study. You will be asked to read, sign and return the consent form after which you will be contacted to schedule your interview.

If you have questions at any time, please email me at thopper8@uncc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Titus L. Hopper, MSA
Doctoral Candidate - University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC
Career Readiness Coordinator - Cleveland County Schools, Shelby, NC

Privacy Notice: Email may not be strictly confidential

APPENDIX F

Snowball Method Recruitment Email

Greetings,

I am Titus L. Hopper, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I was given your contact information from a mutual colleague. I have successfully defended my proposal to investigate "Motivational Factors Affecting Black Male Principals in Rural North Carolina" and I have received IRB approval to conduct my study. For this basic interpretive qualitative case-study, I am seeking participation from 6 to 10 Black male principals working in rural North Carolina counties.

Participation in this study would involve a 45 to 60 minute zoom interview consisting of 8 to 10 questions. The study will take place during the fall 2022-2023 school year. If you are willing to participate in this study please CLICK HERE and complete this short Google Form. Upon completion of the form, should you agree to participate, you will receive, via email, a consent form that will provide information regarding the purpose and implication of my study. You will be asked to read, sign and return the consent form after which you will be contacted to schedule your interview.

If you have questions at any time, please email me at thopper8@uncc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Titus L. Hopper, MSA
Doctoral Candidate - University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC
Career Readiness Coordinator - Cleveland County Schools, Shelby, NC

Privacy Notice: Email may not be strictly confidential

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the Project: Motivational Factors Affecting Black Male Principals in Rural North Carolina
Principal Investigator: Titus Lamont Hopper
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 explore the motivational factors affecting Black male principals to work in North Carolina Schools located in rural Tier 1 or Tier 2 counties.
- You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one virtual interview using Zoom
- Should you choose to participate it will require a maximum of two (2) hours of your time.
- Risks for this study are minimal. Risks and discomforts from this research may include the discomfort of sharing your personal lived experiences as Black male principal along with the factors that are associated with job satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- The benefits of this study may contribute to the body of knowledge that may positively impact the recruitment, mentoring, coaching and retention of Black male principals in rural North Carolina school districts.
- The county where you serve will not be identified but instead the 8 North Carolina educational regions will be used so as to help maintain anonymity.
- At any time during this study you may choose not to participate

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

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Black male principals who lead and serve in rural North Carolina school districts.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a Black male principal serving in a rural North Carolina county.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

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 a one-on-one virtual interview via zoom with the principal investigator. The Zoom audio will be recorded for transcription proposes. You will be asked to commit to a maximum of two (2) hours for the virtual interview and you may be contacted by the principal investigator for follow-up.

What benefits might I experience?
You will not benefit directly from being in this study. Others might benefit because it is important to understand the motivational factors affecting Black male principals serving in rural North Carolina schools.

What risks might I experience?
Several questions we'll ask you may be considered personal and sensitive. For example, we'll ask you about your family, experiences that lead to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction and how you feel your race and gender impacts your role as principal. You might experience some mild emotional discomfort when answering these questions. We do not expect this risk to be common and you may choose to skip questions you do not want to answer. The potential to breach confidentiality exists; however, in order to minimize this risk, the North Carolina Education regions will be used and the county where you work will not be revealed in this study. This study will be conducted with the highest regards for the protection of human subjects. The study will follow all guidelines of UNC Charlotte and will commence only after receiving approval form the Institutional Review Board. Risk to participants are minimal. Participants' and their responses will be de-identified by using an identification code.

How will my information be protected?
While the study is active, all data will be stored in a password-protected data base that can be can be accessed by the primary researcher. Only other people with approval from the Investigator, may need to see the information we collect about you, including people who work for UNC Charlotte and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations. All data files will be deleted within six (6) months following the completion of this study. We plan to publish the results of this study. Participants in this study will be identified by using the name of the region in which they serve and a numeric code (e.g. Sandhill region participant #1, Southwestern region principal #2 etc.).

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.

Data in the form of the final written study may be submitted in a public repository, such as ProQuest, which is a database that houses theses and dissertations. Access to these sites are restricted to persons associated with educational institutions.

What other choices do I have if I don't take part in this study?
Participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

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. Should you choose to withdraw from this study the data you contributed will be destroyed and will not be included in the final study. The Principal Investigator, Titus Lamont Hopper, has the right to terminate participation at any time without 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 Titus Lamont Hopper at thopper8@uncc.edu, 704-692-3767 and Dr. Rebecca Shore at rshore6@uncc.edu or 704-687-8867 Ext. 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 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate

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 & Signature of person obtaining consent Date