A Critical Discourse Analysis: The Ways in Which African American Male Administrators Talk About Race and Their Roles as Administrators in Public Schools in Alabama

Mathew Germayne Epps

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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: THE WAYS IN WHICH AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ADMINISTRATORS TALK ABOUT RACE AND THEIR ROLES AS ADMINISTRATORS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA

by

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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: THE WAYS IN WHICH AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ADMINISTRATORS TALK ABOUT RACE AND THEIR ROLES AS AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL LEADERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe ways that African American males were either motivated or demotivated to become school administrators. Because African American males only represent 2% of educators in the United States, the field for African American males to become administrators were limited (Woodson & Pabon, 2016). There is a paucity of literature on African American male administrators (Grauerholz & Turner, 2017); however, research that has been done on African American male administrators were on their lived experiences.

This study was conducted in central Alabama and 10 participants who were high school administrators agreed to participate. The method for this study was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA was used to determine how language influences social practice in education. Furthermore, intertextuality was used to analyze participants discourse to determine the intertextual features of the interview data. The data was interpreted and compared based on repeated listening to narratives and readings of transcripts to discover repeated patterns in participants stories.

This study was guided from the following research question: In what ways, do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or
increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices? Through the analysis of the interviews, the findings revealed the following themes: (a) African American identity, (b) roles of African American male educators, (c) education policies and practices, (d) societal norms, and (e) motivations to become an administrator.

The findings of this study may encourage African American males to consider education as a career and current African American male educators to pursue administration. In addition, this research study may provide opportunities to discuss how policies and practices contributed to the underachievement of African American male students.

Keywords: African American male, Critical Discourse Analysis, administrator
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my cousin, Electa Vashun Allen. I miss you dearly.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank God for guiding me in my purpose and walk in life to pursue goals that I would never have imagined. I am empowered through my spiritual journey of divine purpose to leave my profession and the world in a better place than I found it. I am better by learning a great deal of how patience, commitment, and sacrifice can lead to results.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Of the 327,167,434 Americans in the United States, the 2018 Census reported that African Americans represented 13.4% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015b), there were 90,410 principals in the United States, but African American principals represented only 10.6%. In the same academic year, African American teachers were 6.7% of the total of 3.7 million teachers nationwide (NCES, 2015a). NCES (2015c) also reported that the student population was majority minorities as European American students represented 48.2% of the total population of students in this academic year. In the state of Alabama during the 2018-2019 academic year, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) (2019) reported that African American students represented 32.4% of the total number of students but only 19% of teachers were African American compared to 79% of teachers were European American. The data has shown the discrepancy in demographics of teachers and students across the nation.

According to Madkins (2011), when the student population does not match the education workforce, the issues in education are problematic. Other scholars have noted the relation between African American teachers and higher levels of achievement for African American students (Clewell et al., 2005; Clotfelter et al., 2007; Dee, 2004; Egalite et al., 2015; Yarnell &Bohrnstedt, 2018). However, because principals are the
most influential person in a school and expected to make personnel and instructional
decisions for the overall culture (Bloom & Owens, 2011; Sarason, 1982), African
American administrators are vital in educating African American students. Because of
African American principals’ deep commitment to African American students, African
American principals have traditionally set high expectations and believed that African
American students can learn despite challenging circumstances (Lomotey, 1989; Tillman,
2004c; Walker, 1996).

Even more problematic in educating African American students is the scarcity of
African American male educators in the classroom (Pabon, 2014). In comparison to the
U.S. Census (2018) report of the population of African Americans, African American
males represent 2% of the entire educational workforce (Pabon, 2014; Wilson, 2015;
Woodson & Pabon, 2016) yet, according to data reported from the Federal Bureau of
Prisons (2020), African American males represent 37.7% of prison inmates. The school
to prison pipeline has been linked in previous studies that have found that African
American male students were subject to unfair zero tolerance policies that led to
suspensions and expulsions then ultimately to prison (Giroux, 2003; Skiba & Noam,
2001). However, researchers such as Karpinski (2006) and Gooden (2012) have
documented how African American administrators have found alternative ways to
approach discipline for African American male students to keep students in the
classroom.

According to Bass (2019), African American male principals have historically
been crucial in African American education by serving in a caring role in the school and
community prior to the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954). However, since
the ruling, the number of African American males in education has dwindled over the years. Henderson (2015) has referred to African American male administrators as an endangered species while signifying the need for African American male administrators as schools become more diverse. However, due to challenges such as low expectations and poor academic preparation, African American males frequently lack the academic background to enter and be successful in college (Goings & Bianco, 2016). In addition to facing more disciplinary actions, special education referrals, and negative perceptions because of unfavorable media depictions, African American males perceive schools as institutions of oppression (Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Therefore, because of the negative experiences associated with school, African American males do not consider teaching as a profession (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011).

Madkins (2011) described the importance for African American students to see representation of themselves in the professional realm. Therefore, it is important for African American boys to see African American males in administrative roles. Consequently, the pipeline for African American male educators is scarce (Brown, 2005). Exploring how African American male principals and assistant principals talk about race and their roles as administrators may be beneficial to the literature as the findings may provide voices that have been historically under researched and systematically and institutionally silenced.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many researchers have recognized that the scarcity of African American male administrators has been problematic for African American students and how African American males in school leadership roles may contribute to the successes of African
American students (Bass, 2019; Brown, 2005; Caton, 2012; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Grauerholz & Turner, 2017; Henderson, 2015; Jenkins, 2006; Karpinski, 2006; Milner & Howard, 2004; Ononuju, 2016). Prior to the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), African American students attended schools that were overseen by African American administrators (Brown, 2005). African American administrators served as role models and were staples of their community as well as recruited, promoted, and hired African American teachers (Karpinski, 2006). However, unintended consequences of the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) led to reductions and displacement of African American administrators (Tillman, 2004b). More notably, African American males in school leadership roles have dwindled and never recovered (Ballenger et al., 2017; Brown & Beckett, 2007; Karpinski, 2006; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004; Wilkerson & Wilson, 2017). The absence of African American male administrators contributed to the tracking, placement, suspension, and expulsion of African American students (Karpinski, 2006). When African American males are in administrative roles, they have an opportunity to make an impact on education. Ononuju (2016) stated “Educational leadership plays a vital role in improving the academic outcomes of underserved and minority students” (p. 99). Therefore, African American students benefit from African American male administrators because of shared cultures, beliefs, and values (Lomotey, 1989).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe ways that African American males are either motivated or demotivated to become school administrators.
Research Questions

This Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was guided by the following central research question: In what ways, do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices? Sub questions for the study were (a): In what ways have discursive practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? (b): In what ways have sociocultural practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? (c): In what ways have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it addresses the need for African American males to consider school administration as a career choice. According to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) (2015), school administrators are responsible for ten standards of educational leadership. The standards are: (1) mission, vision, and core values, (2) ethics and professional norms, (3) equity and cultural responsiveness, (4) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (5) community of care and support for students, (6) professional capacity of school personnel, (7) professional community for teachers and staff, (8) meaningful engagement of families and community, (9) operations and management, and (10) school improvement. However, the number of African American male administrators to incorporate these standards for African American students is limited (Brown, 2005). PSEL (2015) Standard 3: Equity and cultural responsiveness
states, “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunities and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 27). The issue is that African American male students have felt unwelcomed and not supported in schools (Townsend Walker, 2012). Which in turn, contributes to the lack of African American males who consider education as a career option, and thus limits administrative opportunities to ensure professional standards are used for not only African American students but all students who are marginalized and oppressed (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

The paucity of literature on African American male administrators has been well documented (Henderson, 2015; Ononuju, 2016; Tillman, 2004c). African American male administrators bring a unique perspective to the literature of educational leadership. Although African American male administrators have a critical role in education, few studies have focused on African American males in educational leadership (Henderson, 2015). Therefore, this study is significant because it may provide some insights regarding what motivates some African American males to pursue administrative roles despite the challenges many of them face. Participants had an opportunity to describe and discuss their motivation for becoming administrators and other factors such as policies and practices that either motivate or hinder more African American males from the profession.

**Limitations of the Study**

Bryant (2004) described limitations as restrictions that are created by the methodology of the research. Therefore, limitations of this study were data collected, and the analysis included include only 10 African American male administrators who met the
criteria set by the researcher. This study was not be generalizable to all school administrators and only included principals and assistant principals and no other aspects of school leadership (central office, teacher leadership, etc.). Researcher bias was a component of the study of African American male principals and assistant principals, and validity strategies included member checking, peer debriefing, and rich descriptions (Creswell, 2013).

**Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations are what confines this study (Bryant, 2004). The delimitations to this study were that the participants included only African American male principals and assistant principals in central Alabama. Interviews were the only data included this study.

**Assumptions**

The underlying assumptions for this study were that the participants would respond truthfully and accurately as African American male administrators to answer the central research question. It was assumed that American male administrators in central Alabama were actively and eagerly participate in this study. Lastly, the research questions bracketed my biases to accurately depict participant perspectives.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework to structure this study included Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT provides a scaffold for understanding how race frequently affects decision making and provide historical implications for African American male administrators. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) noted the significance of CRT and how this framework provides opportunities for people of color to provide dialogue and raise critical questions
in educational research. Delgado and Stefancic (2007) noted the importance of providing storytelling and counter-storytelling for African Americans to challenge racial obstacles that exist in majoritarian methods. According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), European American privilege is shared through majoritarian stories and silences the experiences of African Americans. Majoritarian methods are expressed through storytelling of the majority and include “the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdom, and shared understandings that persons of majority race bring to discussions of race, including legal ones” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007, p. 139). Therefore, CRT provides counter storytelling methods for African American male administrators to share their perspectives on how race is engrained in educational policies and practices. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) asserted that discussions on educational inequalities are silenced because of a racialized society that continues to marginalize the oppressed. Thus, the voices of African American male administrators provided discourse in the education field that has systematically silenced African American males.

**Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined to help the reader better understand their context in this study.

- **Administrators:** Administrators are those who have served as principals or assistant principals in public schools. At times, referred to as school leaders in various contexts.

- **African American:** African American is a term used to define natural born United States citizens who have a majority of their origins in the original people of sub-Saharan Africa (Wright, 1995). Fairchild (1985) described African American as a
term that “formalize the African connection and…increase a consciousness in Pan Africanism” (p. 54). For the purpose of this study and the alignment with terminology used in the literature, the term African American has been used and participants were given the opportunity to identify themselves as either African American or Black.

- **Black**: Black is a term that describes the race of someone who may not consider themselves as African Americans but share characteristics with population groups of darker pigmentation of skin color. The characteristics of Black people includes variations of phenotypes that include multitudes of variations and heterogeneity. Furthermore, the term Black has been used as a construct to identify a social category but not ethnicity (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2002). The difference between terms Black and African American is well noted in this study and participants had the opportunity to select the term that most accurately defines them.

- **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**: This is a controversial Supreme Court decision to integrate schools that many researchers point to as the reason for a decline in African American educators in teaching and administrative positions (Tillman, 2004b).

- **Caucasian** – According to Bhopal and Donaldson (1988), Caucasian is a term created for the White race of mankind derived from the Caucasus. Participants in this study used this term synonymously with White and European American.

- **Code-Switching** – Code-switching is a practice in discourse that involve signal changes by alternating grammatical systems or subsystems, or codes (Nilep, 2006).
• **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** - Critical Race Theory emerged as an important point in history on racial politics that has influenced the field of education and offers critical perspectives on race, the causes, consequences, and manifestations of race, racism, inequity, and the dynamics of power and privilege in education (Taylor et al., 2009).

• **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** – a qualitative analytical approach to critically describe, interpret, and explain ways that discourse construct, maintain, and legitimize social inequalities (Mullet, 2018; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

• **European American** – European American is a term used to define natural born United States citizens who have European ancestral origin (Bhopal & Donaldson, 1988). Participants in this study used this term synonymously with Caucasian and White.

• **White** – White is a term that describes people who are of European or of European extraction that is characterized by light complexion (Bhopal & Donaldson, 1988). Participants in this study used this term synonymously with Caucasian and European American.
**Organization of the Dissertation**

This study discussed ways African American male administrators are either motivated or demotivated to pursue school administration. The study was organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 included an introduction of the study with a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, definition of terms, and organization of the dissertation. Chapter 2 focused on a review of the literature, which is focused on the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) in a pre and post era. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 included the thematic analysis of the findings, and Chapter 5 included implications for practice and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
Review of Literature

Introduction

This review of the literature is about African American males in education from previous research and to understand the aspects of school leadership as it relates to their experiences as students, educators, and administrators. The historical context of this literature review revolves around the court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Multiple databases and variations of key terms associated with African American males, African American male educators, African American male students, and African American male principals and school leaders were used to research peer reviewed articles.

A comprehensive overview of the impact of *Brown v. Board* (1954) had on African American education was discussed and summarized. Researchers have explored how African American education has been impacted as a result of desegregation orders (Ballenger et al., 2017; Bass, 2019; Brown, 2005; Brown & Beckett, 2007; Karpinski, 2006; Lutterbie, 1974; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004; Wilkerson & Wilson, 2017). Furthermore, an overview of the education, challenges, and treatment of African American males in schools as students, educators, and administrators provide a broad perspective on African American males in education.
Historically, African American male educators have been crucial in the education of students who are socially disadvantaged and disenfranchised (Bass, 2019). Milner and Howard (2004) described the roles of African American educators as surrogate parents, disciplinarians, role models, counselors, and advocates for African American student’s academic, social, cultural, emotional, and moral development. Because of the social, behavioral, and emotional challenges of African American male students, African American male school leaders are sought to fulfill administrative positions in urban schools to mitigate the problems associated with this population of students (Henderson, 2015). Henderson (2015) stated “The urban educational system has increased its reliance on African American male school leaders to remedy these issues, mainly because of the gender and racial connection they have to troubled African American male students” (p. 50). Despite the positive influence African American male educators have on African American male students (Henderson, 2015), African American males make up only 2% of the education workforce in the United States (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Wilson, 2015; Woodson & Pabon, 2016). The absence of African American males employed in education continues to be an issue that has contributed to the underachievement for African American male students in America (Wilson, 2015). Unfortunately, the limited number of African American male educators is dismal because of the obstacles African American males face in schools (Brown, 2005).

The challenges African American male students face include referrals to special education and discriminatory disciplinary practices when compared to all other groups of students (Caton, 2012; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). These challenges have contributed to the school to prison pipeline (Caton, 2012). Brown (2005) noted that African American
male students begin to face obstacles as early as elementary school that create a greater barrier to achieve academic success. Researchers have noted how low academic expectations of African American male students have been a constant theme in previous studies (Fergus et al., 2014; Jackson, 2011; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). According to Wallace and Gagen (2019), the low expectations of African American male students contributes to a decrease in the number of African American males who finish high school prepared to enter and be successful in college.

**African American Educators in the Pre-**Brown Era

The impact of African American educators in the African American community prior to the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) has been well documented among researchers (Jones, 2002; Khalifa, 2012; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004; Tillman, 2004a). The African American educators’ connection to their communities was one of the motivating factors for making decisions in the best interest of African American students (Tillman, 2004a). Milner and Howard (2004) described the importance of community as cultural. African American educators were more familiar with African American students because of having lived in the communities they taught, which led to the development of meaningful relationships with students and families outside of school (Milner & Howard, 2004). The community relationship extended beyond the classroom and into churches as African American educators attended the same churches as the families of their students (Milner & Howard, 2004). African American educators remained in the same segregated schools for decades and often taught generations of families including siblings from the same family (Lyons & Chesley, 2004). The cultural connection African American educators shared with African
American students went beyond school and impacted the community and generations of families.

African American students attended schools that were managed by experienced, dedicated, and concerned African American educators who had better credentials than their European American counterparts (Milner & Howard, 2004). Walker (2013) further noted African American educators’ impact on African American education through their collective involvement in organizations to share beliefs about equality and justice (Walker, 2013). Because African American educators risked being attacked personally and professionally, African American educators created organizations that protected their collective voices of beliefs and values (Walker, 2013). Also, African American educators were vital co-participants with the National Advancement Association of Colored People (NAACP) to seek justice for African American children (Walker, 2013).

Prior to desegregation orders, there were approximately 82,000 African American teachers in the United States (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004). Foster (1996) reported that 50% of African American professionals were educators in the 1950s. College educated African Americans considered education as a rewarding career and 60% of college graduates who pursued education degrees were African American (Karpinski, 2006). African American educators maintained high expectations for students and demanded excellence despite the circumstances of segregation (Walker, 2013). African American educators would work overtime to ensure students learned, and they saw potential in African American students (Walker, 1996; Tillman, 2004a). African American educators understood their mission to equip African American students in a
African American schools were managed by African American principals who recruited and hired African American educators to teach (Irvin & Irvin, 2007; Karpinski, 2006). In addition to managing schools, African American administrators were often perceived by community members as family counselors, financial advisors, community leaders, and politicians (Tillman, 2004b). The community looked to African American administrators for guidance because of the respect that accompanied the value of educators in the African American community. African American principals and school leaders were given autonomy to make personnel decisions, implement programs, and raise money because of the lack of interest from European American school boards and European American superintendents (Tillman, 2004b). African American principals provided vision and direction for the school, assisted with the inclusion of relevant curriculum, and communicated the ideals of the school (Tillman, 2004b).

Booker T. Washington was one example of an African American school leader who impacted education for African Americans prior to Brown v. Board of Education (1954). Lewis (2014) provided a detailed account of one of the most influential and prominent African American male administrators in history, Booker T. Washington. Booker T. Washington advocated for vocational education that included agricultural and domestic work for ex-slaves. As a result of his work, he founded Tuskegee Institute where he served as principal from 1881 until his death in 1915. Despite his efforts, Washington was often criticized because of his stance to accommodate provisions that were set by Southern European Americans. Other African American leaders felt that
Washington’s advocacy for vocational education for ex slaves was a systematic attempt to keep African Americans from a liberal education. His critics debated that vocationalism would place African Americans back in the mode of slavery working in the fields, but instead needed young people to become professionals such as teachers, lawyers, and other established professions. Much of the funding from European American philanthropists went to Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes, but other African American leaders felt that funding should have been contributed to black liberal art institutions. Washington saw the opportunities of vocationalism as a vehicle for academic knowledge, skills, and values. Lewis’s (2014) narrative portrayed how Booker T. Washington navigated criticisms while teaching former slaves. Lewis (2014) described his efforts:

He had to teach the former slave how to be free and work itself was central to this project. His approach to the curriculum was necessarily counterintuitive. He had to restore in freed slaves the impulse to see in their own toil a reflection of their intrinsic worth. Work itself was ennobling. It could restore identity and dignity taken away by slavery. Given the precarious nature of this task, single-mindedness was required, and on this count, Washington was more than ready for the task. (p. 203)

Although Washington faced criticisms from other African American leaders, his service to provide vocationalism for African Americans was a major contribution to African American education. According to Norrell (2009), Washington’s focus on the development of human capital was a good strategy, especially during the times when protests were not conducive to the environment for evolutionary change. Because of
Booker T. Washington’s vision and connection to the community, he was able to provide African Americans with education in agriculture and other vocational studies that continues today.

**Implementation and Post-Brown Era**

Because *Brown’s* purpose did not include integrating educators, some of the effects of the Court’s decision impacted African American educators as well as African American students (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Randolph and Sanders (2011) suggested that the efforts of desegregation to minimize barriers to equal educational opportunities and resources for African American children failed, and subsequently provided more problems than solutions. Some of the failures of desegregation mandates were due to the courts lack of experience to handle resistance from local school board (Ethridge, 1979). Because of the lack of oversight and data from the federal government to monitor desegregation policies, African American education suffered shortfalls (Ethridge, 1979). As a result, judges were hesitant to interfere with the autonomy of local school board policies because *Brown* was more of a civil rights legislation than an education decision (Ethridge, 1979). Ethridge (1979) claimed the lack of data collection from desegregation prevented a true picture of how the ruling impacted African American education, which demonstrated a limited scope of the overall impact of *Brown*. However, scholars have debated the intent of *Brown*.

Researchers of Critical Race Theory (CRT) debated the intent of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) as an attempt to appease the domestic and world considerations instead of moral reservations of African Americans (Gooden, 2012). Because of the political climate at the time of the ruling, Derrick Bell, a CRT scholar, debated the
reliability of desegregation orders because of the converged interest of European Americans (Khalifa et al., 2013). Bell debated that the ruling of Brown was motivated by self-interest of European Americans who opposed the ruling to preserve their image as human rights advocates and not to ensure social equality (Khalifa et al., 2013). Milner and Howard (2004) stated, “While many Blacks celebrated the Brown ruling of 1954, it was met with widespread resistance on the part of many White schools” (p. 292). Because of slow and resistive responses to desegregation mandates, desegregation policies were ineffective and had detrimental effects on African American students, teachers, and administrators (Milner & Howard, 2004). Bass (2019) suggested that the loss of valuable African American teaching capital was a direct result of the challenges faced by African Americans in education.

Many African American educators were demoted or fired because of ineffective desegregation orders handed down from the ruling of Brown (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Meidl, 2019; Tillman, 2004b). African American educators teaching licenses were evaluated based on standardized testing and teacher education certification programs were eliminated from colleges and universities (Tillman, 2004b). Culturally biased teacher proficiency tests were used to control the entry of African Americans into the teaching profession and to determine which teachers would be transferred to the newly integrated schools (Stennis-Williams, 1996). Therefore, a large majority of African American educators were screened (Stennis-Williams, 1996). Some factors that impacted African American educators in many ways included: all-Black schools closed, termination of Black educator organizations, failure to uphold Brown mandates, the right to vote, and an increase on the reliance of standardized testing were used to keep African
American educators from teaching positions (Tillman, 2004b). Between the years of 1954 to 1964, African American teachers went from 82,000 to 38,000 nationwide (Ethridge, 1979; Hawkins, 1994; Holmes, 1990; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004). The African American influence to encourage African Americans to become educators and school leaders was diminished because of the limited number of African American educators after the ruling of Brown (Karpinski, 2006; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). African American educators were the primary decision makers for African American education in the pre-Brown era (Brooks, 2009). However, after Brown, African American administrators were removed from policy making and instructional leadership roles (Karpinski, 2006).

Desegregation brought unforeseen challenges that diminished the influence and roles of African American educators and school leaders (Brown, 2005). Years later, African American educators and school leaders continue to make an impact in the current educational arena; however, schools remain segregated and achievement gaps remain (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). School desegregation was meant to increase better educational opportunities for African American students; instead, school desegregation has increased white flight along with a loss of African American teaching and administrative positions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

There were some unintended consequences of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) that had a direct impact on the African American community and schools (Tillman, 2004b). Traditional African American Schools (TAAS) that were operated and staffed by African Americans teachers, administrators, and school boards were terminated (Brooks, 2009). The prestige and respect for African American educators
began to diminish (Simon & Johnson, 2015). African Americans who would consider education as a career dwindled because of the treatment of African American educators (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Although African American educators were once respected in the community prior to desegregation, many were being persuaded to not consider education as a career choice but to choose career pathways that garner more respect and financial reward (Milner & Howard, 2004; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Another consequence from desegregation included the relocation of African American educators and middle-class families. Jenkins (2006) described Black flight as the migration of African American families who moved to European American suburbs because of integration. The effects were that teachers no longer lived in the communities with their students which caused a disconnect between teachers, parents, and students (Jenkins, 2006). Research by Wilson (1988) supports the idea of Black flight. Because African Americans educators and middle-class families left the African American community, communities suffered economically and left other families in impoverished conditions (Tillman, 2004b; Wilson, 1988). This caused many poor parents, primarily single moms, to raise children in the community without the help or guidance from African American educators, mainly males, who once lived in the same communities (Wilson, 1988).

Despite the challenges in a post Brown era, African American educators can still have an impact on schools with a focus on the community (Khalifa et al., 2016). African American teachers and administrators were successful when they managed schools that were in close-knit communities and met the needs of their students by investing into students’ futures (Bass, 2019). When African American principals were engaged in the
community and brought community members into the school setting, partnerships were created to address the community’s issues which advocated for community-based goals (Khalifa et al., 2016). Furthermore, African American school leaders strategized to form community partnerships because African American school leaders recognized that strength of the community and not individual efforts were needed to bring change (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). As political, social, and instructional leaders, African American school leaders understood the value of community to ensure that African American students were better served (Randolph & Sanders, 2011).

For example, Ononuju (2016) conducted a study of African American school leadership through the discourse practices of African American male administrators in an urban setting. Ononju (2016) noted how one African American male administrator’s connection to the community along with knowledge of the people and systems to the community assisted in the academic success of students who return to serve in the community. Because of the belief in community, the former principal had students who returned to work for him at the school (Ononuju, 2016). The expectation for those who came back to work in this school was to continue the legacy of education for African American students. The findings concluded that through indigenous understanding of the school and the community, African American administrators were able to impact academic outcomes of minority students. This is supported by Brown and Beckett (2007), who found African American administrators’ connection to the community is vital to the behavioral and academic success of African American students.

As diversity in student populations grow, Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) suggested that teachers must divert from traditional teaching practices and incorporate
more culturally relevant pedagogy. It is more likely for African American students to be served in schools that are largely staffed by middle class European American teachers (Brown & Beckett, 2007). European American women dominate the teaching profession, and many teach African American students but do not share similar cultural knowledge and backgrounds (Gay, 2010; Goodwin, 2002). Lyons & Chesley (2004) supported this notion and stated “…the teaching profession in the United States has become increasingly European American while the student population has become increasingly minority and diverse” (p.304). Moore (2013) addressed the need for educators to be equipped with the skills needed to teach students with diverse backgrounds. Moore (2013) suggested that teachers should meet students where they are when it comes to the students’ background, ethnicity, and racial class diversity. Therefore, educators who meet students where they are, enact culturally responsive strategies for students to learn content based on personal connections and interests.

In urban schools, one of the challenges for administrators is to find educators with the skills necessary to lead diverse schools effectively (Brown & Beckett, 2007). Educators who successfully serve students from diverse backgrounds are educators who are culturally responsive, caring, smart, engaging, humorous, and loving. They invest in the understanding and embrace the cultural backgrounds of their students (Hucks, 2011). Other researchers addressed the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy and how teachers’ understanding can assist to educate minority students (Delpit, 2006; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). The need for culturally relevant teaching practices limits the effects of culture blindness and colorblindness conflicts in the classroom (Milner, 2010).
African American Male Educators

Meidl (2019) described the challenges to recruit African American male educators into three themes: presence, financial, and systematic obstacles in society. Presence referenced the lack of African American male educators in schools. Meidl (2019) claimed because African American males are missing from schools, many African American male students do not see themselves as teachers which contributes to the cycle of the lack of African American male educators. The financial pressure of African American males expected to earn has an impact on career choices as well (Meidl, 2019). Other researchers have debated the issue of low salaries in education that keep African American males from careers in education (Brookhart & Loadman, 1996; Kimmel, 2000; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Morris and Morris, 2013; Peterson, 2014; Wood & Hoag, 1993). Because of salaries of public school teachers, for many African American families, salaries are not considered as well paid employment which is the intended outcome after college (Meidl, 2019). Participants from the study shared how African American youth are influenced by the fame of sports and entertainment industry which led the youth away from teacher education (Meidl, 2019). Lastly, the need to navigate social settings through code switching and having a lens of double consciousness was a systematic obstacle Meidl (2019) explained that hinders African American male educators. African American male educators struggled with the need to break down barriers by speaking and behaving in a certain way with European American students and families; in contrast, African American male educators did not feel the need to prove themselves to African American students and families (Meidl, 2019).
Other challenges that have contributed to the lack of African American male educators are highlighted in a qualitative study by Goings and Bianco (2016) who posited that the treatment of African American males in schools as one of the reasons. This study described how low expectations, stereotypes, and racial microaggressions were all factors that contributed to a lack of potential African American male teaching candidates (Goings & Bianco, 2016). The findings indicated that African American male students share common experiences with these factors and subconsciously do not consider teaching as a profession (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

According to Graham and Erwin (2011), African American males do not pursue teaching as a career option because of negative perceptions from teachers, perception of school as oppressive institutions, and the need to conform. This phenomenological study included a random sample of 11th grade African American boys in North Carolina, and data collection included two one-hour focused group sessions. Participants completed a concept map and completed an interview. The findings of the study revealed that participants viewed teaching as “woman’s work.” Other findings suggested that the participants shared that teachers devalue the voices of African American males and concluded that African American male educators must share the same treatment. Being in a school where the participants could be the only African American male educator, discouraged participants from considering education as a career. Participants were not as eager to enter a career that placed them back in the type of environment they experienced as students. Participants also felt that the lack of freedom to discuss topics that could engage and empower African American students and having to conform to teaching a Eurocentric curriculum would be considered “selling out.” Graham and Erwin (2011)
also noted the lack of African American male educator presence, in particular in advanced level classes, and the frustrations of the participants that felt the need to be a spokesperson to address negative racial stereotypes of African American males.

In a phenomenological study, Scott and Rodriguez (2015) discussed how African American males who have a strong sense of racial identity were likely to choose teaching as a career in order to become positive role models for students. Research findings suggested that role models were an identifiable factor for African American male preservice teachers’ decision to pursue education as a career option (Scott & Rodriguez, 2015). Additional research has contributed to the importance of role models as an influencer to African American male educators. Madkins (2011) described the importance for African American students to see representation of themselves in school.

Pabon (2016) conducted a study of African American male educators. The findings suggested that African American males were not prepared to teach in urban schools or were viewed to fix the issues related to African American students. The study noted the participants frustrations and the willingness to leave the teaching profession. Bristol (2017) also noted the frustrations of African American male educators who were the only African American male in their school. Described as loners, findings reported that these African American male educators were more likely to leave as well (Bristol, 2017). Pabon (2016) concluded that the retention and preparation for African American male educators are needs worth addressing to keep African American males in the education field. In order to attract and retain African American male educators, the education system must adapt to various ways of teaching so the number of African American male educators will not continue to dwindle (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016).
The positive impact of African American male educators has been well documented on the success of African American students (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016; Noguera, 2003).

In a phenomenological qualitative study of 27 African American male educators in 14 public schools, Bristol and Goings (2019) explored African American male educators’ experiences through an organizational dynamic of boundary heightening. Boundary heightening was defined as “a response experienced by individuals who are in a numerical minority within skewed groups” (Bristol & Goings, 2019, p. 54). The findings from the study included that African American male educators felt that colleagues viewed them as incompetent or overqualified to teach. Also, African American male educators described attempts to interact with their European American colleagues to improve the working environment outside the classroom in order to not be perceived as apart from their peers’ social network (Bristol & Goings, 2019). Finally, African American male educators worked to lower boundaries and to challenge colleagues who created difficult school-based environments for African American students (Bristol & Goings, 2019). Other researchers further support the exclusion of African American male teachers as many African American male educators share counter-narratives to the views of many European American colleagues (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Parker, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Tate, 1997).

Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) conducted a narrative life history study of an African American male teacher. The findings of the study identified critical stages of culturally responsive pedagogy in teaching: drawing from community wealth, keeping
the tradition, and mentoring Black male students (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016). Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) found that personal identities, professional identities, and cultural competence of educators were grounded in family and community wealth. Keeping the tradition referred to the passing along of what and how values were taught to teachers to students. The findings of the study described experiences from the participants and how it was important to instill lessons learned from teachers in the community to students. Lastly, mentoring Black students was to have a mutual respect and authentic relationships with students to set high expectations (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016).

When African American male teachers are hired, they are more likely to be considered disciplinarians for African American students (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016). Buras (2013) asserted one of the reasons African American males were recruited into K-12 classrooms were to control African American students. Brockenbrough (2015) conducted a study that shared perspectives from African American male educators’ frustrations. Facing patriarchal narratives of dominance, these African American male educators were expected to be firm on African American students. According to Brockenbrough (2015), the strict disciplinary role expected of African American male educators conflicted with the participants view of themselves as educators. Participants shared how their struggles to conform to the image of stern disciplinarians often threatened their acceptability among colleagues (Brockenbrough, 2015). African American male educators feel pressured to control student conduct using strict measures of discipline (Brockenbrough, 2015). The roles and impact of African American male educators can extend well beyond the disciplinary role.
African American male teachers can positively impact African American students by providing students with a professional role model who is respected and reverse of a narrative of African American males as thugs and uninvolved fathers (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016). Because African American male teachers share similar interests with male students, African American male teachers are more skilled to apply culturally relevant strategies and meet the needs of students with diverse learning needs (Howard, 2014; Lynn, 2006). African American male educators have been found to demonstrate a commitment to the success of African American male students through a diverse perspective because of common experiences (Brown, 2009).

Furthermore, Bryan and Ford (2014) ascertained the importance of African American male educators with a focus on gifted education. African American male educators can change the negative trends of African American male students’ lack of participation in gifted education. African American male educators who teach gifted education can become advocates for gifted African American male students and participate in discourse with European American female educators who have dominated the gifted education field (Bryan & Ford, 2014).

**African American Administrators**

African American principals were highly revered in the community and were the authority figures on education, social, and economic issues (Tillman, 2004c). African American principals were responsible for establishing the all-Black school as a cultural symbol of the African American community (Tillman, 2004c). African American school leaders were role models, advocates, and spokespersons (Ballenger et al., 2017; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). Strong community relationships with students’ families and homes were
one of the most valuable assets that African American school leaders used in segregated communities (Khalifa, 2012). African American school leaders aimed to utilize the community’s assistance to change academic and social climates (Jones, 2002). Horsford (2010) contended that support within the African American community provided African American students with care, high expectations, and encouragement to succeed in a racially hostile world.

The reduction and firing of African American administrators post-\textit{Brown} were substantial. There was a 90\% reduction of African American principals in the South between the years of 1964 to 1973, which went from over 2,000 to less than 200 during that time span. Additionally, most principals were demoted to either assistant principals or classroom teachers (Irvin & Irvin, 2007). In the state of Alabama, the number of African American principals shrunk from 250 to 40 in a three-year period from 1967 to 1970 (Lyons & Chesley, 2004).

Karpinski (2006) documented the decline of African American principals during desegregation:

In Arkansas, Black principals declined in number from 34 to 14 between 1963 and 1971; in South Carolina, the total dropped from 144 to 33 from 1965 to 1970; in Georgia, there was a 50\% decline; in Virginia, those who were secondary school principals declined from 29\% to 6.5\%; in Alabama from 1967 to 1970, the number declined from 250 to 50. However, North Carolina witnessed the most dramatic decline of 95\% from 1963 to 1970. (p. 251).

African American administrators are often placed in predominantly African American schools that face several challenges (Brown, 2005). The majority of African
American schools are in urban districts that are underfunded, lack resources, lack certified teachers, have low academic test scores, and high teacher turnover (Brown, 2005; Gooden, 2012). Despite these challenges, African American administrators serving in urban schools are given tasks of providing similar academic results compared to schools that are serving students from middle-and upper-class families (Brown, 2005).

Another challenge for these administrators is to motivate students to perform despite the school community being surrounded by influences of crime, welfare dependency, drug culture, joblessness, out of wedlock births, and female-headed families (Brooks, 2009). Many African American administrators lead schools with majority European American teachers and majority African American students (Cooper & Jordan, 2003). This predicament for African American administrators presents its own challenges. Lyons and Chesley (2004) declared that European American teachers are frequently unaware of African American students’ ways of life, norms, customs, and family and community values which lead to a cultural disconnect.

Henderson (2015) noted the reason African American principals are more likely to serve in urban schools was because of how they relate to students because of a shared common living experience of upbringing and environment. African American administrators’ placement could be linked to the implicit indication that African Americans can only lead and be effective in schools that are predominantly African American (Moore, 2013). This misconception leads to a belief that African American administrators are better served in urban schools and cannot lead schools with diverse populations effectively, which hinder opportunities for further promotions (Allen, et al.,
As a result, African American administrators are rarely given opportunities to manage schools with diverse populations (Gooden, 2012).

Karpinski (2006) debated that the lack of African American administrators was a contributing factor to African American students’ disparities in discipline and placement when compared to their European American counterparts. Gooden (2012) noted that African American principals challenge the norms and find alternatives to support African American students:

An ethic of care should also compel district leaders and teachers to patiently support Black principals as they seek alternatives to suspensions. Working in this way can enable leaders to build better relationships with African American students and make schools more welcoming for all students (Gooden, 2012, p. 80).

**African American Male Administrators**

African American male administrators fulfill a caring role in the school and community (Bass, 2019). Because African American male administrators are leaders in the struggle for African American education (Bass, 2019), the need for African American male educators to assume leadership roles is more urgent than ever (Brown, 2005; LeBlanc, 2016; Moore, 2013; Tarver, 2016). Henderson (2015) noted the dependence on African American male administrators in urban schools to resolve issues with troubled African American male students. Furthermore, Henderson (2015) also described the need for African American males to serve as role models as school principals. The void created by the low representation of African American males aspiring to become principals decreases the exposure of African American male role
models in schools (Henderson, 2015). However, African American male educators have been underrepresented (Brown, 2005; Henderson, 2015; Ononu, 2016).

Bass (2019) noted the value of African American males in school leadership in a qualitative study of 10 African American male administrators and their perceptions of caring leadership. Historically, African American males were crucial actors in educating minority students who were at a social disadvantage and disenfranchised (Bass, 2019). Bass (2019) contended that African American males embrace challenges of struggling schools and closed achievement gaps with a demonstration of care. Bass (2019) proposed core tenets of the Black Men Care (BMC) framework which was rooted in African American males' prior experiences. African American males demonstrate an ethic of care by assuming caretaker roles for their students.

The lack of African American male educators who pursue school leadership opportunities are scarce (Brown, 2005). Brown (2005) claimed the shortage was due to a pipeline perspective. Because of the shortage of African American educators who enter the leadership pipeline, there is a lack of mentoring, recruitment, retention, preparation, and appointment for African Americans into leadership positions (Brown, 2005).

Because administrators are influential in teachers' morale and level of concern for students, African American administrators are extremely important for the success of African American students (Lomotey, 1989). Furthermore, administrators are responsible for creating a positive school culture for faculty and staff (Kunjufu, 2013). Because administrators are the primary decision makers for the local schools, it is imperative for African American educators to consider school administrative roles to ensure African
American male educators feel supported while enacting a culturally responsive approach to discipline and teaching.

**African American Male Student Outcomes**

Shealey et al. (2005) noted the assumption that the ruling of *Brown* would provide African American students who integrated into predominantly European American schools would receive the same educational experiences as European American students. However, without schools that supported a multicultural curriculum, professional development, and school reforms, African American students continued to struggle academically and were less likely to be referred to gifted programs (Shealey et al., 2005).

Data has revealed that African American male students have not experienced equal educational opportunity since the ruling of *Brown* (Green, 2008). African American male students are more likely to receive disciplinary referrals for subjective infractions such as disrespecting authority, placed in less rigorous academic classes, and referred to special education (Elias, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Lyons & Chesley, 2004). African American male students disproportionately are affected by these outcomes (Caton, 2012; Wallace et.al, 2008). African American male students are more likely to drop out of school as statistics show that African American male students drop out at a rate of three times more than compared to European American male students (Ford, 2013; Kunjufu, 2013; Losen, 2011; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2012). Researchers have noted that public schools are not considered nurturing or welcoming places for African American males (Ford, 2013; Hucks, 2011; Kunjufu, 2013).

Wallace et. al, (2008) conducted a study of 19 middle schools where African American males were more likely to be sent to the principal’s office for subjective
reasons, such as disrespect and perceived threats. Discipline practices make matters worse for African American males because many of them are academically challenged and discipline leads to less time in the classroom (Caton, 2012). Therefore, they become at risk of dropping out of school because of challenges to catch up on learning from missed class time (Caton, 2012). The cycle of frustration and negative experiences for African American male students has negative long-term effects (Green, 2008). Therefore, critical discussions on how school practices and policies affect African American males negatively are needed.

The increased use of zero tolerance policies have been criticized to keep minority populations in the justice system and it has been suggested that it provide new sources of revenue to promote and legitimize regressive social policies (Giroux, 2003). One example can be seen in higher prison construction spending than in higher education spending, which has an impact on minorities (Giroux, 2003). A correlation between the expulsion rates for states and the incarceration rate for African American males supports this example (Skiba & Noam, 2001). Furthermore, the overrepresentation of African American male students who were suspended and expelled from school due to zero-tolerance policies contributed to the miseducation of African American males (Caton, 2012). In light of this, it is not surprising Wallace and Gagen (2019) found African American males perceive school as an oppressive institution that often undermine them.

Because of how African American males are depicted in the media, African American males are often perceived as threats and a danger to society, which perpetuates how they are categorized in schools (Caton, 2012; Harris & Kruger, 2019; Jackson & Moore, 2008; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Jenkins (2006) noted how African American
males face negative societal imaging and the difficulties escaping gangster labels. Negative perceptions of African American male students can also be linked to preservice teacher education programs (King, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2011). Caton (2012) noted the perceptions of African American male students on zero-tolerance policies and how their school experiences and academic outcomes were affected by those policies. Due to African American male students not feeling connected to school, academic outcomes suffered (Caton, 2012). Tanner (2009) posited subjective infractions were more likely to involve African American male students because of teachers’ negative perceptions of African American males as threatening, dangerous, and disruptive. Because of how teachers perceive African American male students, African American male students are more likely to receive school disciplinary actions that result in out of school suspension and expulsion (Caton, 2012).

African American males are also subject to low academic expectations. Khalifa (2011) conducted an ethnographic study that investigated the interactions of European American teachers and African American male students. This study found that some teachers would “give in” to African American male students’ disengagement, and European American teachers were more likely to engage in deal making with African American male students. Deal making was described as a way for African American male students to come to agreement with their teacher to be ignored if the teacher would not be disturbed (Khalifa, 2011). Deal making includes students being allowed to participate in non-academic activities such as drawing, resting, using electronics, and playing a game in exchange for them to be silent (Khalifa, 2011). Therefore, the disengagement in learning
for African American male students even inside the classroom can have a negative impact on their progression in school and potential for post-secondary studies.

Positive relationships among teachers and African American males have shown to be valuable in the education of African American male students; it has been noted that African American males are more likely to perceive their relationships with European American teachers as a negative (Ferguson, 2000). Townsend Walker (2012) conducted a qualitative study of African American adolescent males who shared concerns of feeling uncared for by families and unwelcomed by schools. However, some of the participants from the study shared their affection of teachers who demonstrated care to them. The teachers who were considered their favorites were African American (Townsend Walker, 2012). Ironically, some of the participants implied that African American administrators were more likely to suspend them than European American administrators. This can be contributed to Black masculinity. Characteristics of Black masculinity include African American males being perceived as calm, emotionless, and tough which contributes to the perceptions of how others view African American male educators (Brockenbrough, 2015; Majors & Billson, 1992).

African American male students’ negative school experiences do not halt at the secondary level. Johnson (2013) and Warren (2013) challenged the negative stereotypes of African American males in predominantly European American institutions as their intellectual abilities were questioned. Bryan and Browder (2013) added that European American college professors graded African American males unfairly in preservice education classrooms. Other challenges facing African American males include either delay or denial of teacher certification because of the Praxis I and II examinations, which
provides access to teach in K-12 classrooms (Johnson, 2013; Warren, 2013). Furthermore, low academic expectations and reoccurrences of suspensions and expulsions of African American male students prohibits them from having the foundational knowledge to be successful in college and pass entrance exams (Wallace & Gagen, 2019).

Because African American male students bring experiences that are grounded in racism, inequality, and misunderstanding, there is a need for teachers who have a deep commitment and understanding of African American students (Milner, 2006). When teachers demonstrate this level of commitment, African American students recognize this level of care and it motivates them to do their best for teachers (Milner, 2006). African American male students sought teachers and mentors within whom they could build trust and to help them be successful in school (Land et al., 2014). Therefore, positive teacher relationships in schools for African American male students has the potential to turn the tide of academic achievement for African American male students (Wallace & Gagen, 2019).

**Education Policies**

Hunter (2004) noted state and federal educational policies designed to remedy the effects of segregation of African American students after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act of 1965 was created to address achievement gaps of African American students. ESEA provided federal funds to school districts where many poor African American students attended to improve public education in schools where students underachieved (Hunter, 2004). Years later, the standards movement was developed to include statewide systems of accountability for
education (Hunter, 2004). The purpose was to ensure each state upheld standards of what students were supposed to know in each area of curriculum, provide annual statewide assessments, state report records on each school, rate schools based on performance of statewide assessments, assistance to schools who failed to meet expected performance, reward system for schools that met expected performance, and authority for state government to take over schools who performed poorly on statewide assessments (Hunter, 2002). However, many educational reformers have challenged the accuracy of standardized assessments and its accuracy to demonstrate students’ capabilities and its validity assess all children on the same level in the same way (Cramer et al., 2017).

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed to reauthorize federal legislation for education which included ESEA and introduced Title I funding to provide compensatory education for public schools with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Hunter, 2004). However, Hunter (2004) purported that despite the efforts by the federal legislation, African American students still receive an inadequate education. In 2002, the accountability report in Alabama showed a substantial gap between African American students and European American students (Green, 2008). African American students scored in the 39th percentile compared to European Americans who scored in the 65th percentile on the Stanford 9 achievement test (Green, 2008). Furthermore, the Alabama High School Graduation Exam showed that the African American 12th graders pass rate was below the expected 90% graduation rate the state department of education expected (Green, 2008).

The most recent educational policy signed by President Obama was the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Egalite et al., 2015). The requirements from NCLB, to
test students in 3rd to 8th grade and once in high school, remained to measure school performance. According to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), measures for schools with a 12th grade included proficiency in the following indicators: academic achievement, academic growth, graduation rate, English language proficiency progress, attendance, and college and career readiness. Schools without a 12th grade mirrored each indicator except for graduation rate and college and career readiness. Accountability mandates for these indicators are used to develop a grading system for schools in Alabama. The Alabama Act 2012-402 indicated that the grading system would be communicated in a practical way for the public to understand and provide performance-based incentives for high achieving schools. In addition, schools would be graded using an A-F grading system that demonstrated A as excellent progress to F as failing to make adequate progress. Further measures of accountability include providing schools’ progress publicly by media outlets and the State Department of Education website. Recognitions included identifying the top 25% of high performing schools and schools that improved ranking by at least one letter grade. In contrast, the ALSDE defined persistently low performing schools as failing schools. K-12 public schools that performed in the lowest six percent on state standardized assessments in reading and math for three or more years in the most recent six years or earned a grade of an F during the most recent four years, or three grades of a D, would be considered failing schools.

The unfortunate reality with grading school performance is that African American male students have consistently underperformed on standardized testing (Bass, 2019; Green, 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Therefore, accountability mandates from state and federal government on education consistently
degrade the education for marginalized students by classifying schools that are predominantly African American as failing. The goal of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) was to provide equitable educational opportunities for students. However, the results have shown that the implementation and measures to ensure the effectiveness of Brown have done more harm than good for African American students (Tillman, 2004b).

**Summary**

The achievement of African American male students is essential to the recruitment of African American male educators. The percentage of African American males who do not complete high school requirements or do not successfully meet college readiness has an impact on the number of African American males who could potentially enter the teaching profession (Brown & Butty, 1999; Graham & Erwin, 2011; Vegas et al., 2001). Most states require administrators to have teaching experience as a requirement for certification in instructional leadership (Roberts, 2009). Therefore, the recruitment and retention of African American male educators and achievement for African American male students are important to increase the number of African American male administrators. Because administrators have the highest level of influence (Leithwood & Louis, 2012), African American male administrators may support African American male students and educators navigate the challenges they face in public schools. Brooks and Watson (2018) campaigned for more African Americans to become administrators because of a deep commitment to set high expectations and establish a culture of cultural responsiveness for African American students.

There is a paucity of research with a focus on African American male administrators (Bass, 2019; Brown, 2005; Henderson, 2015; Ononuju, 2016; Tillman,
More specifically, a critical analysis on how African American male administrators talk about their roles as administrators and how they encourage more African American males to pursue administrative roles is a gap that would benefit the literature. In addition, African American male perspectives on how discursive and sociocultural practices either support or hinder African American males in administration may provide state and local entities with ways to support African American males in education.

Foucault (1984) defined discursive practices as the way in which knowledge is produced through institutional and disciplinary structures that build language of what is considered accepted on a particular subject. Foucault (1984) debated that language does not imply truth but what is considered truth is based on a historical context. Therefore, the discursive practice that were addressed in this study included how achievement is defined in school structures and how the language used impacts African American males from pursuing careers in education administration. Furthermore, researchers suggested that African American males struggle in school because of sociocultural issues that are associated with exclusionary discipline practices and culturally bias testing (Cartledge et al., 2001; Cooper & Jordan, 2003; Ford, 2010; McGinnis, 2003; Townsend Walker, 2000).
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the methodology for this Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) regarding the way African American male school administrators talk about their roles and how they motivate other African American males to pursue administrative roles in public schools. This approach provides a deeper understanding of how linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural policies and practices either aid or hinder African American males from pursuing school administrative roles. Details of this chapter include the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, rationale for qualitative methodology, description of the research design, participant and site selection, data collection, data analysis, validation strategies, and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research addresses research problems from a human and social context. Qualitative researchers collect data in participants’ natural settings in order to gain a unique perspective. The instrument used to collect and analyze data in qualitative research is the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The methods of data collection come in a variety of forms such as documents, observations, artifacts, and interviews. The researcher makes sense of data through complex reasoning of inductive and deductive
logic by building on patterns, categories, and themes to gain a complete set of themes to inform the study.

Statement of the Problem

Because African American males only represent 2% of educators in the United States, the field for African American males to become administrators are limited (Woodson & Pabon, 2016). The scarcity and paucity of literature of African American male administrators has been documented in the research (Brown, 2005; Grauerholz & Turner, 2017; Henderson, 2015; Karpinski, 2006; Milner & Howard, 2004; Ononuju, 2016). The lack of African American males has been considered one of the problems that contribute to the underachievement for African American male students. The cycle of African American male students who do not perform well in school has kept African American males from considering education as a career because of negative school experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe ways that African American males are either motivated or demotivated to become school administrators. The design for this study is a Critical Discourse Analysis.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study: In what ways, do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices?
Sub-questions were: (a): In what ways have discursive practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? (b): In what ways have sociocultural practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? (c): In what ways have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration?

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used for this study was Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT was used to develop research questions that aligned to the theoretical foundation of this framework. The relevance of this framework includes the foundational research of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and how the tenets of CRT played a role in the discourse of African American male administrators. The way in which interviews were conducted and analyzed is influenced by this lens (framework). CRT has been researched in K-12 and higher education settings (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). However, African American male administrators in K-12 institutions were addressed throughout this study. The purpose of CRT is to challenge the existing knowledge known about gender and race in public education in America. Therefore, the way in which African American male administrators talk about race and their roles as educators gives voice to a population who have been systematically and institutionally silenced (Jenkins, 2006). Dixson (2018) described social change as a core principle of CRT. CRT analyze issues in education, policy, and practice to theorize why racialized educational inequities still exists (Dixson, 2018). Therefore, the aim of this study is to provide an overview of CRT and how CRT impacts African American male administrators in education in America.
Critical Race Theory

The origin of CRT began as a response to limits in scholarly works in critical legal studies in the 1970s when minority scholars felt overlooked (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Furthermore, CRT has been used by scholars to analyze experiences of underrepresented populations in education (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Howard and Navaroo (2016) asserted one of the purposes of CRT is to push educational equity to advocate for students of color. CRT challenges educational policy that has contributed to the educational inequities throughout generations (Howard & Navaroo, 2016).

Educational policy is tied to faculty and students of color in higher education institutions (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002) and the effects of the school to prison pipeline that disproportionately affect minority students (Valles & Villalpando, 2013). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), the issue of race has been under-researched and under-theorized. Therefore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) theorized race as a tool to understand school inequity where race and property intersect. To understand race and property, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) noted three propositions to describe social inequities: (1) race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States; (2) U.S. society is based on property right; and (3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity (p.48).

Race is engrained into American society and the distribution of power structures are very much influenced by race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) described the significance of how statistical and demographical data can be documented to determine
inequities. The authors further noted evidence of the difference of achievement data between African American and European American students as minority students are often tracked and placed in lower levels of sorting systems in schools. Furthermore, high rates of dropouts, suspensions, expulsions, and failures of African American males purports this issue (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Property rights relate to education in the form of tax relief that provides affluent communities more access to better schools. Furthermore, intellectual property or the opportunity to learn presents itself in the curriculum that is taught at schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1995) addressed intellectual property in education by proclaiming a response for culturally responsive pedagogy. By enacting culturally relevant teaching practices, Ladson-Billings (1995) suggested that students would have the ability to develop academically because of the willingness to nurture and support cultural competence that would lead to the development for students to become socially and politically aware. Paris (2012) expanded culturally relevant pedagogy and coined the term culturally sustaining pedagogy which aims to support minority students by sustaining cultural and linguistic competence of their communities and at the same time offer access to the dominant culture. Paris (2012) challenged the idea that languages and cultural practices of minorities are deficits that need to be overcome in order to learn in school. Paris (2012) also claimed that the curriculum taught in schools has been an explicit and implicit way to eradicate the cultural practices of minority students. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) contended that poverty was not the only issue that contributed to dismal school performance for some African American students but that institutional and structural racism in schooling in conjunction with poverty has been what has kept African
American students from access to better schools and programs. Paris (2012) stated “…in the face of current policies and practices that have the explicit goal of creating a monocultural and monolingual society, research and practice need equally explicit resistance that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality” (p. 93). Therefore, institutional and structural racism have been assimilated in schools and have consisted of European American, middle class norms of language, literacy, and cultural practices that have dominated curriculum. However, languages and literacies from minority cultures were considered unworthy in schools and society and in order for students to succeed, they would need to adopt European American norms to be successful in school (Paris, 2012). Consequently, the voices of minorities would be lost without a pluralistic way to culturally sustain the heritage and linguistic practices of students and communities of color in schools (Paris, 2012).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated “…without authentic voices of people of color (as teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members) it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities” (p. 58). Derrick Bell, who has been credited as one of the founders of CRT, perceived the advancements of the civil rights movement had stalled in the 1960s and some of the accomplishments were being rolled back (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). Bell’s contributions to CRT have been documented and the theory of interest convergence, which is described as European American elites’ willingness for racial advances when it converges into their own interests, has been used to challenge policies rooted in racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). One instance of interest convergence in history is centered
around the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) ascertained CRT as a theoretical lens that can further boundaries in educational research and push teacher education to move toward social justice. Therefore, CRT provides a logical debate for further discussions on the need for African American male administrators. Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) stated “CRT has created a space to challenge racism in everyday actions and ways of speaking as a Black male educator working toward a society guided by equity and social justice” (p. 22). Therefore, the lens in which CRT provides for the participants, provides them the opportunity to share their perspectives on race and education.

**Philosophical Assumptions**

In order to have a clear understanding of qualitative research, Creswell (2013) suggested that the researcher must understand their own philosophical assumptions. Philosophical assumptions are the beliefs that guide the researcher in the study. The four philosophical assumptions: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology are embedded into interpretive frameworks in qualitative studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) described that researchers bring five phases into research that place philosophy and theory in the research process: (1) experiences, (2) perspectives, (3) research strategies, (4) method of data collection, and (5) analysis of data.

**Ontology**

Ontology is the nature of reality (Creswell, 2013). With regards to ontology, the researcher embraces multiple realities of the participants in qualitative research (Guba &
Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012). The methodology chosen for this research is grounded in critical discourse and theory. Therefore, ontology beliefs are grounded in historical struggles of power and identity that are based on race, class, gender, mental abilities, or sexual preference (Lincoln et al, 2011). In a broader context, ontology is the assumption that reality is based on the experiences of individuals. Although all the participants may share similarities, my research was guided with the idea that each of the participants brought their own set of beliefs.

**Epistemology**

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how one makes meaning of the world (Levers, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) indicated that knowledge is constructed through linguistic, gender, social class, racial, and ethical lenses. Creswell (2013) further noted that knowledge is known from the subjective experiences of people and conducting studies where participants live and work. Because I shared some commonalities with the participants from this study, I have an emic understanding of the participants and made connections with them and know what they were saying. Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed that qualitative researchers limit the distance between himself or herself to the participants to gain the knowledge of the participants’ worlds.

**Axiology**

Creswell (2013) suggested that the researcher must decide how the researcher’s personal understanding should be introduced in the study. The assumption of axiology is where the researcher acknowledges him or herself in the study by reporting values and biases. The researcher admits to the value laden nature of the study and positions him or
herself in the study. (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the researcher balances his or her values and beliefs with the validity of the research. The way I positioned myself in the study is by making comments on my biases and past experiences that shaped the interpretation of the study (Creswell, 2013). Validation strategies that were used in this study to ensure my biases were limited were member checking, peer debriefing, and rich, thick descriptions.

**Methodology**

Lincoln et al. (2011) described methodological beliefs as the method to the study. Raising concerns in social and political arenas that affect the oppressed are the main purpose of critical methodologies (Hatch, 2001). The methods from this type of research include discourse that promote change socially and politically in the lives of the participants and those who are routinely marginalized (Hatch, 2001). In critical research, researchers raise questions on how institutional and systematic social structures continue to limit the oppressed while upholding those in power (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). CDA served as a method for this study and the participants were asked a multitude of questions that are related to how educational structures are embedded in racial inequities. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended that questions include how educational systems are organized, who has access to particular programs, who has power to make changes, and what outcomes are produced (p. 61). Participants from this study were asked to reflect on their experiences as African American male administrators and how their experiences and roles impact African American males from careers in education.
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The method for this study is CDA. CDA is grounded in the work of critical linguistics and has been developed as a framework to challenge issues related to power of social dominance. Fairclough (1989 & 1995), one of the founders of CDA, described CDA in a three-dimension model: text (description), discursive practices (interpretation), and social practice (explanation). Fairclough (1989) debated that language can be used to distribute power; thus, CDA is the method of interpreting how language influence social practices. According to Fairclough (1989 & 1995), language can be used as a power tool to create change in behavior. Text or language, whether spoken or written, is part of a larger community and displays the way individuals feel on a particular subject. Discursive practices are how the arrangement of text changes the perceptions on a particular subject and its interpretation is based on the beliefs and values of the sender who has either spoken or written the text. Social practices are influenced by language. Therefore, method of CDA is chosen for this study to determine how language influences social practice in education. Fairclough (2003) further described three ways in which CDA involves social practice: (a) part of the social activity within practice, (b) discourse figures in representation, and (c) discourse figures in ways of being, in the constitution of identities.

CDA informed this study and fueled the research question: In what ways, do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices? CDA analyzes the dialectal relationship between language and other elements, such as body language and visual images of social practices.
(Fairclough, 2003). According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), CDA deals primarily with discourses of power abuse, injustice, equality, and the attempt to uncover implicit or concealed power relations. Therefore, the aforementioned research question was used to examine the way African American male administrators talk about the issues of race as school administrators.

Mullet (2018) declared CDA as a multidisciplinary, flexible, analytical framework to critically analyze texts and discourse; furthermore, CDA provides a way for educational researchers to make connections between educational practices and social contexts. Wodak and Meyer (2009) characterized the approach to CDA as: (a) problem-oriented focus, (b) analysis of semiotic data, (c) the view that power relations are discursive to some extent, (d) the view that discourses are situated in time and place, (e) the idea that expressions of language are never neutral, (f) analysis that is systematic, interpretive, descriptive, and explanatory, and (g) interdisciplinary and eclectic methodologies. The shared core assumptions of CDA as described by Mullet (2018) explain that CDA must include an interest to uncover inequality, analyze language to explain how language performs in society, and must be embedded in context and is never neutral.

Fairclough (2003) stated “Discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned differently positioned social actors ‘see’ and represent social life in different ways, different discourses” (p. 206). What this means is that discourse differs in the social practices and CDA examines language, whether spoken or written. The purpose of CDA is for the researcher to go beyond the individual (social phenomena) as the interviewee and the interviewers are part of the data. The idea is to
study the well-established meanings or ideas around a topic that is shaped on how we can talk about it. Analyzing discourse attempts to understand the social world and its complexity, understand implications of certain meanings and worldviews, and understand ourselves within our social worlds (Fairclough, 2003).

Wodak and Meyer (2009) noted the interest of CDA in linguistic manifestation of power. Van Dijk (1993) suggested that CDA seeks to uncover and disclose implicit or hidden power relations in discourses of power that influences knowledge, beliefs, understandings, ideologies, norms, attitudes, values, and plans. Furthermore, discourse and power distinctly relate in two dimensions, direct exercise of dominance of talk and text, and the indirect discourse of people’s minds (Van Dijk, 1993). Mullet (2018) stated “Discourses are also used to justify inequality through paired complementary strategies: positive representations of one’s own group, and negative representations of others” (p. 119). Considering Mullet (2018), the negative representation of African American males in the media and in schools as one of the indicators that hinder them from becoming school administrators are part of a larger discourse that was discussed in this research.

Sample

To identify and select individuals for this study that provided information rich cases, Patton (2015) suggested purposeful sampling because participants have knowledge of experience in a phenomenon or interest. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), purposeful sampling requires the researcher to decide what selection criteria was essential in choosing the participants and sites to be studied. Therefore, a criterion sampling strategy were used to select individuals who are African American, male, and currently serving as high school administrators for at least three years. The sites for this study were
public high schools in central Alabama. By using a criterion sampling strategy, it provided me with the opportunity to choose participants and sites that met predetermined criteria for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

According to Hatch (2002), an important step to participant recruitment involves identifying gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are those who control access to the participants and settings (Hatch, 2002). In order to gain access, I contacted school district offices to identify gatekeepers and inquired about the rules and regulations for research approval. After approval, I contacted participants who met the criteria. Potential participants were contacted via email and contacted by phone to confirm date, time, location, and interest. As interviews were completed, I asked participants for recommendations of other potential participants who met the same criteria. This sampling technique was referred to as snowball sampling (Hatch, 2002). The purpose of this sampling strategy was to provide the researcher with homogeneity in participants who share some common experiences and characteristics (Hatch, 2002).

**Participant Identity**

In order to identify participants for this study, a questionnaire was sent via email to potential participants using a Google form survey. The survey included questions that provided demographic information. Questions included: (a) Are you male or female? (b) How do you identify yourself, African American or Black? (c) Do you work in a public high school in central Alabama? (d) Have you been a principal or assistant principal at your school for at least three years? (e) Are you between the ages of 25 and 60? Participants who are male and identify themselves as African American would be
included in this study. No more than 10 individuals who meet all criteria were chosen to participate in this study.

**Data Collection**

**Interviewing.** Data collection included 60-minute face-to-face interviews with 10 African American male administrators in Alabama. Interviews included open-ended questions from an interview protocol created by me. The interviews took place at the participants’ schools and were audio-recorded. An interview protocol was utilized for questioning and notes were taken while using a semi-structured approach. A semi-structured interview format allowed more flexibility so that participants can respond from their own worldview and present new ideas to the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants’ interests in the phenomenon to be studied provided the foundation of the participants’ perceptions, opinions, and values of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Data Recording**

Data recording included audio-recordings of the interviews between the participant and the researcher. Recordings were recorded on a password-protected audio recorder. Transcriptions were kept on an encrypted hard drive on the researcher’s computer. The audio-recordings were deleted after transcriptions to ensure protection of anonymity of the participants.

**Data Analysis**

I reviewed the data from multiple angles to construct meaning of participant responses using a general analytical framework of CDA. The framework of analysis used in this study was intertextuality. Julia Kristeva, a linguistic philosopher, studied work of
semiotic and dialogic studies from Saussere and Bahktin respectively. Kristeva coined the term intertextuality to analyze text multiple ways to determine how text intersects with other text (Allen, 2000). According to Elkad-Lehman and Greensfeld (2011), the interrelation between text and reader creates a three-dimension space between the author, the reader, and the text. Furthermore, the personal experiences, knowledge, world, ideological and political practices of the reader are brought to life from the text communicated by the author which creates a hermeneutic process to create a network of intertext (Elkad-Lehman & Greensfeld, 2011).

To analyze the data using this framework, interview questions were asked that prompted the participants to act as authors to construct their perspectives of the research questions. Elkad-Lehman and Greensfeld (2011) stated that the participants organize their meanings in a framework that exist in a traditional structure and style based on previous stories or experiences, consciously or subconsciously. According to Allen (2000), utterances (spoken words or statements) are tied together in language and culture. Therefore, the discourse of spoken words and statements from the participant interviews were used as the data to be analyzed. The hermeneutic process involved in the analysis included the intertextual features of the interview data in two axes, horizontal and vertical. Kristeva (1980) described the horizontal axis as the relationship between the participants and the researcher and the vertical axis as the relationship between each text (transcripts) with another text. The data was analyzed horizontally as a relationship develops between me as the reader, the participants as authors and the transcripts as the text, and vertically as relationships between each participants’ text develop and expose intertexts. The interview data was analyzed to determine the textual arrangement of
elements that possesses double meaning of the text itself and its historical and social text (Allen, 2000). To analyze the double meaning, concepts were derived from analyzing the interdependent relationships between participants transcripts (Kristeva, 1980). I analyzed the intertextual relationships of the interview data by comparing the context of the spoken words of the participants. I also analyzed the transcripts to determine how the spoken words signify meaning in context based on historical and cultural references.

According to Ronan (2015), intertextuality builds on the dialogic nature of language by expanding studies of speech to texts. Fairclough (1992) supported the use of intertextuality with the framework of CDA and stated: “intertextual analysis crucially mediates the connection between language and social context and facilitates more satisfactory bridging of the gap between texts and contexts, referring to my three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis in which intertextual analysis occupies this mediating position” (p. 195). The interview data from the study was analyzed to determine how text is used for a common purpose. Therefore, intertextuality provided me with a method to go beyond the text to consider the narratives of history, community practices, and prior knowledge.

Validation Strategies

Creswell (2013) described validation as strength of qualitative research. Time spent in the field, detailed thick description, and closeness of the researcher to participants of the study adds value and accuracy to the study. Therefore, the validation strategies I employed with this study were member checking, peer debriefing, and rich, thick descriptions.
Member Checking

Member checking or respondent validation were used. Member checking is a verification strategy used to ensure accurate depictions of analysis of participants’ responses to the interviews. Analysis of themes were sent to each participant and individuals were prompted to review the analysis to ensure accuracy. According to Maxwell (2013), member checking is one validation strategy used to ensure that the researcher accurately depicts what the participants say and do and the perspective the participants have on the topic. Also, member checking provides a way for the researcher to identify his or her own biases and misunderstandings. After an analysis of the data, I provided each participant with a copy of the analysis to ensure what was analyzed is a true reflection of what the participants meant to convey.

Peer Debriefing

I shared the collection of data and analysis with a peer who shared expertise with the study topic. The peer served as a devil’s advocate in order to challenge me to think further into the study. The peer asked hard questions about the methods, meanings, and interpretations that challenges my biases (Creswell, 2013).

Rich, Thick Description.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), rich, thick description is highly descriptive and provides a detailed presentation of the setting, participants, and findings of the study. The findings include quotes from the participants interviews, field notes, and documents to enable transferability. Therefore, this study included participants’ background that includes family context and upbringing and work setting.
Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, research participants’ protection is vital. Therefore, individual names were not used for this study and participants were free to discontinue their participation at any time without penalty. To ensure the research and its participants were protected, I received permission from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham prior to conducting the study. IRB grants permission for the study to be conducted when human subjects are the participants. The committee determined the severity of the risks or potential harms for the participants. To ensure conformity, participants received formal letters with an explanation of the purpose of the study and a request for their participation. After the proposed number of participants confirmed their willingness to participate in the study, I scheduled interviews. Participants were given consent forms, which were read and signed with authorization to withdraw if requested. Recorded interviews and transcriptions were stored in an encrypted location on a hard disk on my computer. Before recording, participants were notified of the recording prior to the interview. Participants were allowed to view any study information at their request to promote transparency and trustworthiness.

Role of the Researcher

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), researchers in critical research are confronted with interrelated issues of being an insider or outsider, positionality, and intersecting factors. The researcher must contend with potential biases that may affect the research process being an insider or outsider. Whether researchers are either insiders or outsiders is dependent upon the researcher’s positionality. The positionality of the
researcher can be determined by the researcher’s race, gender, social class, background, and sexual orientation and can have an effect on the access to participants and how participants answer interview questions. My positionality as an African American male administrator was shared with the participants from this study. When participants are from marginalized groups, participants are apprehensive when members from a dominant culture conduct research on oppressed groups of people (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, my background and experiences were an added benefit to conduct this study, so participants feel a comfort when answering interview questions. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated “The point of critical research is generally to do research with the people, not on people” (p. 64). What this means is that in qualitative research the researcher is just as much a part of the study as the participants.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that qualitative research is a dialectal process that informs both the participants and the researcher. Therefore, the reflexivity in this critical research provided me with the position to use my own efforts in this process. Also, Creswell (2013) noted that the researcher must position themselves in the writing process. Therefore, I own my biases, values, and experiences in the research. I shared how my experiences shaped my interpretation of the study (Creswell, 2013). However, I caution myself to make sure to report findings that reflect the voices of the participants’ stories and not my own (Pillow, 2003).
CHAPTER 4
Report of Research Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, intertextuality was used as a method of analysis to present the study’s findings. Intertextuality provided a framework that analyzed the participants’ interviews and how their utterances were tied together in language and culture (Allen, 2000). Because the primary focus was on participant’s discourse, the interviews were used to determine the interdependent relationships of each participant’s interview. According to Fairclough (2003), intertextuality is present when elements of other texts are within a text. Therefore, participant’s discourse was analyzed to make connections and discuss the relationship each text has to the texts that surround it (Bazerman, 2004). In addition, participants’ discourses were interpreted and compared based on repeated listening to their narratives and readings of transcripts to discover repetitive patterns in their stories (Elkad-Lehman & Greensfield, 2011). The purpose of this research study was to discuss the ways African American male administrators talk about their roles and how they motivate other African American males to pursue administrative roles in public schools.

According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on how the role of discourse influences power abuse and domination through the production and reproduction of discourse in society. Furthermore, Wodak and Meyer (2001) stated that CDA “takes the experiences and opinions of members of such groups
seriously and supports their struggle against inequality” (p. 96). In other words, CDA provided participants with an opportunity to voice their concerns about the lack of African American male administrators based on their experiences as a student, teacher, and administrator. Overall, this is what makes this research critical in education. Therefore, this CDA was guided by the following research question: In what ways do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices? Sub-questions included: in what ways have discursive practices influenced policy that hinders African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? In what ways have sociocultural practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration? In what ways have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration?

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used as a framework for this study. Tenets of CRT include: (a) race is engrained in American society, (b) interest convergence, (c) challenging dominant ideologies, (d) embracing voices of color or narratives, and (e) commitment to social justice. These tenets were used to theorize how policies and practices in education hindered African American males from pursuing careers in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Using CRT as a theoretical framework, participants were given the opportunity to voice their concerns in relation to race regarding African American males in school. Participants discussed how race influences education and how race relates to curriculum, discipline, and assessments (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano &
Yosso, 2001). Hopefully, this study will ignite African American males to consider education as a career and African American male teachers to pursue administrative roles to provide more voices to be heard in the field of education.

**Context**

The ten participants chosen for this study identified themselves as African American and have served in the role of either principal or assistant principal for three years or more. The administrators in this study represented high school across seven school districts in central Alabama in urban and suburban areas of Birmingham.

**Participants**

To protect the identity of the participants in this study, pseudonyms were created for the participants. Of the ten participants, five are assistant principals, and the other five are principals. Two of the participants have a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership, and the other eight have educational specialist degrees in Educational Leadership. Each participant was described by the highest degree attained, current position, and years of administrative experience, as shown in Table 1.
Table 1

Participant Summary Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Admin Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmond</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
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<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrence</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tremaine</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the participants came from various backgrounds, they shared common experiences as students, teachers, and administrators. The dialogue between the participants took place over a two-month period. Each of the interviews took place in the participants’ offices. Participants’ stories on how they became administrators were intriguing. Participants shared inspirational stories of perseverance and hope as they encountered barriers in their role as administrators, educators, and students. The reasons
why these men decided to become administrators were similar, yet their journeys were unique. The participants’ discourses were impacted by their unique upbringing and experiences (Wodak & Meyer, 2001); however, their utterances shared commonalities in language and culture (Allen, 2000).

**Arius**

Arius was born in Connecticut and then moved to Alabama when he was six years old. He was a part of a family of five, and he was the middle child raised by his mom and dad. He described his dad as a hard worker and his mom as a nurturer. He stated neither of his parents had a college degree, but his mom had taken some college courses at a junior college but never finished. Arius attended a large high school that he described as racially balanced. He was a member of the band and baseball team. After graduation, he attended a historically black college on a band scholarship. He received an undergraduate degree in Political Science; however, he became interested in education when he volunteered at a mentoring program. He later received his emergency certification in Special Education and earned his master’s and specialist degrees in Educational Leadership. He has served eight years in administration in the same school district, with the last four years as a principal and the other four years as assistant principal. Arius is married with two kids and enjoys reading books and music.

**Byron**

Byron was born and raised in a rural town in Alabama with his mom and dad in the home. He described his hometown as the “Black Belt” of Alabama where the socioeconomic could be characterized as low to middle-income families. He is the oldest and has two sisters. He credited his support from his family as a centerpiece of his
upbringing. His mom was a teacher, and his dad worked in a cement plant. Both of his parents were college-educated. Byron came from a family of educators. He stated he had an uncle who was a dean at a university, other uncles and aunts who were principals, teachers, and school counselors. He also stated that one of his sisters is in the education profession as a psychometrist. He is married with three children, and his wife also works in education as a school counselor. As a high school student, he took advanced honors classes and played basketball. His educational experiences included his undergraduate degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and masters, specialist, and doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership. This is his fourth year serving as principal at his current school, and he has twelve years of experience as an administrator for three different school districts. Byron’s interests include reading and exercising.

Cedric

Cedric grew up in a small town in Alabama. He is one of nine children from his dad and one of seven children from his mom. He described his upbringing as being strong in faith as his dad was a pastor. Most of his siblings joined the military. He stated that he was often labeled and had to take speech classes in elementary school because of his size. He credited teachers during his seventh-grade year that motivated him and saw his potential. He described a Caucasian teacher who took the time to tell him that he could do whatever he wanted. He went on to excel academically in high school and earned a scholarship to play basketball in college. After receiving a bachelor’s in pre-physical therapy, Cedric discovered his passion relied on teaching and later joined a Project Teach program to become a certified teacher. He received his master’s in Special Education and leadership certification and a specialist degree in Educational Leadership. He has served
eleven years in the same school district as an administrator, with seven years as an assistant principal and the last four years as a principal. Cedric is married to his high school sweetheart and has four kids. Besides his administrative duties, he also is a pastor of a church. His interests include pastoring, basketball, and spending time with his family.

Daniel

Daniel was born and raised in Louisiana and was a first-generation college student in his family. He described his upbringing as humble beginnings in a low to middle-class family. His mom worked in a hospital, and his dad was a school bus driver and custodian. He described his school experiences as the best of both worlds, attending both public and private schools. He participated in football, track, and baseball at the private high school. He stated most African American students who attended the private school were either athletes, children of senators, or wealthy families. Despite his reluctance to attend the private school, his mom was adamant, and he attended to have the best educational experience. He described his experience as the best decision his mom made to get him to strive for more. He achieved and became interested in student politics, which led to him becoming senior class president for the Student Government Association. He received a scholarship to play football and continued to participate in student politics in college. Daniel received a bachelor’s degree in physical education and later earned his master’s, specialist, and doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership. He has served as an assistant principal for nine years in two different school districts. He is married with two kids, and his wife has earned a doctoral degree also. He loves to spend time with his family, watching football, and riding motorcycles.
Edmond

Edmond was born and raised in south Alabama and was the youngest of ten. He credited his family as a strong foundation because of his mom and dad’s influence. His parents adopted twins that increased their family size from 12 to 14. He described his home as the “hangout spot” on Sundays when other kids from the neighborhood would come eat and play. In the second grade, Edmond transferred to a predominantly Caucasian school because of desegregation orders. He recalled facing racism and his father’s death as challenges he faced at an early age. With encouragement from his mother, he was able to persevere through those challenges and do well in school. He also credited the school librarian and basketball coach, both African American males, who served as father figures that helped him get through challenges in high school. After he finished high school, he received a bachelor’s in Special Education and his master’s and specialist degrees in Educational Leadership. Edmond has served 13 years in administration at the same school district as an assistant principal.

Jerry

Jerry grew up in an urban city of Alabama and went through the city school system from elementary through high school. Jerry grew up in his grandmother’s home after his mom and dad divorced when he was three years old. He was his mom’s only child but the youngest child of his dad. His dad was a retired veteran and was a contractor. His mom was a claim adjuster for a company for over 30 years. He was the first to graduate with a four-year degree in his family. A strong African American community where everyone knew each other and went to school and church together was how he described his upbringing. In elementary school, his teachers were primarily
Caucasian. His first African American male educators were coaches in middle school. His desire to become an administrator was because of an African American male administrator at his high school who he considered a mentor. After high school, he went to a historically black university to play football and earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Education. Prior to his first teaching job, he was a collection officer at a bank and then started as a teacher and a track coach. He described his experiences teaching in rural, urban, and suburban school districts as opportunities that allowed him to grow professionally. Because of his desire to become an administrator, he decided to take a teaching job in a suburban school district that he described as a leap of faith. He felt that he had to get out of his comfort zone teaching in an urban setting to learn how to manage in a more diverse school. Being the only African American coach in the suburban school, he stated he dealt with more race relations in a spiritual and emotional role, particularly in coaching. Jerry has served in the role of assistant principal for four years in the same school district.

Marlon

Marlon grew up in a rural area in Alabama. He was born when his mom was 15 years of age and expressed that he grew up not knowing his biological father. Marlon described his family as blue-collar workers; however, it was hard to find work, so his mom moved to California, and he stayed with his grandparents. He described himself as a struggling student as he matriculated through his primary years of education because of a lack of academic support from home. Neither his grandmother nor grandfather earned a high school diploma, so they lacked the foundational skills to assist him with homework and studying. After taking remedial courses, he began to perform at grade level, and his
weakest subject areas became his strongest. He credited his turnaround to an African American male teacher who knew his family and saw him as a smart student who could achieve academically. He was also a member of the National Beta Club and the Student Government Association at his high school. Marlon was motivated to go to college by his uncle, who attended a historically black university. When faced with the decision after high school, Marlon had three options: work with his grandfather, go into the military, or go to college. He decided to attend college and was awarded scholarship money. He majored in electrical engineering before changing his major to Math Education, in which he earned a bachelor’s. He also earned a master’s and a specialist degree in Instructional Leadership. He has served seven years in administration as an assistant principal across two school districts.

Michael

Michael was born on a military base in Germany and moved to New York when he was three years old. He also lived in Florida and on a military base in Virginia before his dad became an educator in Alabama when Michael was eight years old. Michael described his upbringing in Alabama as a rural area in the Black Belt of Alabama while raised by his parents; his family spent some time living with his grandmother along with his two sisters. Michael reflected on his experience as a second-grade student, being one of two African American students in his class before moving to Alabama. When he moved to the Black Belt, the school demographics were primarily African American, while most Caucasian students went to private schools. His first experience with an African American teacher was when he moved to Alabama and expressed this was the first time that he learned about black history. He credited this experience as one of the
factors that led him to become interested in history. Despite him describing most of his childhood in a rural county surrounded by poverty, he stated trips to Washington, DC and college tours gave him the foundation needed to understand the importance of going to college. After initially deciding on computer science as a major in college, Michael decided to change his major to education because he lacked foundational math skills. He earned a bachelor’s degree in History Education and a master’s and specialist degree in Educational Leadership. He is enrolled in doctoral-level classes in Educational Leadership. Michael has served as an assistant principal for seven years in the same school district.

**Terrence**

Terrence was born in New York and grew up in a single-parent household with his mom, sister, and grandmother. His mom gave birth to him when she was 16 years of age. He described himself as a thinker who enjoyed designing and drawing. He went to a magnet high school that he defined as diverse. He stated his interest was to become an engineer. However, the college he went to did not have an engineering program, so he decided to major in mathematics. He received a bachelor’s degree in Mathematics and later received a master's and teaching certificate through an alternative program offered through a historically black college and university. Terrence stated that he decided to go into education because of a recruitment program that provided students with math degrees to teach. He also noted his passion for helping students was from when he was a counselor for summer camps and a dorm counselor for an Upward Bound program. Terrence is currently a principal and has served as an administrator for seven years with two school districts.
**Tremaine**

Tremaine grew up in an urban area of Alabama. He was raised by his mom and dad. Tremaine alluded to a strong Christian background as his mom and dad believed in the power of prayer and the values of hard work as a foundation of his family. He stated his goal to instill the same values in his family. Sports was a huge motivator in his life that kept him from getting into trouble. He enjoyed playing in high school and decided to play collegiately. His major was in Criminology. He stated his spiritual beliefs guided his path as he began to work as a child abuse investigator for a year. He then became a probation and parole officer for four years. Tremaine credited this experience as what motivated him to understand the role an African American male can have on society. His duties included providing resources for what he described as mainly African American males with opportunities to become productive members of society, so they do not go back to prison. His desire to coach led him into coaching at the collegiate level as an assistant strength and conditioning coach. He then received his teaching certification in physical education and later received his master’s and specialist degrees in Educational Leadership. He described his decision to go into education as a spiritual calling that chose him to have an opportunity to influence African American males at an early age. Tremaine is currently serving as a principal and has been in this role for four years in the same school district. He is married and has three kids.

**Themes**

Semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 90 minutes were conducted in this study. Interviews were recorded with a password-protected recording device, and each participant was provided the opportunity to review transcriptions for accuracy.
While reading transcriptions, themes and concepts were derived from interviews that were aligned vertically to determine the relationship of participants’ discourses. CDA was used as a method to reveal how African American male administrators make meaning of their roles and how structures of power hindered other African American males from becoming teachers and administrators.

A 20-question interview protocol was developed for study participants. Participants were first asked why they identified themselves as African American as opposed to Black, and then asked about their background and upbringing. During semi-structured interviews, participants were asked follow-up questions to gather more details. At the conclusion of the interviews, transcriptions were sent to participants for accuracy.

After participants verified transcriptions, the data was analyzed by reading over the transcriptions multiple times to gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ discourses. While reading over the transcriptions, intertextual relationships between participants’ interviews were coded and placed in a table using Microsoft Excel to organize the data in columns. Codes were created from detailed reviews and revisiting transcriptions to determine the relationship between each participant’s interview. Interview transcripts were compared horizontally to determine the intertextual relationship between each interview, as participants’ responses were compared with one another (Kristeva, 1980). Themes were developed from comparisons in the data. Through the analysis of the interviews, the following themes emerged (a) African American identity, (b) roles of African American male educators, (c) education policies and practices (d) societal norms, and (e) motivations to become an administrator. Themes were derived from shared discourses of 10 African American male administrators.
Table 2

*Summary of Themes and Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Codes</th>
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<td>Heritage</td>
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<td>Corporate/Work Setting</td>
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<td>Profession</td>
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<td>Roles of African American Male Educators</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>Representation</td>
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<td>Disciplinarians</td>
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<td>Consequence</td>
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<td>Lay the Hammer Down</td>
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<td><em>History Curriculum</em></td>
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<td><em>Negative Perceptions of African American Males</em></td>
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**Adapting to Societal Norms**

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<tr>
<th>Inhibited</th>
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<td>Prove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Over and Beyond</td>
<td>Can not get Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn Game of School</td>
<td>Wearing a Mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blend In</td>
<td>Code-switch</td>
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**Motivations**

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<td>Care</td>
</tr>
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<td>Inspiration</td>
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<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Positive Relationships**

| Rapport |
| Communication |
| Trust |
| Encouragement |

**Mentoring and Support**

| Father Figures |
| Motivate |
| Connecting |
| Potential |
| Resources |
| Challenge |

**Salaries**

| Take Care of Family |
| Pay |
| Increase |

**African American Identity**

Social identity of race and ethnicity has discursive patterns of how individuals assume their roles (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, participants were asked to describe themselves as either Black or African American and explain why. All 10 participants identified themselves as African American. They were also asked why they identified themselves as African American instead of Black. As defined in Chapter 1, African American was defined as natural-born United States citizens who have most of their origins in the original people of sub-Saharan Africa (Wright, 1995). Black was defined as
a term that constructs a social category for those who share characteristics of population groups of darker pigmentation of skin color (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2002).

The analysis revealed two common themes related to racial identity: ancestry and social systems. The dialogic nature of the participants’ discourses shared larger cultural textuality based on how participants identified themselves as African American. Participant's discussions on racial identity contained ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse (Allen, 2000). Thus, the participants’ utterances on identity shared how the relationship between history, ideology, and power can be shaped through discourse (Van Dijk, 1993).

Ancestry

The answers of seven of the participants revealed a connection between African American identity and ancestry, where ancestry was described as heritage or roots. Cedric talked about how his identity goes back to the motherland of Africa and identifying as African American allowed him the opportunity to hold on to his heritage. Terrence explained he was born in America, but his roots were African. Similarly, Marlon commented that because his ancestors were from Africa, he embraced the African American identity. Byron and Edmond explained the connection to ancestry a little differently, with Edmond describing African American as being tied to his culture, while Byron considered it an ethnicity. Jerry had a noticeably different explanation for connecting African American identity to ancestry, he described being Black by heritage, while being African American was an identity formed out of colonization.
According to Renniger and Williams (1966), racial groups by color names were a factor in racial prejudice. Furthermore, CRT theorists debated the construction of racial identity as a justification for slavery to conceptualize African Americans as property that defined black as enslaved and white as free (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Some participants shared oppositions to identifying as black. Byron mentioned that he did not want to be characterized as just a color because of the negativity associated with the term black. He stated, “The term black a lot of times has a negative connotation to it as dark and not of a good stature.” Similarly, Terrence considered the term black as just a shade or color and sought more meaning in his identity according to his roots. However, Arius shared black was just a color but expressed a lack of clarity of on why he sometimes identifies as African American. Arius stated:

Depending on what circle I’m in, I found myself referring to myself as black and other times I thought of myself as African American. When it comes to African American, I think of the destination of Africa but in America because I am an American, I have just been told that I am an African American. I think that is something that has been passed down that you are provided with on a form, and you check it because it was provided for you.

Although participants identified as African American, some of the participants referred to the term black to describe their communities. The dissonance on how participants viewed the term black as a negative connotation and used to identify themselves dependent upon on their environment revealed intertextual features of multiple meanings and interpretations. Furthermore, Daniel talked about how he identified as African American in America but outside the country, he identified as black. He stated:
I consider myself as African American, but outside of this place, I am a black man. I think part of that is institutionalized in that you have been taught to believe that is what you are. When you go to places outside of the country, you do not say you are African American.

Through the lens of CRT, racism is an inherent part of American civilization (Ladson-Billings, 1994). What makes this significant was that only in America, Daniel believed he needed to identify as African American. This shared language between participants to identify as African American was based on societal systems in America. In comparison, Marlon considered himself both, black and African American dependent upon the dynamics he was around. Likewise, Jerry stated he was black by heritage but African American by U.S. census data and colonization. Tremaine shared a perspective on African American identity in corporate and professional settings. He shared:

I identify as African American because I think it was the appropriate way to identify myself in terms of my race. To be identified in a corporate setting, I would like others to identify me was African American opposed to black. I think there are more professional issues that exist for me that makes me feel more comfortable. I think African American really accomplishes who I am as a black male and everything that I am striving to be.

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), one of the tenets of CRT was whiteness as a property that included the right of disposition, right to use and enjoyment, reputation and status property, and the absolute right to exclude. The shared language of participants discourses on why they chose African American instead of black included concepts of being accepted as Americans. Michael described how African American males yearned to be accepted in America and take advantage of the same rights and privileges. He stated:

Many people who look at African Americans and just consider us being black or a color miss out on the American part. Even though we had that African
component, I have never been to Africa. People do not identify us as being American, but we have to follow the laws of the land and the Constitution. So, if I am an American then I should be respected as well and be protected by the US Constitution and the laws of the land.

Findings revealed participants determined their racial identity through societal systems created by Eurocentric ideologies. While participants expressed pride and confidence in their heritage, they shared that their identity was conflated with their roots and acceptance in American ideologies. Participants identified themselves according to concepts that suggest implications, values, history, and consequences beyond the term African American because of the symbolic and cultural system that can only be decoded within the context of that cultural system. Furthermore, participants talked about their roles and their perceptions of how education support African American males through the lens of their identity shaped by societal systems that has historical roots of inferiority from slave heritage. CRT proposed that prioritizing the voices of people of color through narratives and storytelling (Cook, 2013; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, CRT provided a way for participants to share discourse on how they have experienced school as students, teachers, and administrators.

In further analysis, the concept of interest convergence was used as a tenet of CRT to signify the interests of African Americans would only be accommodated when those interests converged with European American interest of policy making and decision-making positions (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It has been documented that African American male educators have been recruited for discipline and control of African American students because most European American teachers lacked the skills to do so (Jackson et al., 2013). In this analysis, findings revealed African American males were hired or recruited to ensure the conformity to Eurocentric
ideologies by systemic rules through culture and curriculum. Therefore, participants’ discourses revealed how the roles of African American male educators were used to sustain Eurocentric norms in curriculum, pedagogy, and society in education.

Roles of African American Male Educators

The social construction of race was one principle of CRT that challenged how dominant society racialized different minority groups in different ways (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). The analysis revealed two themes related to African American male educator roles: coach and disciplinarian. Participants discourse shared assumptions that African American male educators were assumed to be coaches and disciplinarians. The analysis revealed ways African American males were characterized and limited to these roles in education.

Coaches

The role of coach was shared language among all participants. Participants’ responses revealed that many African American males who become educators were recruited and hired to be a coach. In fact, 9 of the 10 participants shared at some point in their teaching career that they were coaches. Edmond stated most African American males who started out in education wanted to become a coach. Arius noted that many African American males settle to become educators because of a desire to coach. Tremaine shared he too wanted to coach football which led him to the path of education. He stated:

I had a strong desire to coach football. When I first went into the workforce as a probation officer and served as a parole officer, those experiences gave me a different outlook on life, I wanted to be where I could make an impact before these young men would get into the criminal system, so I wanted to become an educator to make an impact as a football coach.
Daniel shared that most African American males assumed roles of either a coach or administrator in education and how his desire to coach led him to become a teacher.

He stated:

I wanted to coach and be around kids because I enjoyed imparting in their lives. My first 5 to 6 years of teaching was the best time in my life because I was teaching health and driver education, while coaching football.

Terrence stated many African American males who wanted to coach were often certified in either physical education or social studies. Jerry agreed and believed the reason was because certifications in history and physical education were less challenging and was a path for African American males to certify to become coaches. Unfortunately, Jerry connected the above as a reason that made it harder to get a job because it created a larger pool of candidates. Participants' responses revealed that African American male teachers desired to coach influenced the type of teacher certifications they would pursue.

Cedric and Byron provided similar responses to African American male educators who look to secondary certifications, which limited exposure for elementary students to African American male educators. Cedric stated, “What I see currently right now for African American males in education, I don’t see many in elementary education. I see most being coaches and you know that comes with becoming certified in history.”

Byron shared his thoughts on why African American males do not consider elementary certifications because of the desire to coach. Byron stated:

At the elementary level, you are not going to have a ton of African American men going into education to teach elementary because they want to be a coach. If you see an African American male in elementary schools, he is more likely to be a custodian than a teacher or administrator. This is unfortunate because that is where I feel they can be most impactful, so we can catch many of our students at an early age.
However, Michael had a different perspective on his path to become an educator. He shared the challenges he faced when he applied for a teaching position because he had no coaching experience or desire to become a coach. He shared that he thought he was overlooked for some teaching positions because he did not coach. He stated, “The challenge I faced looking for my first teaching job was that I was not interested in coaching. I was not passionate about coaching. I was passionate about teaching history.”

**Disciplinarian**

The shared language of the role of disciplinarian was mentioned by participants as they defined their roles as administrators. Arius stated African American male administrators were needed in the hall for behaviors and not for leadership or to make instructional decisions. Cedric shared that he believed teachers thought he was only hired to be a disciplinarian and wanted him to “lay the hammer down” on students who were referred to his office. Likewise, Terrence noted that he was restricted by code of conduct policies when he was expected to discipline students. He stated:

> You know, when it comes to the disciplinarian role. We (African American male administrators) must make the decision on what kind of discipline a student gets. Often, we do not want to appear to be soft by the faculty or to make teachers happy. We often give students a consequence that I feel like many times we (African American male administrators) are contributing to the school to prison pipeline by basically sending our African American males away from the classrooms and perpetuating the cycle of a revolving door of getting in and out of jail.

When African American male administrators were relegated to disciplinarian roles, it hindered opportunities for them to build positive relationships with African American male students. This perspective was supported by a study from Kunesh and Noltemyer (2019) which noted when African American male students were suspended
from school; their trust in authority has been damaged. Therefore, the one individual who African American male students may look to for support become another symbol of oppression in school.

In contrast, Jerry offered a different perspective to his role as a disciplinarian. He stated:

When I was first hired to become assistant principal here, I had to do some convincing when I walked in the door. It was not enough that I was an African American male. I was well educated and well spoken, but that was not enough like I had to go above and beyond to gain the trust of my faculty and gain the trust of my kids. It took me awhile to establish a rapport where it took a couple of times to open this code of conduct book and send a couple of kids to alternative school to get my message across.

The shared discourse from the participants shared dialectal features on how their roles as disciplinarians were perceived to provide stern measures of control. Other aspects of the role of disciplinarian stated by participants included where African American male administrators were hired. Michael shared African American male administrators were often hired in the most challenging schools with the responsibility to maintain order. Michael observed in his school district that many African American male assistant principals who have been promoted to principal were promoted in predominantly African American schools with the lowest test scores, chronic absenteeism, and high discipline rates.

However, Byron reflected on his first assistant principal experience and was thankful for his former principal who provided him with opportunities to do more than discipline but learn all parts of administration. He stated:

I had a principal that hired me, and she told me that I was hired because I was the best person for the job. She said it did not matter how old you were, what race you were, or gender. I was lucky to have a principal who was honest with me and
that gave me a good experience. The quality of that experience made me into the leader that I am now because I learned how to do things correctly. She gave me an opportunity to do more than just discipline and managerial things.

Byron also noted how principal opportunities were limited as he began to interview for principal openings. He stated:

I applied to multiple jobs when I decided to pursue principal openings. The only two school districts that gave me a call back were two urban, mostly African American schools. I received offers from both of those interviews. I interviewed with other school districts that I would consider diverse, suburban, or over the mountain type schools and I did not get those jobs.

Research used to support findings included a study by Bass and Alston (2018) that mirrored what was shared on this topic. The study suggested that while African American male principals presided over schools with challenges, their primary responsibility was to get students to behave, instead of the academic support needed to provide teachers and students. As a result, negative results in student performance on standardized assessments have an impact on how principals were evaluated. Therefore, African American male principals in these schools were perceived to be ineffective, which limited future career advancement opportunities. In addition, if any improvements were made, the risk of being rewarded was given to the principal with a chance to turnaround another school that has similar challenges (Bass & Alston, 2018).

The role of coach and disciplinarian were shared language among participants that has an impact on how African American males were perceived in education. Through the theoretical lens of CRT, African American male administrators were relegated to coaching and disciplinarian roles based on identity and the need to control African American students to benefit Eurocentric ideals in curriculum and social norms in education. Therefore, these roles limited the perception of African American male
administrators as developers in policy changes to enhance learning in curriculum and pedagogy.

Cedric shared how this stigma may limit African American males. He stated, “I think, unfortunately, in some instances, they are not respected as much as they should be based on the instructional leadership standpoint, they have that stigma of he is just a coach.” Terrence noted that many African American male coaches in the field of education has the belief that they were a coach first and a teacher second. He stated:

A lot of African American male coaches consider themselves a coach first and teacher second. So, their concentration on the teaching aspect is not there so they lose out on the instructional standpoint of administration. They just focus on the athletic aspect and then you kind of get sucked into coaching and you lose kids because they are not athletes that are in your class, so they miss out on skills that they could provide for them.

Educational Policies and Practices

Another concept of CRT included colorblindness; according to Milner (2007), colorblind teachers lacked the experiences to connect with African American students and suggested that because of racial progress, laws and policies were objective and race neutral by institutional policies and practices (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The analysis revealed common themes of educational policies and practices in history curriculum and pedagogy. Participants discourse revealed ways history curriculum and pedagogy included colorblind concepts of how assessment and content was presented in schools.

History Curriculum

CDA often revealed that those in power have access to how discourse has been sustained and reproduced (Van Dijk, 1993). Therefore, curriculum has been used to nationalize students to learn a common history, literature, and language to embrace
Eurocentric ideologies. Through participants discourses, common themes that history content in the curriculum included some biases toward Eurocentric ideologies.

Throughout participants discourses, many of them shared their oppositions on the history curriculum taught in schools. Byron shared his perspective on historical content and how it lacked relevance to African American students. He stated:

African American students learn the same history. How are you going to take pride in something that you know nothing about? We don’t learn about African American history in our schools because it’s not part of the curriculum. So, you know what drives that, and I think we need to do better about embracing that history.

Cedric shared similar discourse in the way African American history has been taught in schools to include primarily slavery. He shared misinterpretations of the way history has been taught has promoted system and structures that hindered African Americans. He stated:

We have to educate people, especially our own kids. Their history did not start in slavery. You know even though we were enslaved as a people here that don’t mean that makes you a slave. The misinterpretations that create systems and structures keep people, you know, not in chains but brains in chains. I really think powerful conversations would lead to positive outcomes because kids are being turned off from history. Who wants to hear about the negative effects of slavery? You have to be factual on the issues and bring out themes of perseverance and endurance but not inferiority or superiority. Also, teach that it was really about capitalism and economics, but those are the conversations people are not ready for.

Further analysis using CRT as a theoretical lens included the way curriculum was structured. Tremaine noted how those in power controlled history content in the curriculum. He stated:

Everyone who writes a book wants to be the superhero in their story. So, if there is a book about you, your culture, and your experiences, you are going to be the superhero in that book. It is going to be based on that particular culture. If all the books and everything we had is intentionally shaped by the predominant culture, how can we talk about Alabama history not allow the African American culture to
be embraced. The way we shaped the curriculum and what we talk to our students about has been greatly impacted by that and it’s a complete silence on the issue on many things that aren’t in our history books that should be in our history books. From a systemic level, we’re not at the stage so we’re not at the table to be able to make those decisions.

The statement made by Tremaine described how cultural dominance impacted the curriculum. He continued to share how Christopher Columbus and other historical figures have been designated heroes in American history despite some accounts that have been recorded of them owning slaves, killing natives, and taking over native lands.

Jerry shared his perspective on how history content was controlled and pointed out textbooks in his office and stated:

There are two sets of books over there but nothing in that book speaks to the accomplishments or the leadership of African American males or females. If there are any, it is far and few between. So, when you expect African American kids to sit in a class for minutes and learn about the Confederate War and what it was about. You are not telling them nothing that they don’t already know and experience. The only thing you are telling them is why. And most of the time it does not give them a why anyway. So, I think those curriculums are all based on what they want you to know and not what you should know to empower our kids. I think all of it coincides together. I think one creates the problem and there is no platform for us to speak on it without sounding radical, rude, angry, or ungrateful.

Marlon stated originators of mathematics were of European and African descent, but it was not discussed in the curriculum. Marlon stated: “A lot of contributions from African Americans are not given to our students. It makes you question if those who control what is taught to our kids is holding some information back on purpose.”

Daniel furthered the narrative on history and talked about how students were taught a certain history. However, he expressed some hope in some of the conversations he observed in his school. He stated:

Students are whitewashed over black history. There are nuggets of black history that come up in our school. Although we don’t have a black history month
program, I think the conversations are shifting to where history classes are aware of what is happening now in our country and even going back to talk about Juneteenth and other parts of history. Now is the time. If there aren’t discussions about how African Americans contributed to the rise in this country, I think even more now the fact that we have an African American woman running for vice president will speak volumes to how people are coming together.

Arius shared how curriculum impacted some African American males from becoming teachers, he shared conversations he had with other African American males who expressed disinterest in teaching content they disagreed with. These findings were supported by Pabon (2016) who noted that African American males were encouraged to enter the teaching field but became dissatisfied with the pressures of teaching a standardized curriculum. Furthermore, African American male teachers felt that standardized curriculum has not benefited African American students (Pabon, 2016).

**Pedagogy**

CRT theorists challenged the way teachers were professionally trained in college that reflected an individualistic and cultural deficit to explain the low minority educational achievement of African American students (Solorzano, 1997). To replace dialectal practices of African American students, pedagogical practices influenced by European American middle-class norms were used to replace the way African American students talk, write, and act (Paris, 2012). The language of African American students and other students of color have been considered unworthy of a place in European American society (Paris, 2012). Therefore, the findings suggested that African American male students struggled academically because of a lack of culturally sustaining pedagogical practices (Paris, 2012). According to Price-Dennis and Souto-Manning (2011), teachers were not well prepared in pre-service teacher education programs to
manage students in culturally relevant ways and to mitigate cultural conflicts in most teacher education programs. The shared language of the participants was reflected in their responses as students, teachers, and administrators.

The analysis of the interviews included shared language among the participants that revealed ways pedagogy has been used to teach African American male students. Participants shared discourse when describing their personal experiences and the experiences of African American male students. Arius shared that he did not remember connecting with any of his teachers while he was a student, and he did not excel in academics.

The findings revealed that teachers presented content according to their own culture and experiences. Tremaine stated that beliefs were shaped through experiences, and because many experiences of African American males were not understood by teachers, it caused a disconnect in how pedagogical practices have been developed. He continued that pedagogy was developed the same way in teachers in that their experiences influenced how they perceived training and professional development. Therefore, the practices that were developed to ensure effective pedagogical practices were rooted in how the dominant culture has influence on how teachers were prepared to deliver content. He noted that teachers must expose themselves to a variety of cultures to provide content to their students.

However, norms have prevented change in teaching practices. Daniel stated that teachers were creatures of habit and that over the years, the practices of teaching continued to remain the same over the years. He said that he had experiences where teachers would state that this was how we do things, and this was what students needed to
learn to be successful. Similarly, Edmond shared that teachers referred to what was comfortable with no desire to improve their practice and made statements such as this has been how I taught. Arius felt that teachers have not adapted because of a preference on how they felt African American male students should learn:

You know, when it comes to what teachers look for in students is what is considered a preference and a norm. So, when an African American male student comes into their classroom and does not receive the information the same or behave a certain way. Teachers respond with what is their preference with a cookie-cutter approach to education, and then African American male students who do not learn the same as the teacher’s preference are sent out of the classroom because of a disconnect.

Jerry talked about how European American teachers lacked cultural experiences to teach African American students. Jerry stated:

White teachers don’t understand African American students’ background and their family dynamics. White teachers don’t know how to teach African American kids. They don’t know how to find the relevance to make their lessons coincide with what is considered the black experience or lifestyle.

Daniel noted that African American male students were disengaged from learning because they were bored in class. Consequently, the achievement of African American male students has continued to show disproportionate gaps in learning outcomes. Participants agreed with the perception that African American male students do not want to learn was a misconception that lowered academic expectations.

Because teachers were not familiar with experiences or lifestyles of African American male students, they lacked training on cultural pedagogies to make lessons relevant to African American male students. Marlon stated African American male students must be kept in their world so they would gravitate toward lessons. Furthermore, when teachers become knowledgeable and relate content to what African American male
students experience outside the walls of the school, they engage in culturally
responsiveness teaching strategies that engage students to learn the curriculum (Ladson-
Billings, 2009).

For example, Arius shared an experience with an observation of one of his teachers, and a group of African American male students:

I went to observe one of my English teachers who was having trouble with one group of boys. She said they wouldn't write paragraphs. So, I printed out some clean rap lyrics. I said, let’s omit some of the things she was teaching that included verbs and verb agreements and give that to them. And they would have to come up with a different verb that they have to put into these rap lyrics. Those kids ate that assignment up. They were engaged, and I could tell that lit a fire in them.

Terrence shared that when he was a teacher that he was able to reach his students because he had a different delivery method that related to his students’ experiences. He stated:

I got my teaching certification in mathematics, and I had to find ways to make the content be relatable. During planning, I would change the verbiage of the textbooks to be sure my students understood the word problems that were in the text. I knew the language my students would understand because we spoke the same language. So, I would just change it so I could teach them the math vocabulary by relating to things that they understood.

These findings revealed how participants were able to navigate between two social worlds through discourse. As African American males, participants used what they understood from their culture and background to engage African American male students in the lesson.

Furthermore, Michael described how knowledge has been assessed over the years and stated that the way students were assessed must be adapted to include other measures of proficiency. He shared that many African American males learn with more hands-on learning, but standardized testing does not address hands-on learning as a means of
assessment. He concluded that the delivery of instruction had not been tailored to the needs of African American males. He reflected on his experience as a teacher and how he taught a lesson on the presidential election. He shared that an African American male student who was struggling had the opportunity to watch a rap video on a presidential election debate. He shared that the student came back to him excited and was able to share what the points were from the debate. Michael described his exuberance when he realized how to reach this student:

That was my light bulb moment and made me realize that it was all about our strategies. What are we doing to reach him? He did not learn from the notes on the board and everything else. I found a medium. That's something that he was comfortable. He was able to go and embrace it and come back with that. Tell me why this is beneficial information. To be able to get the information they need, they need that experience.

Likewise, Byron shared that when it came to teaching African American male students that it was never a challenge for him because it felt natural. He shared that he was able to relate to African American male students because of shared experiences. Edmond spoke on the importance of African American males to become educators so they could collaborate with teachers and recommend strategies to engage African American male students.

The normed pedagogical practices that hindered African American male student success has been documented and disputed by other researchers. Paris (2012) termed culturally sustaining pedagogy as a practice that required sustaining cultural and linguistic competence of various cultures of students while simultaneously providing access to the dominant cultural competence. Therefore, the analysis revealed that African American culture and linguistics must be embraced so teachers can effectively teach African American male students.
Through the analysis of the interviews, participants shared common perspectives on how assessments included implicit biases and lacked fairness when comparing their students to students who attended predominantly European American schools. These findings were consistent with previous research that argued assessments could not be fair and equitable without any efforts to ensure assessments included perspectives from diverse communities (Delpit, 2006). Therefore, without equitable practices in assessments, predominantly African American schools will continue to be perpetuated by school accountability measures that favored curriculum set by Eurocentric norms.

Because of state accountability, standardized testing has been used to determine school effectiveness. In the state of Alabama, schools were graded using an A-F grading system that demonstrated A as excellent progress to F as failing to make adequate progress. In the analysis of the interviews, participants discussed how dominant cultural norms influenced the content in standardized testing. In high schools in Alabama, schools average scores on the American College Test (ACT) were used as the standardized test to measure school performance. Terrence discussed how the content in the ACT has negatively affected predominantly African American schools because it was often perceived that these students cannot be successful in college because of low ACT scores. He stated:

Because of how tests are biased to a certain standard in a certain culture, the questions that are asked on these tests are questions that our students do not have the experience, so many times they get frustrated and skip over those questions.

Byron shared that state’s accountability measures do not consider cultural differences in assessments. He stated that he was reviewing with some of his students and the question included some terminology his students were not familiar with, “I remember
reading a question to a group of juniors, and the question had ‘toboggan.’ My students were like what does this mean. I told them it was another word for skullcap.” These statements highlighted the significance of how discourse influenced the way content was presented on standardized tests. Findings revealed because African American students did not relate to the curriculum, their scores on standardized assessments fell below the norm. Furthermore, other findings revealed that African American males struggled to pass teacher certification exams because of similar reasons.

**Societal Norms**

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), the CRT tenet of property functions of whiteness include rights of disposition. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated “When students are rewarded only for conformity to perceived “white norms” or sanctioned for cultural practices (e.g., dress speech patterns, unauthorized conceptions of knowledge), white property is being rendered alienable” (p. 59). Participants' responses revealed ways this concept of conformity was used to navigate challenges to become administrators. The analysis revealed common themes of societal norms on African American males: negative perceptions of African American males and adapting to societal norms.

**Negative Perceptions of African American Males**

When African American males do not adapt to societal norms, images as thugs who demonstrate a lack of interest in school and academics has been constructed that included discursive formations and cultural practices (Stinson, 2017). CRT challenged how mainstream media promoted negative stereotypes of African American males in films, television, and print (Solorzano, 1997). Participants discourses revealed ways
African American male students have been subjected to being labeled as threats with aggressive behaviors that needed to be controlled.

Arius talked about how African American male students compared to European American male students. He mentioned that European American male students would display similar behaviors as African American male students but were provided with accommodations for conduct disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He stated: “A white male student is given labels such as conduct disorder or ADHD, but an African American male student is labeled emotionally disturbed, which cause teachers to respond to the label and not the student.” Furthermore, Arius described how African American male passion could be misinterpreted as aggressive:

This perception that our African American male students are aggressive is all about the lack of experience by the teachers. They do not know how these young men react. Think about how we praise these boys from an early age on the football field to be passionate. Then once they are passionate about something in school, then it is, they are being too aggressive. So early on in primary grades, teachers who do not understand how to identify passion from aggressiveness, characterize it all as, oh, that is aggression, and I do not like that. It needs to be removed from my classroom. At that point, that is where the referrals come in.

Cedric described past experiences from elementary school. He stated he was taught by majority European American teachers who he believed were intimidated and labeled him as a threat. He was placed in intervention programs and tested for special education in elementary school. He talked about his stature as an African American male student who was bigger than his classmates. He stated:

I know teachers were intimidated and labeled me early on because of my race and size. It was because I had a different learning style that they did not understand. I was a big kid, but it did not mean I was a bad kid.
These findings were consistent with previous research on negative societal imaging (Caton, 2012; Harris & Kruger, 2019; Jackson & Moore, 2008; Jenkins, 2006; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Because of negative societal imaging of African American males, participants revealed that there were misconceptions that African American male students are dangerous. Because the behaviors of African American male students were not considered the norm, they were labeled at risk and needed interventions. The findings revealed that African American male administrators were needed to challenge these norms because of shared experiences with African American male students.

Consequently, when teachers do not relate or were not sensitive to the experiences of African American male students, the findings suggested that teachers referred African American male students for special education for academic or behavioral support. Terrence discussed the impact on how special education referrals influenced the development of African American student perspective of self:

It’s all about the labels we place on our students. When they get used to having labels that consider them having learning disabilities, and so forth and so on, you know someone has given them this label for so long, they take on that personality of believing that they cannot learn because we have told them for so long, they have a learning disability.

Byron noted how special education referrals were used as interventions for African American male students who were behind academically. Instead of making a concentrated effort to close the achievement gap of African American males, Byron believed Byron believed that teachers referred African American males to special education because of low academic expectations. Therefore, special education has been used as a preferred academic intervention for African American male students (Moore et
This practice is problematic for African American male students because it may hinder their opportunities to enter college and be successful (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

Furthermore, other findings included that the perception of African American males as threats do not halt at schooling experiences but may follow them in the workforce and can hinder some from entering the teaching field. Michael noted the challenges he experienced when he began to interview for teaching positions. He believed interviewers felt threatened because he was an African American male. He stated:

> When I first got my degree, I interviewed at a predominantly White school. Just to be honest, I notice that one African American male that was in the school wasn't as masculine in his delivery. So, I felt like for people to feel safe, I had to show more feminine qualities to get a job in certain environments. I feel that is the challenge for an African American male who wants to teach. People just feel threatened.

In comparison, Jerry shared similar experiences and believed employers were reluctant to hire African American males. He noted employers would not hire him because of a fear that he may not display professionalism. He stated he was asked in an interview how would he respond if an angry parent called him a racial slur. Michael concluded that the negative perception of African American males was from ideologies and principles that were based on slavery and Jim Crow laws. He stated:

> You do not have to go back too far in history to see how African American males are perceived. With all the stuff that has happened in 2020, the narrative remains the same in all the injustices that have happened. In most cases, it has been an African American male. Better yet, an unarmed African American male. And so, you have to ask why are all the narratives the same? It is because we are looked upon as threats. I think it is an unconscious bias of those who have to make the decisions that if I give him this opportunity, what is going to happen.
The findings of this study revealed that African American male students were more likely to be referred to special education because of negatively constructed images. The findings also revealed that misconceptions of African American male students as unable to learn and display inappropriate behaviors as barriers to their success in school. As a result, African American male students were subjected to low academic expectations and were referred more for discipline.

Edmond shared what he observed when he attended special education eligibility meetings for African American male students. He shared how the label of emotionally disturbed has adverse effects for African American male students. He adamantly expressed:

A lot of African American males get classified as emotionally disturbed. The question is, what are they going to do when they finish school? No one is going to hire you, and you know it is going to be really hard to transition after high school. It is going to be difficult for those students to go into the military too.

A study by Moore et al. (2008) supported Edmond’s observation that African American male students are more likely to be identified as emotionally disturbed.

**Adapting to Societal Norms**

Through the analysis of the interviews, findings revealed that participants believed that African American males must adapt to societal norms to be successful. Participants shared their personal narratives and described ways they adapted to societal norms as student, teacher, and administrator. Also, participants discussed how rules or codes of dominant cultural norms affect African American male students. According to Delpit (2006), to participate in a culture dominated by norms, one must understand the
codes or rules. Delpit (2006) described the rules or codes as “ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting” (p. 25).

The findings suggested that participants felt the need to work twice as hard as their counterparts and having to prove their value to succeed in their profession. Daniel, who is an assistant principal at a predominantly European American school, stated: “At the end of the day, it goes back to I got to prove that I belong here, and I got to work two times harder than that guy to show you that I belong here.” Edmond shared that as an African American male, he never wanted to get comfortable and that he needed to continue to set personal and professional goals to always be better than others. Jerry stated that he felt he had to go over and beyond to gain the trust of the faculty more so than if he was a European American male because he did not represent what authority looks like to his faculty and students. Michael felt as though he had to prove he was knowledgeable in his position because of faculty, and at times, parents would question him. He shared:

I was helping a parent with a 504 plan, and there were some things that needed to be changed. I know I was very knowledgeable of 504s and what would be reasonable accommodations. The parent was upset with some of the changes that took place and stated that when I showed up, there has been a dark cloud.

The findings revealed participants believed that they needed to work harder because of negative stereotypes. Furthermore, participants felt that they had to be aware of their appearance, demeanor, and speech to succeed in education. Through the analysis of the interviews, participants shared that in some ways they felt the need to sacrifice part of their culture to succeed as administrators. For example, Daniel stated that he had to learn how to play the game of school to succeed because the way he grew up was different than the private school he attended. Therefore, he had to learn how to talk,
dress, and act differently to fit in with the rest of his classmates. Findings also revealed because participants represented a small percentage of African American males in education, they felt a responsibility to be a model for all African American male educators.

Jerry stated that he made it a priority to be sure to overdress at times in order be sure to appear professional to his students and his colleagues. Terrence stated he knew he had to dress a certain way to keep a job and model professionalism for his students. Byron made a similar observation and stated:

I feel like I must always be better and be mindful of those who I connect with because I feel like I represent more than just myself. I must make sure that I am seen in a positive light because of what is projected by the media of African American males. I take on the responsibility to change the narrative, so I do things such as dressing a certain way to be sure that I am a good representation of what a successful African American looks like. It goes back to when I was in college, and I would see some African American males come to class with wave caps on and things of that nature. I wanted to make sure that I would not do things like that.

Furthermore, Terrence described the need to adapt through his demeanor and the way he spoke. He stated:

Despite the way I was brought up, you know; this was the way I moved. I had to adapt to almost everything. Even the way I talk, you know I had to find that balance. When I was in a county school, knowing I was really the only minority, I really had to watch what I do. I knew I couldn't be too Black; you know...I had to really kind of watch how I talked and acted so I wasn't stereotyped. You really have to kind of be conscious of how you move, how you step, how you talk. I felt I had no choice.

In comparison, participants also mentioned that in some cases that they felt the need to adapt through code-switching. Tremaine shared his thoughts on how he communicated in different arenas with students, colleagues, and parents. He stated:

I have to be able to do what is called code-switch. You have to be able to adapt to the African American population and in that social setting, but then you have to
be able to adapt to many other settings as well. You know, to really understand that you have to be from a culture that knows it is necessary. I have to be able to navigate to a particular area and space depending on who I am talking to and the setting. I have to have that balance.

Daniel discussed aspects of code-switching as well:

You know I can talk to you in a certain way and use certain slang because we are from the same house. But then I can code-switch and talk to you in a whole different way in a professional setting. You have to know who you are talking to depending on where you are, but at the same time, you have to be true to yourself too as well and know that this is who I am.

Byron compared his experience on how he spoke to students when he was an administrator for a predominantly European American school:

When I was hired at that high school, I was more cognizant of the setting. I would not say something like ‘hey man, you need to cut that out’ or ‘we don’t do that around here.’ I did not want to speak that way because I did not want to be viewed as uneducated or to be using slang terminology. But now, in my current setting (predominantly Black school), I can be a little more relaxed and comfortable now. Also, I know my students understand where I am coming from. I explain to my young men at my school that they have to be able to converse with people in different areas and that there is a time and place for everything.

Participants embraced their African American racial identities; however, the significance of their discussions revealed how hegemonic structures has forced cultural dominance on African American males. More so, participants discussed how they felt compromised while acting in their roles as administrators.

African American male administrators have the responsibility to make decisions on instruction, discipline, and other school related policies and practices. However, participants shared that they had to be cautious when they shared their ideas so they would not be perceived as insubordinate or angry. Yet, they understood the importance of using their voices to enact change. Daniel stated, “I had to learn the rules before I could
play the game” when referring to speaking up on issues. He explained that he had to learn the culture of his school before he could change the way things were done.

Also, Marlon shared his experiences working at a predominantly European American school. He attended a meeting where school leaders were discussing policy changes. He stated:

I came into the meeting, and to be honest, it was hard for me. I did not want to be the angry black man, but it was something that I felt needed to change, so I shared my thoughts. I can tell they took it, as I was angry and disrespectful because of the look on everyone’s faces. I was not disrespectful. I just wanted them to understand what I meant and how this particular policy was not fair to all of our students.

The findings revealed participants remained silent on some issues to keep from being reprimanded. These findings have historical implications on the silencing of African Americans through hegemonic norms that rules out contrasting ideas of dominant ideologies (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In addition, participants felt the need to make colleagues feel comfortable by at times, stepping outside their comfort zones. For example, Arius stated, “I am always trying to make sure to speak and smile so people will not think I am not a nice person. I feel like I am always wearing a mask.” Arius described himself as an introvert but felt as though he needed to demonstrate an outgoing personality because he did not want teachers to be intimidated.

Other findings revealed how policies and school code of conduct were written as a tool to target African American students. Participants suggested that dress code policies and subjective infractions were violations that have a cultural bias. Jerry shared his thoughts on how the code of conduct was written. He stated: “I do feel like our code of conduct is written to speak to the actions of African American students, especially the dress code.” Tremaine also shared this perspective. He stated, “I question what particular
culture these rules come from…who deemed what is professional and what professional look like? Why should our students who have a culture of their own be limited to what someone else say they should look like?”

Similarly, Daniel questioned how the code of conduct was written and interpreted. He explained that administrators are in the position to determine how the code of conduct was interpreted and, depending on how certain infractions were perceived, may lead to more violations for African American males. Likewise, Cedric described his experience when African American students were sent to his office for disrespect. He stated because of implicit biases teachers referred African American students for discipline because of a lack of cultural awareness.

The subjectivity of African American male students’ infractions on discipline has been under investigation from previous researchers (Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019; Skiba et al., 2002; Townsend, 2000). The cultural norms and behavioral expectations of mostly European American female teachers have been determining factors to why African American male students have received referrals for infractions such as disrespect and threats (Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019). These participants felt that African American male students must understand cultural norms to navigate through cultural challenges. However, participants also shared a responsibility to change the way policies impact African American male students. Despite the risk and apprehensions to voice their concerns, they felt that the need outweighed the risk. Tremaine concluded:

I don’t think we should ever give up on change. I don’t think we should do it in a disruptive way and rock the boat, but you have to voice your concern, or there is no need to be in that organization. I think you have to find a place where you can make an impact.
Motivations to Become an Administrator

According to Muhammad et al. (2019), “Research shows that a significant contribution to resilience in Black males comes from their homes, communities, and schools” (p. 115). Interviews from the participants revealed ways they were supported to become administrators and encouraged to use their influence to support African American male students and teachers. Participants discourses shared that they were motivated to become administrators because of their sense of purpose and spirituality, positive relationships, support from mentors, and opportunities to increase their salaries. Participants were motivated by challenges and responsibilities of helping their students be successful. During the interviews, participants were enthusiastic while discussing their responsibilities as administrators to be role models for their students. Also, the challenge to persevere despite the odds that were stacked against them and their students were motivators to succeed. They all shared their careers were fulfilling and could not be replicated with any other profession. The analysis revealed common themes that motivated participants to become administrators: sense of purpose and spirituality, positive relationships, support from mentors, and salaries.

Sense of Purpose and Spirituality

Analysis revealed common themes of purpose and spirituality as shared language from participants included passion and purpose. Findings revealed participants were inspired to serve their students through concepts of spirituality. Palmer (2003) defined spirituality as “an eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than our own egos” (p. 377). For example, Tremaine defined his role as a “calling and ministry” to influence the lives of students, and more specifically, African American males. He noted
his inspiration to become an administrator so that he could be a catalyst of change for students because he did not want them to go through the same experiences as him. Likewise, Cedric noted he wanted to become an administrator to provide at risk students with support because these students were marginalized and not given the opportunities to change. In comparison, Arius was motivated to support teachers so teachers could help students. He stated, “I knew as a teacher I could only impact a few students, but as an administrator, I could affect so many more.” Similarly, Michael wanted to share strategies he used with his students and provide teachers with feedback on effective instructional practices.

Furthermore, the concept to connect with something larger was related to how participants felt about how their salaries compared to their potential to impact students’ lives. Tremaine, who was a former probation officer, shared despite the lack of financial benefits of education, he saw administration as an opportunity to intercept troubled students before they became products of the criminal justice system. He felt strongly that change had to happen by enacting policies as an administrator. He referenced President Obama and stated:

And to really make a difference was in the policy and impacting what goes on behind the scenes...but I look at President Obama. He didn't have a relationship with millions of African American people. However, what he did have was a way to inspire and impact policies that really made a difference. He has done something by impacting laws and policies but also in motivating other African American and minority children that they could accomplish something unimaginable.

Unfortunately, many African American males do not have the opportunity to impact education policies because of the limited number of African American male administrators. Tremaine metaphorically described this issue as not having a seat at the
dinner table to have conversations with policymakers and influencers. He noted that the major problem is that African American males do not have the degrees and certifications “to be brought into the house to sit at the table where changes were made.” Therefore, participants’ sense of purpose inspired them to become administrators and navigate through challenges they faced as students and teachers.

**Positive Relationships**

Dantley (2005) noted that deeper meanings of spirituality included who African American school leaders were at their core and the way they connected to their students and others. Findings revealed that this is also true for participants of this study in that serving as positive role models and father figures motivated them in their leadership roles. Participants spoke about the importance of African American male representation in schools so African American students would have someone that can relate and build trust. Findings included themes of connecting and communicating with students, building positive rapports, encouragement, and establishing relationships, were shared language among participants.

Findings also revealed that trust was gained when participants established positive relationships with their students. Tremaine shared positive relationships created trust with his students. Daniel noted students placed trust in him as a father figure. Likewise, Arius shared an example on how he established trust with some of his students:

I have a group of males who are considered at risk that either is failing or have multiple discipline infractions. And on top of that, they are majority African American. I looked up their parental contact and noticed that a large percentage of them are being raised by grandmothers or mothers. There were not even grandfathers on their parent contact. So, you know, I saw this as an issue and wanted to allow them a chance to come and eat lunch with me twice a week so we can just chop it up.
Not only did Arius noticed this as an opportunity to build relationships with students, but also as an opportunity for his students to identify with someone at the school.

In comparison, Edmond also shared how he was able to counsel African American male students because they identified with him. He stated:

> When some of my African American male students come into my office, the first thing that comes out of their mouth is they don’t want me here anyway. So, I give them a free opportunity to say what they mean and explain to me why. I always tell them that at my age now, I am still defining my character, and it is never going to stop. It only takes a few seconds to destroy your character, so do not let anyone else define it for you. I always go back and tell them my story, so they know I can relate to them in some way. I tell them how things were not always fair for me, but what I had to do to be successful.

Positive relationships extended beyond participants and their students. Marlon shared how positive relationships with parents has been beneficial. He explained that many parents would thank him for the time he placed in ensuring that they were included and informed about their students’ success. He reflected on his own upbringing in a single-parent household and explained the reasons why positive relationships with parents was important:

> I pride myself on relationship building and especially with parents. Sometimes parents do not show up to open houses or parent conferences because they work two or three jobs. A lot of times, it’s a lack of resources to the parents that are needed to help our students. Regardless, without the relationships, we do not know if a parent has a need that we can help them with.

African American males need for affiliation has been manifested in positive relationships (Delpit, 2006). Shared discourse from the participants was consistent with these findings from previous research as common themes of establishing a rapport were motivation for participants.
Mentoring and Support

Participants shared ways they were mentored or supported by teachers, colleagues, and supervisors as well as the need for mentoring to encourage African American males to become administrators. Daniel shared when he was a student in high school that his history teacher challenged him and made him believe in himself. Likewise, Marlon stated after struggling in elementary and middle school that his 8th grade math teacher saw something in him and recommended him to take advanced math courses. Cedric also shared a school experience in middle school of some teachers who saw his potential and stated he had the ability to achieve. Edmond discussed having the support in the form of father figures in school provided him with the positive role models. He stated:

What stands out the most to me from my experience in school was I had male adults that were good at leading me in the right direction. They were like father figures at the school. Our librarian and our basketball coach were two who were important to me because they were the ones directing, pushing, and telling me what I needed to do or change in order to be successful.

Through the analysis of the interviews, findings revealed the importance of mentors for the participants. All participants shared that a mentor was the reason that they became an administrator. In comparison, Scott and Rodriguez (2015) conducted a study that determined how mentors were influential in the decision for African American males to pursue teaching as a career. As the participants reflected on their experiences, they shared how they were inspired by mentors who saw their potential.

Participants noted former principals encouraged them to enroll in Educational Leadership courses and provided them with leadership roles. Participants also shared the importance of mentors to African American male teachers to retain, recruit, and motivate
them to become administrators. Byron suggested a mentor program for African American males to identify potential administrators would be an effective way to increase the number of African American male administrators. He stated:

A mentor program for aspiring African American male school leaders would provide the right kind of leadership and training that can provide constant feedback. A leadership academy led by other African American male school leaders who have the experience to recruit and prepare other African American males could encourage more to consider administration.

Similarly, Daniel shared professional learning communities of African American male educators could be developed to provide advice to teachers who were interested in becoming administrators. In addition, Terrence noted mentors could provide potential African American male teachers and administrators with strategies and support to pass certification exams. Participants were also influenced by mentors while they were students in K-12 settings.

Jerry shared how his high school assistant principal was a mentor. He stated he observed how his assistant principal related to students and teachers. He further noted that while his assistant principal set expectations for him and his classmates, he knew it was out of love and their best interest. He shared that he wanted to make an impact and emulate the same to his students.

Findings concluded that participants were motivated by mentors to pursue administration because of their leadership as teachers. Mentors guided participants in navigating the challenges successfully to become administrators. In addition, because of the leadership participants displayed, participants provided counternarratives of African American males as thugs. Milton-Williams & Bryan (2016) noted that African American male administrators represented professionals who were respected and self-disciplined
for African American male students Findings revealed that participants can replicate the support they received to African American male teachers to pursue leadership roles and students to see possibilities of themselves as successful adults.

**Salaries**

The low wages associated with teaching salaries has been one of the reasons that has made recruiting African American males into teaching careers difficult. African American men believed that higher education should be associated with higher earning potential (Meidl, 2019). In fact, education has been perceived to success and mobility in the African American community (Bass, 2019). However, earning a teaching degree that leads to jobs with low salaries do not equate to the potential earning in other professional fields. Meidl (2019) noted that African American male students were lead away from considering education as a career because of the pressure to become superstars and make money because of the influence by sports and entertainment.

Michael talked about salaries as a barrier to recruit African American males into education. He stated, “When it comes to recruiting African American males into education, a lot of times it comes down to pay because you know they feel like teachers do not make enough money to support a family.” Byron also discussed the challenges of teacher salaries and stated most men want to be able to provide for their families. Tremaine asserted that many African American males would rather be employed with blue-collar occupations that required less education and finances to attain certifications and licenses. Terrence shared how teacher salaries have impacted the way students perceived the teaching profession. He stated:
For my students and their career aspirations, it’s all about money. It’s the society that they are in with all the social media and everything. To be considered successful, my students feel like you have to have the nicest things, go on these nice vacations, and it’s all about buying because that’s what they see on Instagram. But when our students see teachers barely getting by. Some of my students see our teachers working in the mall at department stores on the weekends or in the evenings. So, when it comes to salaries, our males do not see education as glamorous as they see what they are influenced by in their culture. They want to be ballplayers or rappers.

Terrence mentioned that he needed more money and decided to pursue administration after teaching for six years. Byron shared that his former principal stated administration was a way for him to increase his salary to encourage him to pursue administrative roles. Edmond stated for African American male teachers to do more to support their families that ways to increase their salaries through administration may retain them in the field. However, Michael stated many African American males who were in education were coaches who do not want to consider administration because they make more money in coaching. He shared:

A lot of African American males who are in the field are coaches. So, when they coach, that is seasonal work in the sense of the supplement they receive, they look at administration as working longer hours for less pay.

Summary

In conclusion, participants felt strongly that more African American male teachers should become administrators and a pipeline for African American male students to connect and be inspired to become teachers was needed. Overall, participants shared intrinsic motivators that inspired them to perform their roles successfully. Findings revealed that the rewards of supporting teachers to become better teachers and students to become productive members of society have more value than any other profession. Tremaine summarized:
I've been extremely blessed, to be honest with you. Being asked to serve in this role as an administrator was an opportunity that I could not pass up… I didn't wake up dreaming about teaching and getting into education nor become an administrator. However, when an opportunity was presented to me, I had to ask myself if there was a better opportunity to make the most impact in my community…So, to me, it made perfect sense to impact their lives at an earlier age…I feel that is where the rubber really meets the road to truly make a difference. I am in a position to impact young lives by not only my presence but also my decision making.

Participants’ discourses described interlocking themes on the practices that contributed to a lack of African American males in education. According to Elkad-Lehman and Greensfield (2011), participants’ narratives shared “cultural, social, ideological, and political context in which they are conceived and in which they are heard or read” (p. 265). Participants interviews revealed larger discourses on the way they identified themselves as African American based on slave heritage and embraced the identity through the struggles of slavery. However, their roles as administrators were defined in a larger context that has historical roots to ideologies set by Eurocentric norms. The shared discourse among the participants revealed African American male educators were relegated to coaching and disciplinarian roles to ensure the maintenance of African American children would be maintained to promote Eurocentric norms in school through curriculum, pedagogy, and societal norms. Unfortunately, Eurocentric norms in schools have a negative impact on African American male students. Despite shared experiences among participants, they were resilient in their pursuit to become administrators. Furthermore, participants shared their own experiences and how they navigated challenges to become administrators. Participants unanimously agreed that dialogue was needed to challenge hegemonic structures that hindered African American males in education.
The method chosen for this study was CDA. Critical Discourse Analysis has been used to study how language has been used as a social practice and to investigate hidden power relations and ideologies embedded in discourse (Johnson & McLean, 2020). Ten African American male administrators agreed to participate in this study to discuss how discourse influenced their roles as administrators and how African American males were motivated to become administrators. Participants were interviewed and interviews were transcribed. Transcriptions were analyzed by using intertextuality as a method of analysis. Intertextuality explored ways those in power control production and reproduction in certain social settings to conform norms (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, participants discussed how norms of educational settings hindered African American males from pursuing careers in education.

Because language has textual, discursive, and sociocultural structures (Fairclough, 2003), participants responses included hermeneutic features shaped by their personal experiences and ideological practices (Elkad-Lehman & Greensfield, 2011). Findings revealed discursive patterns that included roles of African American male educators and negative perceptions of African American males; sociocultural practices included curriculum, pedagogy, and societal norms.

In this chapter, rich, thick descriptions and direct quotes from participants were used to describe ways language have discursive and sociocultural practices that has perpetuated dominant norms in education. Discursive practices referred to the way orders of discourse shaped norms from spoken and unspoken rules that govern the way individuals think, act, or speak (Fairclough, 2003). Sociocultural practices referred to the way power relations were influenced by ethnic or cultural majorities (Fairclough, 2003).
Therefore, this study revealed ways African American males were motivated to pursue careers in public school administration and the barriers that kept African American males from careers in administration. The importance of discourse on this topic was shown through the participants’ utterances.

In Chapter 5, a detailed summary and discussion of the study’s findings will be presented, in addition to implications and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 5

Summary and Discussion

Throughout history, education has been controlled by European American norms by either denying or limiting educational opportunities to African Americans (Spring, 2016). Furthermore, according to Spring (2016), education was used to assimilate African Americans into the cultural norms of European Americans. This has been problematic for African American males who have struggled in education because of norms that have suggested how they should act and talk (Delpit, 2006). European American culture has dominated academics through the way textbooks were published, how curriculum was developed, and assessment of knowledge (Delpit, 2006). In addition, the codes or rules to succeed in European American culture has required African American males to adapt to linguistic ways of communicating whether through writing, talking, dressing, or interacting (Delpit, 2006).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used as the methodology for this study. CDA has been used as a framework to challenge issues related to power of social dominance by investigating text, discursive practices, and social practices (Fairclough, 1989). This study was used to challenge how language has persisted to create power relations to maintain ideologies of dominant European American culture that have hindered African American males in education. Therefore, the way African American male administrators view race and their roles as administrators was part of a larger
symbolic system that provided them with a way to oppose structures that challenged them.

**Summary of Major Findings**

In this CDA, the analysis of interview data revealed five major themes that discovered discursive, sociocultural, and linguistic practices that either hindered or motivated African American males to pursue careers in public school administration. Ten African American male administrators participated in open ended, face-to-face, 60-minute interviews. They provided their own personal and professional narratives on their experiences as students, teachers, and administrators. The analysis revealed the following themes: (a) African American identity, (b) roles of African American male educators, (c) education policies and practices, (d) societal norms, and (e) motivations to become an administrator.

The social identity of African Americans has roots of heritage that desired to be accepted in societal norms that dated back to the early 1900s. Worden (2009) noted how slavery was no longer a desirable heritage in society as whiteness was the most desirable attribute because of increased social and political segregation. In fact, the term colored became a preferred identifier for descendants of slaves to distance themselves from the indigenous African majority who were exiled and socially segregated from political rights (Worden, 2009). The discursive patterns of social identity were investigated in this study as participants discussed why they identified as African Americans.

Prior to desegregation, African American educators were responsible for every aspect of decision making for African American schools (Irvin & Irvin, 2007; Karpinski, 2006; Tillman, 2004b). However, because of demotions and firings after desegregation,
the roles of African American educators were limited (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Meidl, 2019; Tillman, 2004b). Participants discussed the roles of African American male educators and how they perceived their roles as administrators. Participants shared discourse revealed how roles of African American male educators were rooted in their beliefs based on discursive patterns of social identity. Participants shared African American male educators were most likely hired in schools to coach because of societal expectations. They also shared that coaches were most likely to be certified in either history or physical education. However, only three of the 10 participants were certified in history or physical education, and nine out of 10 participants shared they coached. Participants desired to hire more African American males in their schools, but there were challenges of filling positions because potential candidates were not certified in either math, science, or English. Michael stated the only time he was able to hire an African American male was when he had vacancies in history or physical education with coaching responsibilities.

Other findings revealed participants believed that African American male educators were not respected as pedagogical experts. Because African American male educators, who served as coaches, were praised for the way they maintained structure and discipline for their students, they were relegated to the role of disciplinarian when promoted to administrator. Therefore, because African American male educators were influential in African American male students lives because of shared cultural connections, it has been perceived that African American male educators were best at making those students behave (Jackson et al., 2013). Consequently, the role of disciplinarian had negative effects on the relationships between them and African
American male students. African American male students resisted authority from African American male administrators, which caused negative school experiences for African American male students.

Pabon (2016) noted how African American male teachers did not agree with school curriculum and frustrated with the lack of preparation for teaching in urban schools. The shared discourse from participants regarding curriculum included the way history has been taught in schools. In many aspects, participants discourses included that African American history has either been ignored or misinterpreted. Cedric stated how most of the African American history included slavery and manipulated ideologies of inferiority. Tremaine shared a perspective of how history curriculum in American culture have embraced historical figures as heroes who oppressed African Americans and natives.

Hall et al. (2012) defined pedagogy as an act of teaching and discourse that connects culture, structure, and mechanisms of social control. Furthermore, traditional pedagogy has hierarchical orders in education that has influenced preservice teacher training, professional development, and teaching ideologies (Yilmaz & Ozciftci, 2016). However, critical pedagogies such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012) have preceded each other to ensure equitable teaching practices and opportunities across race and ethnicity. Teaching practices were explored in this study in ways pedagogical norms were shown in teacher interactions with African American male students. Participants shared that pedagogical norms lacked relevance to engage African American male students to curricula. For example, Arius shared an experience on how a
teacher struggled to teach a group of African American male students whom the teacher perceived as unmotivated to learn. He shared a teaching strategy that involved familiar rap lyrics with those students, and they learned the use of action verbs in a sentence. Terrence changed terminology in a textbook for his students to understand word problems in math; as a result, students were able to understand the math problem. Hall et al. (2012) asserted that students need to feel a sense of community in a school that provides a safe place in physical and ideological terms, and teachers must enact pedagogy that goes beyond the classroom door. Unfortunately, European American teachers who do not share the same experiences with African American students have dominated the teaching field. Because of a difference in cultural experiences, African American male students do not engage and ultimately fall behind in academics.

Participants also discussed how societal norms influenced the curriculum in the form of standardized testing and content in classrooms. Standardized testing determined how students’ knowledge and school performance were assessed. Terrence and Byron, principals at predominantly African American schools, shared how standardized testing has cultural biases that affected how their students performed. As a result, they shared their schools received low performance marks from state accountability measures. Byron felt politics played a part in how schools were graded and strongly opposed perceptions that his students could not be successful. Furthermore, Byron shared examples of how terminology in curriculum do not relate to his students and ultimately affect African American males in teacher certification exams.

African American male students were expected to adapt to the norms of society to participate in a culture that has constructed images of them as thugs through film,
television, and print (Delpit, 2006; Solorzano, 1997). Participants shared ways African American males were labeled as threats who were aggressive that needed behavioral interventions. Participants felt that labeling was a precursor to the unfair treatment to African American males that lead to resentment and distrust in the educational system. Byron believed one of the reasons African American males do not consider education as a career choice was because they do not want to go back to a place that has oppressed them. Cedric remembered how he was often blamed for things when he was in elementary school. He felt it was because he was one of the only African American male students in his class. Also, he noted his learning style was different and his teachers thought he had a learning disability. He shared he was referred to special education because teachers perceived him for being a bad student who did not want to learn. Arius shared his experiences in IEP meetings and how African American male students were given labels of emotionally disturbed. He further discussed how emotionally disturbed labels resulted in teachers’ perceptions of African American male students. He continued African American male students’ passion has been misinterpreted as aggression. As a result, teachers considered them to be behavioral problems because these students lacked someone who understood them.

Participants discourses revealed ways African American males must navigate societal norms in education. For some of the participants, they felt the pressure to prove they were capable in their roles and the need to work harder. Daniel uttered he had to prove that he belong. Jerry felt he had to go over and beyond to gain trust. Michael provided accounts of having to prove he was knowledgeable. Other findings revealed that the way African American males dressed, talked, and acted was needed to be successful.
Jerry mentioned he would overdress to look professional. Terrence did not want to be perceived as being too black, so he changed the way he talked and acted in professional settings. Marlon noted he would be cognizant of his demeanor at meetings and would carefully choose when he opposed policy so he would not be perceived as the angry black man. The way African American male students were expected to adapt to norms and the consequences they faced were shared among participants as well. Cedric talked about the subjectivity of teachers because of a lack of cultural awareness and how it impacted African American students.

Although participants uttered challenges in their personal journeys to become administrators, participants navigated through those challenges to serve in their roles. When African American males receive support from their homes, communities, and schools, they were able to become resilient to persevere through challenges to become successful (Muhammad et al., 2019). Participants shared a common belief that they were “called” to become administrators because of their shared passion to encourage students. Their journeys involved different paths; however, they all had a common goal to make education better for students. Participants shared that their roles as models to their students provided them with accountability to be better versions of themselves. They sought positive relationships with students to establish trust to get students to believe in themselves. Participants agreed that it took someone who saw leadership potential in them for them to go into administration and some shared stories of how they were approached by a former principal or mentor who encouraged them to pursue a master’s in Educational Leadership. The need to provide for families was shared language by participants as to the reason they pursued administration and as a reason many African
American males were detoured from a career in education. Marlon told his college advisor that he did not consider teaching because teachers did not make a lot of money. He instead began his college studies in engineering classes. Byron stated that his former principal encouraged him to go into administration because he was serving in leadership roles as a teacher, but also it would increase his salary. However, the requirement for African American males who would be interested in administration would be to teacher for three years. The economic responsibilities to take care of a family and earn a reputable salary has been a practice in the African American community that has kept African American males from considering teaching as a career because of low salaries. It has been documented that African American males have gone beyond their own self-satisfactions and health to support their families (Griffith et al., 2011). Therefore, despite an interest to become an educator, African American males sought more value in supporting themselves and their families with other jobs that may include blue collar work with longer hours.

To encourage more African American males to become administrators, participants communicated that the need started with their efforts to encourage their current students to consider the field of education. Also, participants shared that African American male teachers must be willing to step out of their comfort zone and pursue administrative opportunities to provide more voices in education. However, the barriers in education must be addressed to challenge how societal norms through discursive and sociocultural practices hindered African American male students from becoming successful.
Research Questions Answered

The data collected included an overall research question followed by three sub-questions. An interview protocol of 20 questions was used to collect a detailed account from African American male administrators to address the research question. These African American male administrators revealed how discursive, sociocultural, and linguistic practices have hindered African American males from pursuing careers in education. The research questions were (a) in what ways have discursive practices hindered African American males to pursue careers in public school administration? (b) In what ways have sociocultural practices hindered African American males to pursue careers in public school administration? (c) In what ways have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration?

Research Sub-Question 1

The first research question asked participants to discuss ways discursive practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in administration. Discursive practices were shaped through orders of discourse that has been distributed and consumed in society that set spoken and unspoken norms (Fairclough, 2003). Because of discursive patterns of African American male students, African American male teachers often found themselves limited to positions that included controlling African American male students. Findings revealed most African American male teachers were hired to coach and serve as disciplinarians. Participants noted that African American males as coaches and disciplinarians have been a common practice that has frustrated African American male
teachers who have desired to become administrators. As a result, African American male educators leave the education field because of those perceptive norms.

Discourses of African American males as perpetuators of violence and stereotyped as gangsters and thugs have framed perceptions of them that influenced how they were perceived in education (Jenkins, 2006) Other discourses on African American males have labeled them as problems who invoke fear and were prone to violence (Howard, 2013). Furthermore, research on African American males has identified them as deficits or broken instead of individuals with positive qualities (Jackson, 2006). The way African American male students have been characterized has influenced the way society has framed perceptions of them; consequently, the same characterizations have been internalized by African American males (Howard, 2013).

African American male students were disciplined more because of discriminatory beliefs of teachers who lacked racially diverse experiences and subjectively conceptualized how African American male students should behave (Hines-Datiri, 2015). Participants provided responses regarding how these discursive patterns manipulated teachers’ perceptions of African American males as unmotivated to learn and criminals. As a result, African American male students were considered threats and aggressive when their behaviors were unfamiliar to teachers, and teachers referred African American students to special education, lowered academic expectations, and referred them more for disciplinary infractions. Participants acknowledged these discursive patterns led to unpleasant schooling experiences for African American male students; thus, kept African American males away from considering education as a career when they finish high school.
Discursive patterns of ideological gender role norms have pressured African American males with economic responsibilities to take care of themselves and families financially (Collins, 2006). Collins (2006) defined family as a natural arrangement that has been based on heterosexual marriages where men were head of households with the responsibility to provide financial support to their families. Therefore, the need for financial or economic security has kept African American males from careers in education (Meidl, 2019). Consequently, African American male teachers make up less than 2% of educators in the United States (Pabon, 2016). Participants agreed that the limited number of African American males in administration was because of the disinterest from African American males to earn low wages after college. African American males preferred to earn degrees in other fields or worked blue-collar jobs such as mechanics, welders, and other career technical fields where training and certifications costs less than four-year universities.

Research Sub-Question 2

The second research question asked participants to discuss ways sociocultural practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in administration. Participants discussed sociocultural practices in the form of school curriculum and teacher pedagogy. Sociocultural practices referred to the ways discursive events in education has created and recreated society and culture, including relations of power through knowledge and practices of groups people that include language, customs, and beliefs of what is acceptable and unacceptable (Fairclough, 2003). Luke (1995) claimed curriculum shaped students’ identities and influenced how textbooks were reproduced, adopted, and accepted as specific forms of cultural logic and social identity disguised to
transmit unbiased skills. Participants discussed the way history has been taught in schools that has created feelings of inferiority in African American students.

Milton-Williams and Bryan (2016) noted how teacher pedagogy programs in undergraduate studies has lacked effective models of good teaching programs and culturally responsive curriculum to prepare teachers to teach African American male students. Furthermore, teacher education programs were dependent on research studies, textbooks, and curricular resources that has consistently mischaracterized African American male students (Ladson-Billing, 2011). Thus, deficit studies in pedagogical practices have included the underachievement of African American male students. As teachers enter the field, their perceptions of African American males were mostly negative, and their training involved traditional teaching practices that does not include diverse learning practices. Often, European American teachers lacked the self-efficacy to embrace culturally relevant teaching because they have not been taught to be aware of how their cultural norms and traditions influenced their position in teaching (Milner, 2010). Findings revealed that teachers bring their own set of values and perspectives into the classrooms (Nieto, 2003); therefore, dominant cultural norms influenced how teachers prepare and teach African American males, which ultimately, lacked the strategies needed for African American male students to learn successfully.

Participants discussed ways that they had to adapt to societal norms to navigate through education as students, teachers, and administrators. In participants discourses, findings revealed that Eurocentric codes and norms were learned that provided participants with the skills needed to become administrators. Jenkins (2006) noted that African American males have been taught by the dominant society how to speak, what to
believe, how to look, and how to define success. However, African American male students who were not taught these norms struggle in school and in society and were labeled as unsuccessful.

**Research Sub-Question 3**

The third research question asked participants in what ways have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration. Participants shared a desire to enter teaching because of their passion to impact the lives of African American children. Participants described themselves as mentors, father figures, encouragers, motivators, and influencers. The descriptors mirrored individuals who participants mentioned as mentors to them and their commitment to what Michael described as paying it forward. Seven participants stated another African American male administrator encouraged them to become administrators; the other three stated former principals who persuaded them were African American females.

**Central Research Question**

The central research question for this CDA was: in what ways, do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices?

Because CDA explored ways linguistics (language) has been used as a social practice, participants responded to questions that included the way social practices have controlled education in ways that has excluded African American males through discursive patterns by way of societal and cultural norms (Fairclough, 2003).
Study participants were transparent in their discussions as they challenged ways African American males were perceived in education. Participants shared personal and professional narratives of how discourses of African American males included utterances that these students do not want to learn, unmotivated, disinterested, dangerous, thugs, bad, threatening, and aggressive as discursive patterns that contributed to how these students were treated in schools.

Study participants reflected on their roles as instructional leaders and how curriculum and pedagogy influenced the way African American male students received instruction. In these reflections, participants challenged content in curriculum and how cultural biases exist in standardized testing. Furthermore, participants also asserted many teachers lacked cultural awareness to teach African American male students. Because of this, African American male students were disengaged from learning.

Therefore, findings revealed that African American male administrators challenged norms through discourse. African American male administrators not only demanded excellence from African American students but also served as symbols of hope. When African American males were in leadership roles, they provided a model to African American male students on how to persevere through the challenges they faced. Many participants stated that change in the way African American males were educated needed to happen. For changes to take place, perspectives of African American men are needed to provide educational discourse with alternatives that view the potential of African American male students.
Implications of the Study

Studies have shown the positive impact African American male educators can have on African American students (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016; Noguera, 2003). Prior to segregation, African American males pursued careers in education (Carothers, 2014). The 2018 United States Census reported that there were 327,167,434 Americans, with 13.4% of the population were African American. Currently, African American males make up only 2% of the total teaching population in the U.S. (Pabon, 2014; Wilson, 2015; Woodson & Pabon, 2016). While recruiting African American males to teaching is needed, the need for African American males in school administration serves a much bigger purpose in education. Because school administrators are tasked with making personnel and instructional decisions, they are the most influential person in a school to incorporate change in a school’s culture (Bloom & Owens, 2011; Sarason, 1982). However, since desegregation mandates, African American administrators have been trying to capture what was lost in the pre-Brown era (Karpinski, 2006). Therefore, empirical studies on barriers that hindered African American males from entering education and then becoming administrators and what motivated current administrators to navigate through challenges to perform in their roles would be beneficial to the field.

As participants shared their stories, I reflected on how my experiences mirrored what they conveyed. I can relate to the preparation throughout primary and secondary grades and then ultimately going into junior college with no desire to become a teacher because of the way I viewed education. After earning an associate degree in Computer Science, I aspired to become an electrical engineer because of the salary. When I first
entered education, I was placed into a coaching role and felt comfortable to not look towards getting a masters or ever becoming an administrator. Through my experiences, I wanted to provide other African American male administrators with a voice while encouraging others to become agents of change to an educational system for African American male students. I am confident that through participants’ discourses that some of the practices that were influenced through power and dominance may be questioned to effectively enact a shift on how we educate students. The findings from this study provided some themes that may aid in further practice: (a) African American identity, (b) roles of African American male educations, (c) education policies and practices, (d) societal norms, and (e) motivations to become an administrator.

**African American Identity**

Participants described themselves as African American because of discursive patterns of social identity. Findings identified ancestry as participants shared discourse of heritage, roots, culture, and ethnicity. However, other participants shared patterns of a desired societal acceptance through identifying based on societal norms of professionalism and institutional systems. The way participants identified as African American was part of a larger discourse of racial groups that were rooted in slave heritage and ideologies (Crenshaw et al., 1995). However, participants embraced their identity as a servitude to their ancestors who persevered through the turmoil of slavery.

**Roles of African American Male Educators**

Researchers have described roles of African American educators in various ways including disciplinarians, role models, and surrogate parents (Milner & Howard, 2004). Findings revealed African American male educators served in these roles as a coach.
Participants stated that African American educators were not given credit as instructional leaders but as disciplinarians. Therefore, African American male administrators were either responsible for discipline or assigned to predominantly African American schools with challenges. While African American male presence is important in these schools, it should be more consideration given to African American males in their practice as pedagogical experts.

**Education policies and practices**

Dominant cultural norms have historically plagued African American education since desegregation mandates. Prior to *Brown*, African American educators were in control of the curriculum taught to African American students (Tillman, 2004b). However, African American educators were not consulted on implementation of desegregation orders and decisions were made to benefit European Americans (Tillman, 2004b). Therefore, the educational experience for African American students were thought to be equitable because all students would receive the same content. To limit African Americans from the teaching profession after desegregation orders, Stennis-Williams (1996) claimed culturally biased teacher proficiency test were created after desegregation mandates. Johnson (2013) further acknowledged Praxis I and Praxis II certification exams were barriers to African American males becoming certified to teach. Therefore, college prep programs for African American male students to enter college and preparing African American males in pre-service teaching programs with strategies to pass certification exams would help increase the number of African American males in the teaching field.
Since African American students were most likely to attend schools where the majority of teachers were European American women, it is more important for pedagogical practices to include cultural practices that challenged norms (Moore, 2013). Milner (2010) debated the need to oppose concepts of cultural blindness and cultural blindness. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), teachers hold a custodial orientation on how schools should operate by establishing a flow of power that students must accept their decisions and not question. Because of this view, teachers hold firm to their beliefs on how they should teach. Opposing views include culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogies that in many facets students are viewed as individuals that provide teachers with opportunities to understand them and teach with diverse strategies (Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris, 2012). Therefore, a focus on critical pedagogies in teacher education programs would provide pre-service teachers with the training needed to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

**Societal Norms**

It is critical for African American males to advocate and voice their concerns as school administrators for African American male students. African American males face negative stereotypes as early as elementary school (Brown, 2005). Goings and Bianco (2016) noted the treatment of African American male students were because of teachers’ unconscious biases developed through discursive patterns. By being in administrative positions, African American males can assist teachers with ways to counteract negative stereotypes of African American males by highlighting the positive aspects of these students.
Graham and Erwin (2011) shared that African American males feel pressure to conform to be an effective educator. Due to these pressures, many either leave or do not consider teaching as a career. In many ways, African American males feel they have to “sell out” in order to conform to certain norms of teaching practices and ways of being (Graham & Erwin, 2011). The norms in education are rooted by codes and systems set by social and cultural standards. Delpit (2006) stated “The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power” (p. 25). Therefore, participants understood the need for them to navigate between their own culture and European American culture to be successful. Delpit (2006) also stated “If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier” (p. 25). Thus, it is critical for African American male administrators to teach the rules and codes to African American male students and teachers for them to become administrators.

**Motivations to Become an Administrator**

African American male administrators play a vital role in the community and development of African American male students who could later become educators. Ononuju (2016) stated African American male administrators have understanding of how community works for students and makes connections that improved the behavioral and academic success of African American students. Participants shared a common purpose of seeking out opportunities to serve their communities. In addition, a mentor or former principal who served as an influencer in their lives were who motivated them to pursue administration (Scott & Rodriguez, 2015). Furthermore, Henderson (2015) noted how influential African American male principals were in increasing exposure to other
African American males who may aspire to become administrators. Participants believed African American male representation in schools were important in recruiting students to the field of education. By providing African American male students with positive role models in schools, they would more likely view school as a positive experience. Therefore, the need to incorporate ways to recognize and encourage African American male students to become teachers and African American male teachers to become administrators would improve educational outcomes for African American male students.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This CDA was limited to 10 African American male administrators in central Alabama. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate how language and culture influence other African American male administrators in other regions of the country. Future researchers may wish to study how discourse of African American male teachers are influenced by dominant norms and how those norms may be challenged in education. Study participants discussed ways in which they have experienced challenges personally and professionally and how they navigated through challenges to become school administrators. Study participants looked to their positive impact of building positive relationships and the desire to do more for students as motivators to continue to do the great work they are assigned. Future researchers may look to investigate ways African American male students discuss education and the influential dominant norms in education and its impact on the success of African American male students.

**Recommendations for Practice**

This research study was to discuss ways African American males were either hindered or motivated to become administrators in public schools. Participants shared
discourse on their personal and professional experiences as African American male administrators. Participants provided detailed narratives on how systems and structures were in place that challenged them and other African American males in education.

To challenge the perceptions of African American males in education, positive attributes of African American male students should be highlighted to defy the ideas of deficit models. Also, the recognition of African American male teacher pedagogy to discuss ways African American male teachers engage students in learning. In undergraduate programs at colleges and universities, preparation programs for preservice African American male teachers can benefit the field by providing support to pass teacher certification exams as well as a focus on critical pedagogies to include preparation for teachers to instruct in a diverse approach. African American male administrators who currently serve in the roles of administration must mentor students and teachers to navigate through the norms to increase the number of African American male representation.

**Conclusion**

The way linguistics has been used in education as a societal system has shaped how African American males were perceived and the way curriculum has been used. The intertextual features of participants discourses shared how discursive and sociocultural practices were influenced by language in education. As more African American male administrators utilize their voices to change the discourse that has troubled African American males in education, their shared language can provide a counternarrative to the negative perceptions that has plagued African American males in education.
If more African American males considered education as a career, the need would eradicate the shortage of the African American male teacher pipeline (Brown, 2005). Furthermore, more African American male school leaders would emerge to mentor and recruit African American males into education to retain and prepare them in the field of education. The challenges facing African American male students are noted throughout this study.

Study participants shared utterances that reflected on ways African American males were detoured from careers in education. Participants shared challenges facing African American male students that caused negative experiences in school. Labeling African American males as dangerous, aggressive, and threats was a challenge that led to emotionally disturbed labels in special education. Because of negative labels, participants shared that African American male students were characterized and treated unfairly by teachers. Limiting African American male educators to roles such as coach and disciplinarian lessened how the profession of education perceived them as instructional leaders. As a result, many African American male educators were responsible for controlling the behaviors of African American students and not sought for instructional decisions. In addition, low salaries were viewed as an obstacle for recruiting African American males into education.

Participants shared examples of how education has been used to assimilate European American norms through curriculum and pedagogy. Because African American male students did not relate to content and how content was taught, it has been perceived that they were unmotivated to learn and lacked the skills to become proficient in academic standards. However, African American male educators who have been
successful in schools learned ways to adapt and interact between their culture and dominant Eurocentric cultures.

Hoy and Miskel (2013) stated trust was an important factor for student achievement. Because African American males have lacked trust in the educational system, many do not consider education as a career field. However, findings revealed African American males could be motivated to navigate challenges of education to become administrators through positive experiences of school personnel that view them as assets and not deficiencies. In addition, current African American male administrators were motivated to improve education for African American students by building positive relationships.

These findings may motivate current and potential African American male administrators to challenge dominant norms in education to increase the number of African American male administrators. In addition, findings may provide more studies on how discourse influences other minority groups. The results of this study were intended to provide researchers and practicing educators with inquiries on how to challenge dominant norms in education to ensure more diverse learners.
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doi:10.1177/001440290006600308

https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219#


https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X13490140.


https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124519846294


APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ADMINISTRATORS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN ALABAMA

We are looking for individuals to participate in a study about their roles and what motivated them to become an administrator in public high schools in Alabama

Looking for African American male administrators with at least 3 years’ experience or higher.

If you are interested, please call 682-5355

or email

mepps@uab.edu

Thank you!
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Protocol for Administrators

Interviewer: ________________________ Interviewee: ________________________

Date: ________________________ School: ________________________

Time: ________________________ Position: ________________________

Location: ________________________ Years of Experience: ________________________

Introduction:

Thank you, for taking the time to answer my questions today. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight on how African American male administrators talk about race and their roles as school administrators in Alabama. Because of the limited number of African American male educators in the U.S., the number of African American male administrators are even more scarce. Since school administration is responsible for the decision making in public schools, many of the decisions that are made hinder African American male students academically and socially. Therefore, African American male students resist education as career options because of various issues that include policies and treatment of African American male students. Therefore, this study looks to inform the research on African American male administrators and how they talk about their motivations and their roles to impact education.

I will be conducting one audio-taped interview. What we say today will be recorded and transcribed. I am very interested in your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views, impressions and feelings. You should know that your name will remain confidential in the study and the data from the interview will be available for you to review. I may ask some additional questions that you have not reviewed, in order to clarify what you mean. Should you be interested in the completed study, a copy will be made available upon request.

Are you ready to begin?

[Test the tape recorder.]

[Conduct the interview]
**Description:**
The purpose of this interview is to gain insight on how African American male administrators talk about they encourage African American males to pursue administrative roles in education. Because of the limited number of African American male educators in the U.S., the number of African American male administrators are even more scarce. Since school administration is responsible for the decision making in public schools, many of the decisions that are made hinder African American male students academically and socially. Therefore, African American male students resist education as career options because of various issues that include policies and treatment of African American male students. Therefore, this study looks to inform the research on African American male administrators and how they talk about how they are motivated in their roles to impact education.

**Introduction: Introduce yourself and the research**

In what ways do African American male administrators talk about the ways in which they encourage or increase the number of African American male administrators through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices?

**Are you ready to begin?**

**Introducing the Participant:**
1. How would you describe yourself, Black or African American?
2. Tell me about yourself: where are you from, family, interests, upbringing.
3. Tell me about your experiences as a student throughout school.
4. What challenges, if any, did you face pursuing a career in teaching?
5. Now you are an administrator, how long have you been an administrator?
6. Why did you decide to become an administrator?

**SQ1: In what ways have discursive practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration?**
1. What are your thoughts on the lack of African American male representation in public schools as teachers and administrators?
2. I would like to provide you with some data supported by research that involves African American male students. They are three times more likely to be suspended, expelled,
or drop out of school when compared to White male students. Data has shown that 1 out of 3 African American males will serve jail time and other studies have concluded that African American male students are subject to low academic expectations, perform below average on standardized testing, and referred to special education more than any other group of students.

What are your thoughts on the data of African American male students in regard to discipline, school to prison pipeline, special education, and achievement?

3. Are there any policies and practices that you think contribute to the issues in education related to African American male students? Please discuss.

4. What do you think African American males have to do in order to navigate those practices and succeed in school in order to become an administrator?

5. What challenges, if any, did you face in becoming an administrator?

6. How did you navigate those challenges?

SQ2: In what ways have sociocultural practices hindered African American males from pursuing careers in public school administration?

1. Tell me in what ways, if any, you felt the need to adapt culturally in school or your career.

2. In what ways do you think the curriculum and pedagogical practices are influenced by the dominant culture?

3. And how do you think, if at all, normed curriculum and pedagogical practices impact the success of African American males in education as learners, educators, and administrators?

SQ3: In what ways, have African American male administrators encouraged other African American males to pursue careers in public school administration?

1. What can be done to encourage more African American males to pursue careers in education?

2. What can be done to encourage more African American males to pursue careers specifically in Administration?

3. What advice would you give upcoming African American males pursuing a role in administration?
4. Thank you for participating, is there anything else you would like to add before we conclude?

    Thank you for participating in this study as it will assist with further research and some insight on African American male administrators in public education. I hope this experience was beneficial to you as you progress further in your pursuits of educating our students.

    Thanks!
APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
APPROVAL LETTER

TO:    Epps, Matthew G.

FROM:  University of Alabama at Birmingham Institutional Review Board
        Federalwide Assurance # FWA00005960
        IORG Registration # IRB00000196 (IRB 01)
        IORG Registration # IRB00000726 (IRB 02)
        IORG Registration # IRB00012650 (IRB 03)

DATE:  17-Sep-2020

RE:    IRB-3000005797
        A Critical Discourse Analysis: The Ways in Which African American Male
        Administrators Talk About Race and Their Roles as Administrators in Public Schools in Alabama

The IRB reviewed and approved the Initial Application submitted on 14-Sep-2020 for the above referenced project. The review was conducted in accordance with UAB’s Assurance of Compliance approved by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Type of Review: Exempt
Exempt Categories: 2
Determination: Exempt
Approval Date: 17-Sep-2020
Approval Period: No Continuing Review

Documents Included In Review:
- flyer.200827.docx
- pletterclean.200911.docx
- pptcomms(samplategatekeeperpermissionletter).200911.docx
- interview.200827.docx
- exempt.clean.200911.pdf
- pptcomms(gatekeeperemail).200911.docx
- surveyquest.200911.pdf
- phonescript.200911.docx
- consent.clean.200911.docx
- IRB PERSONNEL EFORM
To: ______________ (Prospective Participant Email)


Content:

Hello ______________ (Prospective Participant),

I am conducting a study to discuss ways African American Male Administrators talk about race and their roles as administrators in public schools in Alabama. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

To be an eligible participant, you must be:
- Between the ages of 25 and 65;
- identify as an African American male;
- have served in the role of principal or assistant principal for the last three years;

The purpose of this study will be to describe the ways African American male administrators talk about how African American males are encouraged to pursue administrative roles in education. This study will be conducted using a qualitative method of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze how linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural practices influence African American males in school administration. Participants of this study will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview that may take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish to discontinue participation in this study, you are welcome to without penalty. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you take part in this research, and there are no expected risks to this study. A consent form has been attached to this email for you to review prior to interview.

Your participation in this research study will be confidential. In published reports, there will be no information that will include information that would make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely. If you are interested in this study, please reply to this email stating your interest with a preferred phone number to schedule interviews. Thanks

Mathew G. Epps, UAB Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX E

GATEKEEPER APPROVAL LETTER
To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that Mathew Epps is conducting a research project on “A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Way in Which African American Male Administrators Talk About Race and Their Roles as Administrators in Public Schools in Alabama.” I further understand that this study aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of these individuals through discourse. I am willing to grant Mr. Epps permission to conduct his research with [name] at [organization] within the [school district]. The above individuals’ involvement in this study is purely voluntary based on his willingness to participate. By signing this letter, I grant permission for this study to be conducted.

If you need any additional information, I may be reached at [contact information].

Signature

Date
APPENDIX F

TELEPHONE SCRIPT
Telephone Script: Participant Recruitment

Researcher: Hello. This is Mathew Epps from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I am calling you about scheduling an interview for the study that I am conducting on African American male administrators in public schools. Do you have a few moments to speak with me?

Option 1
Prospective Participant: No, this is not a good time.

Researcher: Is there another time that I contact you?

Prospective Participant: Yes, how about _____________

Researcher: Thank you, I will reach out again on (date) at (time). [End call]

Option 2
Prospective Participant: Yes

Researcher: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me! As I mentioned, I am conducting a study to discuss ways African American male administrators talk about race and their roles as administrators in public schools. I would like to follow up with you about participation of this study. What will be a good date and time for me to schedule an interview with you?

Prospective Participant: _______ (date) and _____ (time)

Researcher: I look forward to talking with you on (date) at (time). Thank you! [End call]
APPENDIX G

GATEKEEPER EMAIL
To: _______________ (Gatekeeper Email)

Subject Line: Approval for Doctoral Research

Content:

Hello _______________ (Gatekeeper),

My name is Mathew Epps, and I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at The University of Alabama in Birmingham and in the process of writing my dissertation. I am conducting a study to discuss ways African American Male Administrators talk about race and their roles as administrators in public schools in Alabama.

I am writing for permission to conduct a research study within your school district. The study is entitled a Critical Discourse Analysis: The Ways in Which African American Male Administrators Talk about Race and their Roles as Administrators in Public Schools in Alabama.

I am hoping to interview ten African American male administrators who have served as either principals or assistant principals in your school district for the last three years. If granted, I will interview individual participants at their schools at a time that is convenient for them. The interviews will last no more than 90 minutes. If you agree, please submit a letter of permission on your school district’s letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study. A sample letter has been attached is attached to this email.

If you have some potential candidates who would be willing to participate, please provide their names and email addresses. I have attached a flyer for recruitment efforts if needed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks

Mathew G. Epps, UAB Doctoral Student
APPENDIX H

CONSENT FORM
CONSENT FORM


IRB PROTOCOL NO.: IRB-300005797

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mathew Epps

The title of this study is a Critical Discourse Analysis: The Ways in Which African American Male Administrators Talk about Race and their Roles as Administrators in Public Schools in Alabama. The purpose of this study will be to describe the ways African American male administrators talk about how African American males are encouraged to pursue administrative roles in education. Since you have served in the role, as an administrator for at least three years, your perspective on this topic will be an added resource to the growing literature of African American male administrators.

If you agree to join the study, we will ask you to participate in a 90-minute audio-recorded interview. The interview will take place at an agreed upon location. You will have the opportunity to review transcription and analysis to ensure your perspectives are depicted accurately.

Your participation in this study will be confidential. Information in this study’s publication will not include any names or workplace that will be identifiable of you. All transcriptions and data will be securely stored, and only the researcher (Mathew G. Epps) will have access.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Mathew G. Epps
mcpps@uab.edu
205-682-5355

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the UAB Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (205) 934-3789 or toll-free 1-855-866-3789. Regular hours for the OIRB are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday.

The information on this consent has been explained and communicated to the participant. A copy of this informed consent form has been offered to the participant.