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FROM THE EDITORS

The Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (TABSE) has a long legacy of providing critical insight into research related to minority students in both higher education and PK – 12 settings. Given this, we see The Journal of the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (JTABSE), as an effective tool in reaching a broader audience in hopes of effectuating positive change throughout the state and nation. The purpose of this journal is to provide peer-reviewed research addressing topics that continue to impact minorities in public and higher education. Our goals are to:

- ☐ Provide current research relevant to the education of minorities in the state of Texas, and beyond.
- ☐ Contribute to, and extend, the current body of existing literature.
- ☐ Spark further conversation and interest in the research presented within the journal.

We hope that you enjoy the manuscripts provided in this edition. The next edition will be available in August 2018, the “Back to School Edition”. We are currently accepting manuscripts for review. Please send an electronic copy of your manuscript to Dr. Jennifer Butcher or Dr. Johnny O’Connor. All manuscripts are subject to a double blind peer review process.

As a peer-reviewed journal, we periodically screen for scholarly reviewers. If you are interested in being a reviewer, please contact Dr. Jennifer Butcher. We ask that reviewers currently hold a master’s or doctoral degree, demonstrate knowledge related to the subject matter being reviewed, and have experience in the use of current APA style guidelines.

Thank you for your continued support of the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators. If you should have any questions, concerns, or want to offer any feedback, please do not hesitate to contact either Dr. Jennifer Butcher or Dr. Johnny R O’Connor, Jr.

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EXPERIENCES OF TEN SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE SUPERINTENDENTS IN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of 10 African American male superintendents in Texas public schools. Three research questions guided this phenomenological study: (1) What were the career decisions that led to seeking a superintendent position? (2) What challenges were encountered in attaining and sustaining the superintendency? (3) What advice can be given to other African American males who aspire to the superintendency? Ten currently serving African American male Texas district superintendents met the criteria and were interviewed. The researcher drew from Tillman's Culturally Sensitive Research (CSR) model that served as the foundation of this study. Based on the data, the overall conclusion that supports the success of the African American male superintendency is primarily founded on relationship building, coupled with personal and professional development. For aspiring and present superintendents and administrators, these conclusions may provide insights into the phenomenon of the African American male superintendency, while offering possible explanations for the scarcity of this district leader subpopulation.

INTRODUCTION

During the period following the founding of the United States, African Americans played an intermittent part in the education landscape—predominantly absent and extremely limited (Moody, 1971). Prior to the 19th century, the topic of education for African Americans was exceptionally remote. As the Civil War period came to a close, African Americans were essentially segregated in schools limited to African Americans only (Moody, 1971).

According to Horsford (2010), the Commission on Research in Black Education reported that the status quo of education in the African American community is tantamount to a setback of diminishing returns compared to the historic practice of racial educational distinction of

countless descendants of Africa in spite of xenophobia. Even though there were periods throughout American history when African American educators and leaders were more prominent and present, nonetheless, within the last half-century, that presence and prominence has diminished (Brown, 2005; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007; Tillman, 2003; Whitaker, 2001). Ironically, the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), brought with it, new challenges and problems for African American educators. More than fifty years after the *Brown* decision, African American educators continue to struggle to gain equity within the ranks of administration, especially at the level of the superintendency (Balkin, 2002; Bell, 2004; Green, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007; Ogletree, 2004).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of the Superintendency

Grieder, Pierce, and Jordan (1969) and Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, and Sybouts (1996), reported that the school superintendent, initially known as the school inspector, had its origin in the early 1800s. Buffalo, New York, is believed to have been the site of the earliest school inspector chosen in 1837. Apparently, within three months, the inspector gave his notice. A \$75- annual compensation package was given to his replacement. This trend began to grow, as did the salary, during the early decades, but by 1867, notwithstanding, there were only 30 superintendents in the United States. Though these early superintendents were in cities, it was not until the twentieth century that these positions were also found in rural areas (Campbell, 1980).

As the scope of the superintendent's responsibilities continued to grow, the move for consolidating smaller, rural districts in greater county districts became necessary (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1980). Utah was one of the initial states to employ this type of configuration; in 1905, it enacted an elective restructuring tantamount to combined regions (Campbell et al., 1980). This reorganizing promoted both the availability of secondary buildings and resources and the ability of states to select worthy school leaders (Bateman, 1940). This consolidation movement was viewed as the precursor of present-day Texas independent county and school districts (Glass et al., 2000).

The superintendency has evolved into a position that often bears the responsibility for the very survival of school districts (Brunner & Bjork, 2001; Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young & Ellerson, 2011). Among others, viable areas that fall within the purview of the superintendent include student achievement, employment of the building administrator, and acting as an integral link between the local community and the school board (Kamler, 2009).

Historical Perspective of African American Males' Education

In the period preceding the Civil War, African Americans were forbidden to be educated, while their White female counterparts were allowed (Lerner, 1972; Shakeshaft, 1989). Though it was against the law to provide any type of learning to African Americans, people of color began to covertly teach other African Americans. At the turn of the 20th century, African American females began to attend schools and colleges, and comprised approximately 70% of the African American instructors (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1989). Following the Civil War, when slavery in the United States was legally eradicated, up until the middle of the 20th century, African Americans were charged with founding schools to educate their own youngsters

(Franklin, 1990; Perkins, 1983; Tillman, 2003). During that time, the teachers and administrators who were responsible for the education of African American students within the classroom were also almost exclusively African American. Some of these early teachers were elevated to the distinction of lead teachers, known as Jeanes Supervisors, founded by Anna T. Jeanes, who supported them by establishing the Negro Rural School Fund in 1907 (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1989).

According to Fultz and Brown (2008), since the time of slavery, African American males in America have had “an uneasy relationship” in the financial systems of the areas where they have lived (p. 856). This uncomfortable affiliation has led to insurmountable difficulty in employment and objects of various planned rules and protocols, which have ultimately resulted in incomparable financial restriction. Historical records detail that almost 70% of the slaves brought to the New World were African American males, as their ability to work hard equaled monetary gains and new territories for their slave owners (Berlin & Morgan, 1993). Fultz and Brown (2008) noted this reality led to the proliferation of slavery of African American males, especially, which eventually brought about an unruly cadre of manpower who constantly competed for individual dignity and personal liberty, within the context of keeping their kinfolk safe and together. These opposing outlooks developed into strained racial interactions that have spanned two centuries.

As has been noted by Carter G. Woodson, an African American chronicler, the early 1800s was a period of strict rules and regulations levied by the legislature against enslaved African Americans, particularly concerning the schooling of African Americans, as well as their ability to gather among themselves (Fultz & Brown, 2008). According to Woodson, a Virginia delegate recounted the feeling of the time, in 1832, in this way:

We have as far as possible closed every avenue by which light may enter their minds. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light, our work would be completed; they would then be on the level with the beasts of the field and we would be safe (Woodson, as cited in Fultz & Brown, 2008).

Fultz and Brown (2008) argued that attitudes such as these oppressive rules and edicts did little to quell the notion of unrest among slaves, primarily in the South, which frequently resulted in resistance and upheaval movements directed by Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner in the early 1800s. There were similar obstacles to educating African Americans located in the northern part of the country. However, Rury (1985) noted that there were alternative views to educating African Americans as indicated by a few all boys schools for African Americans sponsored by humanitarian groups of Pennsylvania and New York during the late 18th century. Noteworthy was the implication that these benevolent supported-schools took an uncanny interest in developing a group of African American males who had a sense of appreciation for education while adhering to social mores of approved and acceptable behavior patterns that were in keeping with Caucasian expectations.

Fultz and Brown (2008) pointed out that the hopes of liberty and fairness had been dashed by the beginning of the 1900s. Although slavery had been abolished and the 14th and 15th Amendments had established an atmosphere to advance civil rights for newly-freed slaves, sharecropping, legal separation of the races, financial constraints focused on African Americans, and rampant hangings and brutal crimes against African Americans overshadowed the promise of a better life for freedmen.

Notwithstanding, some saw segregated schools of the early 1900s as a collective means of instilling family values and community worth within the African American learning centers

which began as newly freed slaves began to be educated (Walker & Archung, 2003). Horsford (2010) presented varied ways of seeing the segregated schools of the past as an “*interdependent project*” that provided “*institutional caring*” that was vibrant for African Americans, as much as it was a source of African American pride and quality education for many (p. 60).

Others, such as Green (2004), observed that more progress for African Americans would be slow until the landmark decisions of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955). However, the *Brown* decision also presented a paradox as both its positive and negative ramifications were felt throughout history and plagues African Americans still. Green noted that the rippling effect of *Brown* caused the more familial, community units to fade, which resulted in another type of forced segregation. Moreover, Green highlighted the effects of the *Brown* decision to integrate schools led to the demise of African American schools resulting in the loss of many instructional and administrative positions of African Americans. These closures, often touted as attempts to provide better buildings and more qualified teachers, led to increased prerequisites for employment which compounded the losses for African American teachers and administrators. Green emphasized that African Americans of segregated schools demanded excellence and possessed high expectations for their students, especially those of color.

Foster (2005) noted that during the time of large cadres of African American teachers and administrators, African American parents felt that their children would be presented with upstanding, promising models who would promote similar messages in the classrooms that echoed the home environment. Epps (2002) posited that these diminished numbers of African American educators have had a profound, adverse impact on schools and ultimately society. African American teachers and administrators frequently were seen as mother and father figures, compassionate caretakers and caregivers, as well as exemplars and encouragers for children of color. Onwuegbuzie (1998) added that for the African American students, the presence of teachers and administrators who look more like them often serves as a role model of achievement for students of color. In a more general way, the presence of these African American educators contributes to dispelling the stereotypes that African Americans are inferior to their European counterparts. Furthermore, according to Lyons and Chelsey (2004), while the impact of the fallout of the *Brown* decision caused numerous losses of African-American administrative positions in the post-Brown era, those voids have yet to be adequately filled.

Lyons and Chelsey (2004) noted another questionable outcome of the *Brown* decision was the lack of African American students who were choosing to pursue careers in education. After all, since other fields of study and occupations, many of which paid higher salaries, were becoming more available to African Americans, the trend toward seeking educational careers was waning. Thus, fewer African American teachers were present in the public school classrooms, which led to fewer models for African American students, as well as fewer advocates for fair and equitable service to students of color. Moody (1971) added that the effects of the *Brown* decision did not produce immediate transformations in public schools, for court cases continue to be waged in the fight for equal educational rights for African Americans.

Demographics of Superintendents

The number of public school districts in the United States for the 2012-2013 school term was approximately 13,500 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) released a study by Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson (2011), which has been viewed as a reputable source of data highlighting educational administrators in the United States. According to the study, the majority of

participating U. S. district superintendents were “married, White males, between the ages of 55 and 60” (p. 1). Nevertheless, the number of female superintendents has increased gradually, especially during the decade of 1990-2000, when the percent of women superintendents rose from 6.6% to 13.2% (Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000).

Furthermore, according to Finnan, McCord, Stream, Petersen, and Ellerson (2015), African American males comprised less than 1% of the 1347 male respondents. According to this AASA salary and benefits study, the poorer and larger urban districts were headed by minority superintendents more often than their White counterparts. This annual survey revealed many other related data. A state superintendent certification was obtained by 94% of the superintendents surveyed. Doctoral degrees were held more often by superintendents in larger school districts. Length of time in their district was ranked by over half of the entrants as one to five years, with the longer tenure favoring male superintendents. Average annual compensation was \$122,000 and generally was determined by the size of the district, i.e., the larger district superintendents commanded a larger salary. Regular yearly evaluations were noted by more than 93% of the respondents. Most of the participants rated their level of job satisfaction as either very satisfied or satisfied with their position. Finnan et al. (2015) reported that the local engagement of neighborhood stakeholders was seen as a necessary ingredient in promoting and realizing shared goals and objectives.

According to the Texas Education Agency (Snapshot, 2014), there are 1227 public school districts in the state of Texas, ranging from districts with fewer than 500 students to those that have in excess of 50,000 pupils. According to the Texas Education Agency (2015), the average number of students in Texas school districts is 4,400 students. However, when compared to districts headed by African Americans, the arithmetic mean grows to more than 6,700, an increase of more than 50%. Furthermore, when the gender is also considered, African American male-led districts have a mean of 10,562 students. Of these 1227 districts, about 80% are led by White superintendents and approximately 6.2% of them are headed by African American superintendents. According to the Texas Education Agency, the breakdown of superintendents in Texas by ethnicity and gender is as follows:

- White male superintendents-751 or 63.2%,
- White female superintendents-200 or 16.8%,
- African American male superintendents-42 or 3.5%,
- African American female superintendents-32 or 2.7%,
- Hispanic male superintendents-98 or 8.2%,
- Hispanic female superintendents-34 or 2.9%,
- Asian male superintendents-6 or 0.5%,
- Asian female superintendents-5 or 0.4%, and
- the 1.2% balance of the Texas superintendents are comprised of the two or more races category.

For more than a decade, the average tenure of Texas superintendents was slightly more than five years (Meier, & O’Toole, 2002). However, currently, that average has increased to almost nine years and the average age of Texas superintendents is 52 (TEA Special Report, 2015). These superintendent statistics include charter schools, however. If the charter schools are removed from the data report, the number of African American male superintendents serving in traditional public schools is more realistically reported at approximately 2% (Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, 2015).

Career Paths of Superintendents

As stakeholders in the public education arena become increasingly disadvantaged, the demand, too, increases for more progress to be made with fewer resources (Lezotte, 2009). Though the need remains great for successful educational leaders to marshal resources and improve the learning environment for a growing student population, it is still a challenging journey to achieve that first superintendency (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999).

According to Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson (2011), the route that the majority of superintendents have taken to achieve this position has been the customary one of classroom instructor, site administrator, and central office administrator. These routine steps to the superintendency were fueled, in a large part, by the mandated governmental credentials. In the past decades, the majority of the state-run education entities outlined the required experience needed to make one eligible for a superintendent position and credential, i.e., classroom instruction and building administration. Kowalski et al. (2010) reported, however, in the recent decade, this prerequisite has been eliminated. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents in this survey did follow the usual path to the superintendency. Yet, many participants indicated that, if given the opportunity, they would pursue a similar pathway to the superintendency (Kowalski et al., 2010).

Though career paths may have been similar in previous decades, Kowalski et al. (2011) found that the overwhelming first steps into administration for the United States survey participants were the following:

1. Secondary assistant principal (19.1%);
2. Central office director (14.9%);
3. High school principal (14.1%);
4. Elementary administrator (13.4%); and
5. Middle school administrator (11.9%).

However, they also noted that a small percentage (3.5%) of the survey participants had no previous administrative experience.

According to Gabaldon (2003), there was little impact of age or race on career paths of Texas superintendents; however, distinctions were noted regarding the number of years of teaching, sex of the administrator, as well as the age at which the position of superintendent was realized. Women superintendents possessed more years of classroom experience prior to being named to the superintendent position, and therefore were, on the average, older when they achieved the superintendency. Additionally, Texas female superintendents of color were more often named as the first superintendent of color in their respective school regions.

Challenges of the Superintendency

Among the many challenges facing contemporary superintendents, some include the ability to develop workable, productive affiliations with interested partners in education, possessing a skill for verbal intercourse, and the ability to appropriately address and settle disputes (Thomas, 2001). According to Trevino, Braley, Brown, and Slate (2008), in a recent study of public superintendents, the primary obstacle facing the respondents was providing school districts with extremely capable, competent instructors. The availability of financial support was next, followed by concerns regarding sound instruction and the success of the local education program. There were also concerns that related to the overabundance of attention to standardized testing results, governance models, turnover, and the political and legal issues that pervade education (Thomas, 2001; Trevino et al., 2008; Ziebarth, 2002).

Kowalski et al. (2010) reported that the racial and gender makeup of the superintendency is 94% Caucasian and 76% male. Bjork et al. (2014) found these statistics alarming in a country where 50% of its population are female and at least 25% of the population self-identifies as a minority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Therefore, according to Jackson and Shakeshaft (2003), the accepted notion of there not being enough African descent candidates in the pipeline for the superintendency is a misnomer. In fact, the evidence in New York confirms there are sufficient numbers in the pipeline, but the pipeline is “jammed” with a few inflated issues. For example, African American aspirants are not always pursued, and this indifference could be indicative of the lack of prospective candidates. Jackson and Shakeshaft emphasized that race matters in education employment, especially at the top level of the superintendency, as African descent males very rarely made it to the final rounds of the interviews for New York superintendencies. Also, African-descent males were applying for the superintendency in similar or increased numbers of their White counterparts, and both were applying for “cross race/ethnicity” districts (p. 11). However, none of the African-descent applicants were offered positions in White majority districts; but more than half of the White applicants were offered positions in the minority districts. Yet, none accepted the offer.

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of successful African American male superintendents in Texas public schools. For this research, successful is defined as having been in their present and/or past superintendency at least three years, having rated their job satisfaction as moderately to very satisfied, having received favorable annual evaluations, and having obtained local, state, regional, or national recognition for their successful leadership of the school district. The following research questions guided this phenomenological study:

1. What was the career path that led to seeking a superintendent position?
2. What challenges were encountered in achieving the superintendency?
3. What advice can be given to other African American males who aspire to the superintendency?

METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was a qualitative phenomenological narrative method. The purpose of the phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of successful African American male superintendents in Texas public schools. Moustakas’s (1994) approach to phenomenological research focuses on describing the lived experiences of the participants from a psychological stance. This approach further ensured the objectivity of the descriptive narrative by having the researcher employ bracketing or provide an epoché, to discourage inserting prior experiences within the reporting (Husserl, 1931). The use of the “transcendental” approach to describing the participants’ experiences can thus be “perceived freshly” by the researcher (Creswell, 2013, p. 80; Moustakas, 1994).

Participants/Setting

The participants in this study were purposefully selected and included 10 African American male educational administrators who attained the position of district superintendent in the state of Texas. Specific criteria for participation included the following:

- Have served successfully as a superintendent in a school district for at least one year. For this research, successful is defined as having been in their present and/or past superintendency at least three years, having rated their job satisfaction as moderately to very satisfied, having received favorable annual evaluations, and having obtained local, state, regional, or national recognition for their successful leadership of the school district.
- Hold a valid Texas Superintendent Certificate.
- The district over which the superintendent presides has received a rating no lower than the “Met Standard” denotation by the Texas Education Agency.

DATA COLLECTION

The primary data collection strategy was face-to-face interviews. Interviews were recorded by tape recorder, videotaping, and notetaking. A guided protocol was utilized to facilitate the in-depth research questions. The Guided Protocol contained demographic and “getting acquainted” questions in an effort to better assess the background of the participants while creating an easier, more amenable atmosphere that would enhance the comfort level of the interviewees. Once the climate was more relaxed, the primary questions were based on the research questions and literature review, with prompts added as needed. Each interview lasted approximately an hour.

FINDINGS

The major findings of this research are presented by research questions. Research Question One explored the career decisions that led to the superintendency by each of the participants. Emergent themes included:

- caring about and desiring to positively affect children’s lives;
- recognizing the influence of God in their lives;
- having a mentor; and
- following the customary path from classroom teacher to the superintendency.

Research question two explored the challenges encountered by the participants in attaining and sustaining the superintendency. Emergent themes included:

- relating to a lack of diversity;
- working with board members;
- addressing financial issues; and
- facing communication concerns.

Research question three explored the advice offered to other African American males who aspire to the superintendency. Emergent themes included:

- preparing for the positions;
- finding a good mentor;

- expanding networking opportunities; and
- persevering with the pursuit.

CONCLUSIONS

This qualitative phenomenological narrative study explored the lived experiences of 10 successful African American male Texas superintendents of public school districts. Based on the data, the overall conclusion that supports the success of the African American male superintendency is primarily founded on relationship building, coupled with personal and professional development. Related conclusions include maintaining a focused outlook on expected outcomes, while remaining receptive to fortuitous circumstances which enhance learning opportunities. These conclusions suggest the multi-faceted nature of the African American male superintendency is supported in the literature regarding the breadth of the superintendent's responsibilities that have evolved over time into five key roles: teacher-scholar, manager, democratic leader, applied social scientist, and, most recently, communicator (Callahan, 1966; Kowalski, 2005). The chief executive education officer of the school district is viewed as a partner, who, with the local school community, administrators, and other viable stakeholders, serves as the guide to a common goal (Kowalski, 2005).

Research Question One

Research question one explored the career decisions that led to the superintendency by each of the participants. A conclusion regarding career decisions is that these leaders consider their role as a calling of a spiritual nature. The conclusion is supported by the research regarding the spiritual aspect of educational leadership (Dantley, 2011; Houston, 2002; Houston & Sokolow, 2006).

Another conclusion seems to be the importance of having multi-level experiences prior to the superintendency. This multi-level experience model is consistent with the literature, for according to Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson (2011), the route that the majority of superintendents have taken to achieve this position has been the customary one of classroom instructor, site administrator, and central office administrator. Furthermore, Gabaldon (2003) reported that there was little impact of age or race on career paths of Texas superintendents; however, distinctions were noted regarding the number of years of teaching, sex of the administrator, as well as the age at which the position of superintendent was realized.

Research Question Two

Research question two explored the challenges encountered by the participants in attaining and sustaining the superintendency. A conclusion from these challenges is that these leaders have limited models of common ethnic backgrounds. This finding is consistent with the literature as Kowalski et al. (2011) reported that the racial and gender makeup of the superintendency is 94% Caucasian. Furthermore, in the most recent AASA survey, African American males comprised less than 1% of the 1347 male respondents (Finnan, McCord, Stream, Petersen, & Ellerson, 2015).

Another conclusion from the challenges encountered is the importance placed on diverse training needs. This is also consistent with the literature as there is reported an overwhelming need for adequate, consistent financial budgets, as well as leaders who are astute in school finance (Lamkin, 2006; Trevino, Braley, Brown, & Slate, 2008). Additionally, school boards

often foster questionable bonds that present a challenge to superintendent leadership (Kowalski, 1995; McCurdy, 1992; Zeigler, Jennings, & Peak, 1974).

Research Question Three

Research question three explored the advice offered to other African American males who aspire to the superintendency. A conclusion from these district leaders is the importance of strategically planning for the superintendency. The research supports this rationale as Tripses, Hunt, and Watkins (2013) noted the challenging position of the superintendency. Issues mentioned in their work, included the value of mentoring, attending to one's own health and well-being, timeliness, the ability to bounce back after challenges, and a strong, comprehensive preparation program in various disciplines. Moreover, some of the more paramount issues encompassed robust training in school finance, legal issues, negotiations with unions and other stakeholder groups, academic administration and leadership, principled morals, public relations, and communication skills.

IMPLICATIONS

This research study explored the lived experiences of successful African American male Texas superintendents with the goal of giving voice to those in the phenomenon of the African American male superintendency. Findings from this study indicate that the career decisions and challenges within the ranks of the superintendency are somewhat similar for African American males, yet there are clearly areas that require more and varied approaches. Suggestions for these varied areas follow.

- encourage leadership mentoring programs specifically for African American male educators (Brown, 2005; Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Tripses et al., 2013);
- provide networking opportunities for African American male educators
- provide opportunities for improving understanding of depth and breadth of school and district finance issues (Lamkin, 2006; Trevino et al., 2008; Tripses et al., 2013); and
- encourage development of communication strategies for diverse settings and audiences (Callahan, 1996; Kowalski, 2005; Little, 2009; Osterman, 1994).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This phenomenological narrative research study provided an understanding of the lived experiences of the successful African American male Texas superintendent. Each of the superintendent participants had been in their current position at least one year. Each participant has spent about 20 years in the field of education, during which time they have honed their skills and made vast contributions to their profession. The participating superintendents gave of their time freely and without reservation, to offer their insights and experiences in the hope of expanding the opportunities for future African American candidates to the superintendency.

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THE MISEDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES: FOSTERING RESILIENCY TO PROMOTE ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

African American boys are the focal point of many startling statistics. They lead the youth population in the number of out of school suspensions, office referrals, high school drop-outs, and overrepresentation in special education programs. This article will highlight the disparity among African American male students in the educational arena and bring awareness to the important aspects of helping them to develop resiliency to succeed. Implications for school counselors will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The education and plight of African American males is being discussed more than ever among policy makers and educators in the United States, yet they are more likely to be the population that is most debilitated (Opportunity Agenda, 2011). There are many adverse components that inhibit the academic success and progression of students, particularly African American males. They are three times more likely to receive out of school suspension and make up 20% of the country's special education population. African American male students continue to be on the front line of defense and continue to receive unfair treatment in the educational arena (Rocque, 2010). Maya Angelou as cited by Azzam (2013) proclaimed the following:

If children are given the chance to believe they're worth something-- if they truly believe that-- they will insist upon it. That is in Rome, Italy, or Rome, Arkansas; in Paris, France, or Paris, Texas. Children don't have to be born with a silver spoon in their mouths, but if they can be convinced they're the best, they become resilient. They themselves will resist any attempts to belittle them. But it's also a bouncing forward, going beyond what the naysayers said, saying, 'No, it's not true that I'm nobody. I know that not only is that not true, but I'm more than you can imagine! (p. 1)

From Their Perspectives

After witnessing the phenomenon of our nation having its first African American president, many African American male students are still unable to envision success for themselves (NEA, 2011). They need African American male mentors to assist them in visualizing what a successful African American male looks like. In 2008, only 11% of 4.6

million U.S. African American males who attended college completed their bachelor's degree (NEA, 2011). These statistics do not provide a positive outlook for the success of the African American male, so young African American boys have a difficult time foreseeing a positive and successful future for themselves. Sadly, the media broadly publicizes negative stereotypes of African American men and boys. Unfortunately, young, impressionable African American boys are influenced by the distorted images of being criminals, aggressive, disruptive, and disadvantaged (Opportunity Agenda, 2011).

Adversities

Zero Tolerance Policy

The zero tolerance policy was implemented in the 1990's to reduce violent acts in schools (Lewis, Bonner, Butler, & Joubert, 2010; Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011). The original goal of these policies was to remove all disruptive students from school creating a safer and welcoming environment for all other students and staff (Teske, 2011). The one strike you're out ordinance was intended to make schools a safer place to learn and eliminate disruption; however, research does not indicate any improvement (Bryan, Griffin, Day-Vines, & Moore-Thomas, 2012). In fact, researchers have found that the number of suspensions actually spiked causing more students to be removed from school (Bryan et al., 2012) and possibly introduced to the judicial system at a young age. Many African American male students have suffered due to this policy as they are targeted and receive more punitive consequences than their Caucasian counterparts for the same minor infractions (Skiba, 2014; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008).

Disproportionality in African American male student out of school suspensions related to the zero tolerance policy is troubling and directly correlated to decreased academic performance due to missed instructional time (James, Smith, Simmons, & Levy, 2013). What is more troubling is the lack of evidence to show that the punitive policy is improving overall school climates. In addition to the zero tolerance policy having no supporting statistics to indicate the relevance of such a tenant in schools (Skiba, 2014), researchers have consistently shown that the zero tolerance policy actually increases the likelihood that minority students will become trapped in the juvenile judicial system and drop out of school (Castillo, 2014; Skiba, 2014). This phenomenon adds to the disparity of the school-to-prison pipeline – a process where students (primarily African American males) are exposed to the juvenile judicial system at an early age and imbibed into the adult criminal justice system for minor school discipline infractions (Strasser, 2013). There are consequences for suspending students without adequate support and interventions upon their return to school. Students may begin to feel isolated and consequently disengage from school as they are stereotyped and penalized harsher than their peers. Further, they may feel helpless and develop a sense of hopelessness as they may find it difficult to succeed in school due to extensive amounts of negative stigma and out of school suspensions that have caused them to fall behind academically (Lewis et al., 2010).

Achievement Gap

The term achievement gap is described as any significant difference in the educational progression between different groups of students (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). As students move through grade levels and continue to be excluded from school and punished more severely than their peers, essential academic skills are not obtained from the classroom setting. This disparity is most often seen in African American students who have experienced several adverse situations in their lives (Payne, 2013). As increased out of school suspensions and

punitive consequences have a harmful effect on all students, there is certainly a more significant achievement gap among African American students (Wong, 2016).

Not only do African American students perform lower than their counterparts in school (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015), but as the zero tolerance policy practice continues and the achievement gap grows, they will continue to have higher dropout rates than their counterparts and fail to obtain high school diplomas (Castillo, 2014). This further prevents them from reaching increased educational attainment which would ensure that African American males would continue to be underrepresented in higher paying professions in the workplace.

Poverty

The majority of students in the U.S. come from low socioeconomic status schools (Suits, 2015). Students living below the poverty level are identified by receiving free school lunch and are considered low SES, which has been studied and found to be an indicator of low academic performance (Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Williams et al., 2015; Wong, 2016). Poverty is the most common indicator in the minority achievement gap due to several factors (Payne, 2013). Schools in these neighborhoods have less government funding and higher teacher turnover rates than schools in more affluent neighborhoods (Siwatu, 2011) resulting in low quality teaching and decreased positive teacher-student relationships. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002) stated, “Studies of school suspension have consistently documented disproportionality by socioeconomic status (SES). Students who receive free school lunch are considered low SES and are at increased risk for school suspension” (p. 4).

Additionally, poverty is closely connected to detriments of zero tolerance policies. For example, researchers have found that children residing in low SES neighborhoods tend to be exposed to more violence, negative stereotypes, and receive harsher treatment than their Caucasian counterparts (Alexander, 2010; Siwatu, 2011; Wong, 2016), causing them to miss more classroom instruction due to increased office referrals and out of school suspension.

Fostering Resilience in Minority Students

In this article, resilience is suggested from an educational perspective. Research on educational resilience has revealed how some students develop educational resilience and some do not (Padrón, Waxman, & Lee, 2014). Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994) described the most commonly used definition of educational resilience as “the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions and experiences” (p. 46). Simply stated, educational resiliency entails students’ ability to overcome obstacles and adversities to become successful. Moreover, it is “the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply to the stress that is inherent in today’s world (Henderson & Milstein, 1996 p. 7).

Recommendations for School Counselors

According to the National Education Association (NEA) (2011), African American males need affective attention before any academic strides may be made. In a qualitative study of 12 young African American males, Moon and Singh (2015) found that African American male students believed they could do better in school with support from teachers. One participant stated, “If I know someone out there has my back and believes in me, I don’t notice all of the racism and drama that’s out there...well ok, I notice it, but it’s easier to ignore and focus on the

big picture” (Moon & Singh, 2015 p. 22). The participants noted the importance of support attention to their needs and issues at home as well as their academic issues (Moon & Singh, 2015). They also need to be included in programs and activities in order to feel connected to the school as well as feel connected to their culture. Such activities would help African American male students to develop a positive sense of self-awareness.

Although school counselors’ professional responsibilities are compounded by non-school-counseling activities that negatively affect their ability to build necessary relationships with students from low SES backgrounds (ASCA, 2012), there still remains some suggestions for the school counselor to best serve their students and assist them in becoming more resilient. School counselors could help build resistance in African American male students by:

- Implementing activities/organizations to provide connection.
- Developing gender and culture specific mentor programs to develop a strong sense of self.
- Implementing culturally relevant communicative interactions that express connection to the community.
- Facilitating professional development for teachers on culture sensitivity. This would build an overall school climate where African American male students would develop a sense of belonging, feel welcomed, become more encouraged, and feel supported.

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THE REEXAMINATION OF A MULTI-YEAR ENHANCEMENT PLAN FOR PASSING THE PRINCIPAL LICENSURE EXAMINATION AT A HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY (HBCU) IN TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) leveled the playing field for African Americans by providing an option for higher education that caters to the unique needs of African American post-secondary students. HBCUs receive federal support, but many are at risk due to competition from non-HBCU institutions that offer African American students an alternative to the educational path, sensibility, and paradigm offered by HBCUs. There is a discernible discrepancy between the TExES principal certification test scores of students in one HBCU cited as sample in this study and the assessment outcomes in the same assessment of students in a non-HBCU setting. This gap is significant because African Americans are underrepresented as school administrators in the state of Texas. The identified interventions designed to improve performance outcomes in one HBCU had a positive impact on its students' performance in the TExES principal certification test scores. It is recommended that further study be conducted to enhance understanding of other factors that would promote the 21st century competitiveness of HBCUs.

INTRODUCTION

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have made an impact on post-secondary institutions in the United States of America. "Most private black colleges originated in the nineteen southern and border states after the Civil War during and after Reconstruction [1867-1890]" (Avery, 2009, p. 327). Since the 1800s, Black institutions of higher learning were established to ensure that Blacks received education opportunities and were equipped with the tools to succeed in a non-equitable society. Ultimately, HBCUs became the primary providers of post-secondary education for students of color. "For nearly two centuries, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have provided educational opportunities to millions of students who were disenfranchised from traditional higher education institutions" (Baylor, 2010, p. 1)). Today, "there are 105 institutions federally recognized as HBCUs" (Satterfield, 2008, p. 6). Although most colleges and universities serve

students who are classified as African Americans, they are not recognized as historically black colleges. "HBCUs provide an excellent foundation for millions of African American students throughout the country" (Baylor, pg. 33, 2010). Over the years, many of these institutions have closed their doors due to low enrollment and financial troubles; however, the vision of HBCUs still shines brighter in the 21st century. These postsecondary institutions have paved the way for thousands of students from different races to walk across the stage with bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in their preferred disciplines. Upon their establishment, HBCUs provided unique collegiate experiences that were not offered to students of color from mainstream colleges and universities. "Education is culturally specific" (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, pg. 265, 2007); these institutions were, and still remain, the stepping stones for African American students to receive a premiere education that cultivates excellence.

History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Texas

In Texas, a total of nine historically black colleges and universities embrace the Lone Star state. These include Huston-Tillotson College (Austin), Jarvis Christian College (Hawkins), Paul Quinn College (Dallas), Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View), St. Phillips College (San Antonio), Southwestern Christian College (Terrell), Texas College (Tyler), Texas Southern University (Houston), and Wiley College (Marshall). Including public and private colleges and universities, these historically black postsecondary institutions in the state of Texas have seen a surge in diversity in their student population as they continue to educate students who come from all walks of life.

Among the HBCUs located in the state of Texas, Prairie View A&M University, just northwest of the city of Houston and noted as the second oldest public institution of higher education in the state, "was the only institution of higher learning for Negroes supported by the State, its history becomes the record of the Texas conception of the ends and aims of Negro education." (Woolfolk, pg. 18, 1962). Prairie View A&M University was established and joined as a member of the Texas A&M University System in the year 1876. "The university is a land-grant institution by federal statute and a state-assisted institution by legislative designation, serving a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population. It is committed to achieving relevance in each component of its mission, *dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and service*, by addressing issues and proposing solutions through programs and services designed to respond to the needs and aspirations of individuals, families, organizations, agencies, schools, and communities--both rural and urban" (Jackson, History of Prairie View A&M University online).

Prairie View A&M University has steadfastly provided high quality education for all students who have entered her doors. The institution "offers baccalaureate degrees in 50 academic majors, 37 master's degrees and four doctoral programs through nine colleges and schools" (www.pvamu.edu). More importantly, it has established a strong foundation for students to create a journey of excellence while building upon tradition. Prairie View A&M University's student enrollment continues to fluctuate from year to year. As indicated in Table 1 below, student enrollment was 8,203 in 2008; it went up to 8,781 in 2010; and it plummeted to 8,336 in 2012.

PVAMU Student Enrollment Statistics				
5 Year Trend - Fall Semesters				
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
8, 203	8, 608	8, 781	8, 425	8,336

Table 1 PVAMU 5 Year Fall Enrollment Statistics

The university has continuously embraced the number of students who have been awarded degrees from the institution. "During the University's 130-year history, some 46,000 academic degrees have been awarded" (Jackson, History of Prairie View A&M University online).

Perceptions Regarding HBCUs

For individual students who seek to pursue a college degree, researching different postsecondary institutions that meet their criteria has its advantages. "Throughout their enrollment, colleges and universities have a primary responsibility to increase students' knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live" (Henry & Closson, pg. 18, 2010). "Often when outsiders are familiar only with the history of HBCUs, they fail to see what is currently happening, including these institutions' service to diverse communities, their enormous track record in the sciences, and their continuing and crucial role in educating those African Americans who eventually occupy the black middle class" (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom, & Bowman, 2010, pg. 9). In the not too distant past, these schools were the only place for students of color to receive an opportunity for higher education. Thus, historically black colleges and universities have changed the paradigm of education. "HBCUs, on the other hand, seem to make up for what they lack in resources by providing a more collegial and supportive learning environment for students and faculty" (Kim and Conrad, pg. 401, 2006). HBCUs have played a major role in how African American students who have attended these schools attribute their success. For these students, attending HBCUs have allowed them to take ownership of their career paths, give back to their communities, and allowed them the privilege to leave their mark on society.

Since their beginnings, HBCUs have embodied an essence that has captivated their students and staff for years to come. The history behind the development of HBCUs affirms the positive perception that these institutions would equip students of color with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete with similarly educated persons in society. With an environment enriched with a strong historical background, "HBCUs provide an opportunity for students of color to examine their culture and to understand that they can be academically successful" (Baylor, pg. 39, 2010). This has helped HBCUs provide the type of education that is needed for students to embark on a journey that may have previously been deemed an unrealized dream. "The sense of community at African American higher education colleges and universities offers cohesiveness in Black culture that is not totally visible within the larger social structure" (Satterfield, pg. 9, 2008). Not only do HBCUs provide a culturally-sound education for their students, they help shape the minds and souls of students who have made significant contributions to their communities and history in general. "HBCUs, private and public, represent only three percent of all American colleges and universities, and enroll only 14 percent of all African American college students, but they have

produced: 70 percent of all African American dentists and physicians, 50 percent of all African American engineers, 50 percent of all African American public school teachers, and 35 percent of all African American attorneys" (UNCF, 2008). From Pulitzer Prize winners Alice Walker (Speiman College), the Honorable Barbara Jordan (Texas Southern University), to author Alex Haley (Alcorn State), these distinguished and notable individuals, as well as others, have graduated from HBCUs and have made an unforgettable impact in the fields of education, entertainment, science and other notable disciplines.

As HBCUs took shape in the history of America, they struggled with the burden of a negative image. "A number of HBCUs are at risk because of low endowments, low enrollments, administrative and financial mismanagement, heavy debt, and/or loss of accreditation" (Avery, pg. 338, 2009). With discussions of segregation, HBCUs have been tainted with what they have fought to eliminate in schools: segregation. "Both public and private Black colleges in the south remained segregated by law and were the only educational option for African Americans until *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Gasman et al., 2010, p. 8). Although HBCUs were originally established for people of color to have the same educational opportunities as their white counterparts, they were also charged with perpetuating the segregation they were designed to address. "HBCUs may provide the type of environment that allows for engagement in practices designed to assist in enhancing the critical consciousness among their White student populations" (Henry and Closson, pg. 14, 2010).

Financial Constraints

As predominantly white colleges and universities began to fully accept the enrollment of African American students into their institutions, enrollment at HCBUs began to decline. "With the push for the integration of historically White institutions during the Civil Rights Movement, enrollment dropped at HBCUs, and their role of educating the near entirety of the Black middle class shifted"(Gasman, pg. 5, 2013). Students of color now have the option of enrolling in predominantly white institutions as well as historically black colleges and universities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

African American students' test scores on the state-mandated Principal Texas Examination of Essential Skills (TExES) exam have tended to lag behind their White counterparts. The chart below indicates the annual pass rates by entity based on ASEP rules:

Educator Certification Online System Annual Pass Rates on Principal 068 on ASEP Rules Initial Pass Rates 9/1/2012 - 8/31/2013				
	# of Test Takers	# of Tests Taken	# of Tests Passed	% of Tests Passed
All	41	41	39	95.1
Female	33	33	32	97.0
Male	08	08	07	87.5
Afro-Am	33	33	31	94.0
Hispanic	03	03	03	100.0
White	04	04	04	100.0
Other	01	01	01	100.0

Table 2 PITAIUIU Annual Pass Rates - ASEP Rules

Per the results taken from the Certified Principal Demographics by Preparation Route 2008-2012 (Ramsay, 2013a), Black/African American principals who took the university post-baccalaureate route for principal certification were produced in small percentages in comparison to their White counterparts. In the year 2011-2012, 63% of White principals obtained their principal certification through the university post-baccalaureate route in comparison to only 14.6% of African American principals who obtained their principal certification using the same route (Ramsay, 2013a). Per the Educator Certification Online System Report, submitted on August 22, 2013, thirty-four out of 36 students successfully passed the Principal EC-12 exam through Prairie View A&M University during the completion year of 2012 (www.pvamu.edu/education).

The Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) compiles all the results of the exams and reports the passing rates to higher education institutions. The standard expectation for an institution to remain accredited is currently 80%. Therefore, university principal preparation programs must align the curriculum to address all the standards (Hernandez, Roberts, & Menchaca, 2012, p. 5, 2012).

Many Texas regional ESCs (education service centers) and participating post-secondary institutions offer programs that assist future campus leaders in adequately preparing for the principal exam. A high percentage of African American students do not successfully pass the exam. This has been particularly true within HBCUs. "There is tremendous pressure on preparation programs for their students to do well" (Wilmore, pg. 3, 2003). "The responsibility of reforming principal preparation programs lies with state certification policies, as well as with institutions granting the degree or certifications" (Lynch, pg. 46, 2012). In the Certified Principal Demographics by Preparation Route 2008-2012 report, the results show that "... most Principals were White, and the

university post-baccalaureate route produced the smallest percentages of African American Principals." Social values permeate stakeholder decisions in our educational system. It is important that African American educators and campus leaders have the responsibility to reflect these social values in the professional lives. "The assessing of students' learning with a standardized metric suggests neutrality" (Donnor and Shockley, 2010). This draws a line between what is valued socially and what is valued academically. This also speaks the same for those African American principals who have the same credentials as their White counterparts in the role as the campus principal. In the article, *What Happened to All of the Black Principals After Brown?* (Smith & Lemasters, 2010), the authors reference a dissertation by Wright (2003) wherein the authors conducted face-to-face interviews with eight African American educators and spoke of their experiences in Texas public schools post *Brown vs. the Board of Education*:

We had a lot of black middle school and elementary school principals that were placed in an assistant principal's position and very, very many of them who were called assistant principals. Basically, they ran errand! There were no black principals, head coaches, or head band directors. The most negative thing that I experienced was being placed in a sub position coaching with the experience that I had. (Wright, 2003, pp. 135-136).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine what steps were taken to enhance the TExES scores at a Historically Black University (HBU) in Texas and to determine if the steps taken were effective in improving TExES scores.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What steps were taken to improve the TExES Principal Certification scores of students at a specific HBCU in Texas?
2. Were these steps effective as measured by African American student scores on the state mandated TExES Principal Certification exam?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Minorities are underrepresented as principals in Texas as compared to the general Texas population. Per the Employed Principal Demographics 2008 - 2012 data (Ramsay 2013b), the *race* and ethnicity results indicated that "nearly two-thirds of principals were White, about one-fifth were Hispanic/Latino, and just over one-tenth were African American." In addition, "underrepresented minority students who currently attend college are generally not attracted to teaching as a career because of increased opportunities in other fields" (Madkins, pg. 420, 2011). One factor causing this underrepresentation is the difficulty level of the required TExES exam. In the state of Texas, the Principal TExES exam is a comprehensive criterion-referenced test that is "divided into three domains, *school community leadership, instructional leadership, and administrative leadership*, with nine competencies. The examination questions address specific competencies" (Wilmore, pg. 4, 2003). Initiatives cited in this study significantly helped African American students to pass the Principal TExES exam which makes them TExES licensed and eligible for employment as administrators in Texas. "Communities, scholars, policymakers, and

practitioners interested in expanding college access and success for underrepresented racial-ethnic minorities would be wise to seek answers in the lessons and examples provided by HBCUs over their long, distinguished histories" (Allen, et al., pg. 275, 2007). This will help narrow the gap in the percentage of Caucasian and African American principals in Texas.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study is limited to one HBCU in Texas and the enhancement steps that were put into place to enhance TExES Principal Certification outcomes.
2. The study does not reflect the Hispanic student population who are in the principal certification track in Texas. The focus is strictly on African American students whose programs include sitting in the TExES examination.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

HBCU: A Historically Black College or University: Originally founded to meet the higher education needs of African American students, particularly during segregation.

TExES Exam: The Texas Examination of Essential Skills (TExES) is the state mandated test for all new certifications in Texas. This begins with people seeking initial teacher certification and continues through the superintendent certification level. A passing score on this test is required for certification. Certification is a prerequisite to employment.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative design was used in the study. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), qualitative research plays a discovery role, while quantitative research plays a confirmatory role. Data for the quantitative study were gathered by extracting pertinent data from extant databases. Explanatory and descriptive methodologies comprised the quantitative portion of the study. An explanatory design involves the researcher collecting and analyzing quantitative data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena, concerned primarily with determining "what is" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The independent variables for the study were the 68 completed Principal TExES exams. One set of dependent variables for the study were Principal candidates classified as Finishers seeking licensure. The other set of dependent variables for the study were Principal candidates enrolled as All but Clinical seeking licensure.

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) defined a target population as "all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objects to which researchers wish to generalize the results of their research" (p.167). The target population for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of Prairie View A&M University graduate students enrolled in The Whitlowe R. Green College of Education Administration Department seeking Principal P-12 licensure using information gathered through the Texas Education Agency databases.

CONCLUSIONS

The Whitlowe R. Green College of Education is committed to ensuring that candidates experience the synchronicity of clinical experiences incorporating theory and practice in a multicultural

and multi-dimensional setting. In order to sustain and enhance the performance of required field experiences, the College of Education is currently taking the following steps: (1) at each monthly departmental meeting, the faculty analyzes and organizes data from a variety of sources for program and candidate improvement. These results are used to make necessary changes and adjustments as outlined in the minutes and agenda of each department meeting; (2) each week the Dean's Executive Council analyzes TExES® scores for all candidates and program decisions are made based on candidate performance; (3) data from meeting agendas and minutes and course syllabi, including rubrics and assessments, are examined and used to improve programs; (4) data from the candidate, teacher, principal, and field supervisor are examined and evaluated at the end of the semester; and (5) the College of Education will continue to have open communication between building administrative mentors (supervisors), field supervisors, candidates, interns, university professors, and program coordinators. All of the above items are monitored and analyzed by an internal auditing team and documented to ensure compliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

It is recommended that future study be done to determine the reasons African American students continue to select an HBCU as their higher education option of choice notwithstanding their eligibility to attend equally competitive non-HBCUs. Various questions should be considered such as: Do predominantly white colleges offer a wider variety of majors and financial aid than HBCUs? How has lower and stiff competition from predominantly white colleges impacted HBCUs financially?

To sustain viability, HBCUs must increase their enrollment by marketing themselves as schools of choice which provide a culture and climate in which all students, not just African Americans, feel welcomed and supported due to a collective vision of excellence and a commitment to its achievement

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**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL NARRATIVE STUDY
OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological narrative study was to explore the habits, characteristics and expressions of African American male community college instructors and understand their influence on students, colleagues and the surrounding community. Community colleges are becoming a greater source of academic and career development (Chang, 2005). However, as more African American and Latino-Hispanic Americans are enrolling at community colleges more each year, the faculty population may not accurately represent this change. This is an indicator for colleges that need faculty development for cultural awareness and diversity inclusion. These are important methods that can support the interaction between students and instructors (Chang, 2005). With the increase of African American students enrolling in community colleges, the ratio of African American male community college instructors is still low as compared to their Caucasian counterparts (Fujimoto, 2012).

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education is providing more and more students affordable opportunities to earn advanced degrees and certificates. More families see the need to enroll in institutions in order to build on a better career and higher wages. Community Colleges offer great support with smaller classroom sizes and payment options which include lower tuition rates as compared to major universities and technical areas that provide hands on training (Charlier, & Williams, 2011; Xueli, 2009). As more minorities enroll in community colleges, the need for more culturally diverse instructors could help to support this cultural shift in higher education. This research study will present information based on the lived experiences of African American male community college instructors in order to gain a better understanding of how they relate to students, interact with other faculty and staff, and deal with personal challenges. Although researchers have concentrated studies on the cultural diversity of the classroom environment in evaluating the impact of teacher immediacy on student learning, there has been insufficient data about the influence of teacher immediacy in an African American male instructor's classroom (Gendrin & Rucker, 2004).

Background of the Problem

Community colleges are becoming a greater source of academic and career development (Chang, 2005). However, as more African American and Latino-Hispanic Americans are enrolling at community colleges each year, the faculty population may not accurately represent this change (Chang, 2005). This is an indicator for colleges that faculty development for cultural awareness and diversity inclusion are important methods that can support the interaction between students and instructors (Chang, 2005). The community college district where this study was conducted has over 200 academic programs, graduates more than 4,000 students annually and serves more than 27,000 students at tuition costs only at quarter of that of the nearest university. The students enrolled received over fifty-four million dollars in federal financial aid. With the increase of African American students enrolling in community colleges the ratio of African American male community college instructors is still low as compared to its Caucasian counterparts (Fujimoto, 2012). There is limited research as it relates to the lived experiences of African American male community college instructors.

Statement of the Problem

This phenomenological narrative study focused on the lived experiences of a select group of African American male faculty, because they are generally an underrepresented population of educators in higher education (Fujimoto, 2012). As university tuition increases and more minority students are seeking opportunities to pursue higher education, a key component to recruitment is making sure that the campus environment supports the cultural and social needs of the student (Xueli, 2009).

Community colleges are generally made up of faculty and staff that live in the surrounding areas that may share common cultural similarities to the students (Xueli, 2009). This research was gathered in a community that is comprised of a high Hispanic/Latino and African American population. A major concern is that as minority enrollment increases in community colleges, the new student population will shift; whereas, the minority will quickly become the majority, but the current faculty population will not represent this cultural change (Fujimoto, 2012). African American students, specifically African American males, represent the highest dropout rate at 48.9% (Luke Wood, 2012). The assumption is that having an African American male instructor present may offer a cultural connection and support the academic develop of all students. However, there are only a small number of African American male instructors and certain studies suggest that they are less likely to receive tenure or promotions (Jewell & McPherson, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Chickering's Theory (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998) was used as a theoretical foundation for this study. The educational environment exerts powerful influences on student development in institutional size, student-faculty relationship, curriculum, teaching, and several other areas. These distinct areas of environmental influences can also determine what impact the African American male community college instructor has on the classroom and what environmental influences have impacted them as well (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010). Chickering targeted thirteen small colleges that focused on the influence of college faculty on the college environment development from 1964 to 1969 (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

In Chickering's study he wanted to target the faculty in the preparation of Education and Identity in order to provide research findings on how to be more inclusive of various student populations (Evans, et. al., 1998). Chickering's Seven Vectors account the interpersonal, emotional, ethical, and intellectual characteristics of development. The Seven Vectors used to show the elements of behavior that can be studied to determine a student's growth are; Developing Competence, Managing Emotions, Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, Developing Purpose, Developing Integrity and Environmental Influences (Evans, et. al., (1998).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological narrative study was to explore the habits, characteristics and expressions of African American male community college instructors and understand their influence on students, colleagues and the surrounding community. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What educational affiliations or other programs are African American male community college instructors participating in outside of the classroom environment?
2. What were the perceptions of African American male community college instructors regarding the educational environment during their time as students?
3. How have the perceptions of African American male community college instructors changed during their role as an instructor?
4. What are the perceptions of African American male college instructors regarding the educational environment of the future?
5. What barriers do African American male community college instructors recognize that may inhibit their progress in the educational environment?

Rationale/Significance of the Research

There have been several studies presented as to a major concern in regard to why there are not enough African American male community college instructors. However, very little information has been presented on those that are currently facilitating instruction (Brown, 2009). Brown (2009) previously conducted a study on African American male instructors and how they interact with African American male students using a pedagogical approach in studying emotions, feedback and a unique understanding needed to inspire these students in elementary and secondary schools.

This study presented similar ideas, but will focus on African American male community college instructors' daily experiences within the community college environment. Xueli (2009) reported that academic enrollment of African American male students based on those having graduated from high school attending a four-year institution is 55.4%. The enrollment is gradually increasing, but their Caucasian male counterparts are enrolling at a much higher rate (Xueli, 2009). Parents and students alike are more likely to check professor reviews or take advice from previous college students who may have previously enrolled with certain instructors (Xueli, 2009). Instructors play a significant role in engaging students, recruitment into academic and professional programs as well as offering support towards career development (Owens, D., et.al, 2010). For an instructor, this information is essential as it can help them understand the

student population cultural shift and the various academic, social, financial challenges that students could encounter (Owens, D., et.al, 2010).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited in the following ways:

1. One major limitation of this study was the source of data. Interviews and data were gathered from only African American male instructors located at one location within the community college district. The data collected offered insight from the perspective of the participants who experienced the phenomenon of interest. The study did not require participation from other African American male instructors located at the other campuses within the college district.
2. Another limitation of this study was the manner in which individuals were selected for the study. Each participant was selected based upon a previous relationship with the researcher. Any full-time online instructors, part time instructors from other institutions, and instructors that teach evening or night classes were not utilized for the study. The small population for this particular study was a voluntary group identified using purposeful sampling, in that it included African American male instructors who chose willingly to participate in the study.
3. The final limitation of this study concerned the beliefs of the individuals interviewed and their willingness to address those beliefs.

Delimitations

This study included the following delimitations:

1. The participant must be an African American male instructor of any age teaching any subject regardless of tenure.
2. The participant does not have to be a full-time instructor but can be a full-time employee teaching at least one course of any kind on the specific campus location in which the research is being conducted.
3. The participant must participate in some other educational organization or program outside of the instructional setting that supports the institution's mission, values and community support.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Community colleges are becoming a greater source of academic and career development (Chang, 2005). However as more African American and Latino-Hispanic Americans are enrolling at community colleges more each year, the faculty population may not accurately represent this change. This is an indicator for colleges that need faculty development for cultural awareness and diversity inclusion. These are important methods that can support the interaction between students and instructors (Chang, 2005). With the increase of African American students enrolling in community colleges the ratio of African American male community college instructors is still low as compared to their Caucasian counterparts (Fujimoto, 2012).

Community Colleges offer affordable tuition plans and fast paced technical degrees that allow for the working student to earn a quality level education. Working students attending community college are able to continue supporting their families without increased debt and enroll in courses more often than at universities. For those living in low socio-economic areas,

community colleges offer greater support and smaller classrooms to allow for more teacher-student interaction (Chang, 2005). Topics concerning the cultural shift in higher education, diversity in faculty hiring, African American male faculty awareness and the educational environment of students are among the concerns expressed in the literature.

The Great Cultural Shift

Throughout the literature several ideas have been expressed as to lack of overall African American male instructors participating in community colleges (McClure, 2007). White males dominated the education system during the early 1900s in attaining higher level degrees and prestigious positions within society. During a time of racial segregation, specifically in the South, African American males could only find opportunities as teachers earning low wages (Jayakumar, et al., 2009). With the lack of wages and future evidence of higher paying jobs coming their way, the literature indicates that African American males left the schools to seek more labor intensive but hiring paying jobs. Some joined the military, while others began to seek opportunities playing a professional sport (Jayakumar, et al., 2009).

During the 1980s Jayakumar, et.al, (2009) reviewed information regarding an increase in female students enrolling in colleges. As more females became educated, they often were able to acquire the jobs that males would generally have had, except the males did not have a college degree. More Caucasian women sought employment opportunities teaching K-12. The change of personnel would modify the teacher population placing women as the majority (Jayakumar, et al., 2009).

Comeaux (2008) reported a large portion of African American male students participating in sports, but lower numbers when in comparison to academia. This could suggest that the social and cultural connection linked with African American males and sports may outweigh the importance of academic and faculty support (Comeaux, 2008). African American males as students have to be able to relate to the instructor before they can even begin to comprehend the instructional method (Gendrin, & Rucker, 2004). More information seems to be outlined and discussed regarding four-year institutions and its concerns rather than those of the community college. This seems to present a level of concern, because the research expresses a huge growth in community colleges because of affordable tuition, community location convenience and smaller classrooms, which means more opportunities to engage with faculty (Twombly & Townsend, 2008).

Community College Growth

Bragg and Durham, (2012) reported that The Lumina Foundation in 2010 estimated that more than 37 million Americans, more than 20% of the working adult population have enrolled in college, but has not earned a degree. This has challenged the nation to increase the number of high-quality degrees awarded by 60% by 2025. This undertaking will require an additional 8.2 million graduates with associate's degrees or higher between the ages of 25 and 34 (Bailey & Morest, (2006). As numbers soar to higher heights, more emphasis would need to focus on community colleges in academic financial support and creating programs conducive to the cultural environment (Bailey & Morest, 2006).

The scale of this directive is staggering and places immense demand on the already financially bound public higher education systems, more specifically community colleges because of the number of students moving from universities to enroll at community colleges. Ninety-five percent of the nations' community colleges have open enrollment. If it were not for

community colleges, the overall higher education system would enroll fewer racial and ethnic minorities, those of lower socio-economic status, immigrant, and first-generation students (Bragg & Durham, 2012). These changes will have a huge impact on incoming students if they are unable to adapt to college life based upon the lack of diversity amongst faculty (Karim, 2003). This describes why access has been the ideal tenet of community colleges for decades. Even more recently community colleges have been central in the national debate about college completion (Bailey & Morest, (2006).

The Role of Community Colleges

In the current social ambiance, parents, legislators, policymakers, members of business and industry, and other institutional stakeholders demand accountability for student success. Therefore, community colleges must certify that newly hired faculty members are both “a good fit” and a “valuable long-term investment” for the institution (Green, & Ciez-Volz, 2010). The nearly 112,000 full-time faculty members employed by community colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) represent one-fifth of all faculty members in U.S. higher educational institutions (Green, & Ciez-Volz, 2010). Community college instructors teach approximately thirty-seven percent of undergraduates, which includes nearly fifty percent of all freshmen and sophomores (Green, & Ciez-Volz, 2010). Green & Ciez-Volz (2010) concluded that due to the vast majoring to baby boomers’ faculty seeking to retire the urgency of new faculty hiring of specifically those can influence the new millennial generation of the 21st century is important.

Weissman (2013) found that the number of tenured professors over the years is beginning to decline while adjunct instructors are on the rise. Previously seeking an occupation as a professor was a respectable professional career with higher paying salaries, but now wages are relatively low. High educational tech courses, such as distance learning and the ability to test out of courses tend to take the place of traditional classroom settings. This creates a concern for qualified applicants that are eager to teach long term (Weissman, 2013). Since the millennial generation is more likely to want to enroll in distance education courses, it poses a major concern for the new younger generation of instructors. If instructors are having difficulty increasing their salaries, research states that they may seek other means for earning higher income (Rosser, & Townsend, 2006). This could then result in another blow to the already low number of African American male applicants seeking employment as instructors (Rosser, & Townsend, 2006).

Lack of Black Male Students Leads to a Lack of Black Male Instructors

African American males enroll in college in very low numbers as it relates to all other students. This may have a direct effect on why there is a lower number African American male faculty facilitating instruction in higher education. A major concern is that African American males’ college retention rates have not seen a dramatic increase that would initiate a movement towards completion of advanced degrees. Lower graduation rates produce fewer candidates being considered for the hiring process. For African Americans, the decades between 1950 through 1980 was one of continued gender similarity, with both males’ and females’ college enrollment rates growing very slowly (McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011).

McDaniel et al. (2011) conducted extensive research concerning these matters. The much lower rate of college completion for blacks than whites was due in part to the lack of educational resources devoted to blacks, especially in southern states, where the majority of blacks resided. Black men in the South also benefited less from the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill was race-neutral in statutory terms. In southern states, however, segregation severely limited state

investment in the colleges accessible to blacks (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). This restricted the magnitude to which southern black veterans could use G.I. benefits to obtain a college degree. Throughout much of the mid-twentieth century, college completion rates of blacks, especially those of black males were almost non-existent constrained by lack of resources, location of schools and financial support. At the same time, very different structures of occupational opportunities for blacks and whites and men and women likely created different incentive structures for each group (Jayakumar, et al., 2009).

Faculty Shortage

Major deliberations have occurred based on a growing national concern about African American male teacher shortages in urban centers including efforts to increase the number of males in instructor based professions (Brown, 2009). Districts and university-based teacher education programs sought to hire and certify African American men to work in urban communities that were facing substantial teacher deficiencies. In some communities, supporters and researchers have requested for African American men to work in urban schools as a way to give back to African American communities confronting deleterious social conditions (Brown, 2009).

The previous educational environment was generally comprised of Caucasian students from middle to high class socio-economic families generally with two parent incomes and some sort of a college education (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). In 2007-2008, 35% of all two-year college students were students of color, however only 17% of the faculty members were of color (Fujimoto, 2012). White men occupied the most prestigious and higher paying careers during this period. College-educated African American men, however, were largely locked out of high-status occupations. In 1940 and 1950, there were almost no college-educated African American male engineers. Fewer than 6% of black males with a degree worked as doctors, dentists, lawyers, or managers compared with at least 7% to 16% of white men working in each of these fields (Jayakumar, et al., 2009). During this time, African American men were more likely to be working as teachers than in any other occupation. Women's access to jobs as teachers was a likely incentive for them to complete a college degree. Due to African American men, not being able to gain access to the high-paying jobs compared to that of white men with college degrees, their incentives to complete a college degree were reduced (Fujimoto, 2012). Previous research suggests that increasing numbers of faculty members of color may contribute to the "critical mass" needed to have a progressive impact on educational excellence and student achievement (Fujimoto, 2012). Additional research on the influence of mentoring programs supports the notion that faculty diversity has an encouraging effect on retaining students of color. This provides evidence of the positive impact of peer mentoring programs involving peers of the same racial background for African American as well as for Latino students (Fujimoto, 2012).

The Hiring Process

Hiring based on personal preferences rather than qualifications will corrupt the recruitment process where a well-defined ad, job description, and fair search will serve to clear up any misunderstandings (Gnage & Drumm, 2010). The search committee may have to look beyond their ideal candidate, which quite often would be someone like them. Gnage and Drumm (2010) concluded that the job description's worth begins in the compensation and benefits office as determination regarding salary range. The job description continues to be important well after the position is filled. Often the job description is a foundation for annual performance reviews,

so it is critical that it is as detailed as possible. This information provides students that are searching for career choices by reviewing job postings a better understanding on what educational path to take. The authors note that an effective job description encompasses the necessary details that can be frequently rewritten without containing too much detail. The authors reveal that it is critical to change preceding policies that have thwarted innovation (Gnage & Drumm, 2010).

Hiring for Diversity

Wilson (2010) indicates that since community demographics, organizational culture, and diversity in enrollment and staffing needs have influenced and often resulted in hiring-process changes, many of which began to appear when 2-year colleges transitioned from junior to community colleges. These shifts have required organizations to modify their missions to focus on more diverse and nontraditional learners, thereby redefining hiring processes in their institutions. Gnage and Drumm (2010) indicated that the majority of students entering community colleges face innumerable challenges, often far beyond what a university first-year student typically encounters. Individuals working in community colleges must be able to attend to all of these challenges. In spite of the job description, the capacity to serve a diverse population has to be an obligation even when a particular job focus may be reduced to a specific population.

Diversity must be a consideration in the hiring process. A diverse faculty and staff are essential to creating a college environment beneficial to encouraging student success through mentoring, role modeling and carrying out their assigned duties while leading students toward the completion of educational aspirations. Research has supported the value of a diverse faculty and staff (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010).

African American Faculty

Jones and Osborne-Lampkin (2013) researched a specific area concerning African American female faculty as well listing several concerns as it relates to the experiences of African American faculty. Since socialization is an important factor in the academic preparation and professional success of early career faculty (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Johnson, 2002; Lucas & Murry, 2002; Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013), a number of African American female junior scholars in recent years have had opportunities early in career professional development to conduct activities designed to address and reduce academic socialization issues. Research Socialization issues are especially critical for African American female faculty given their limited representation in academia, notwithstanding efforts to diversify higher education.

Based on the 2009 United States Census (2010) report Jones & Osborne-Lampkin (2013) stated these findings; .5% of African American females 25 years and older held doctoral degrees compared to .9% of White females. Of the 63,712 doctoral degrees awarded in 2007-2008, 4% (2,594) were awarded to African American females which comprised 12.8% of female faculty and 3.6% of all other faculty (NCES, 2009; Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). This rising number and percentage of African American female faculty can lead to an encouraging and lasting impact on the overall health of the academia. Despite this, consistent evidence has shown that non-White faculty members have different experiences in academia when compared to their White counterparts (Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Additionally, they receive less social support than White colleagues (Ponjuan, Martin Conley & Trower, 2011). As a result, African American faculty members are often uninformed of professional opportunities due to limited

access to formal and informal networks that exist in many professions and disciplines. This lack of access may eventually compromise their professional success (Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013).

Warde (2009) referenced African American male faculty seeking tenure at universities. African American male tenure-track professors in institutions of higher education often lack effective mentoring, which might be due to the fact that mentors typically choose protégés who share the same ethnic, religious, academic, and social backgrounds. African American male tenure-track professors typically have a more difficult time compared to their White counterparts in gaining access to the professional and social networks that are so essential to advancement in the professoriate and earning of tenure.

African American Male Tenure

According to Warde (2009), several of the tenured professors mentioned mentoring as a substantial ingredient to their prolonged academic and career success. Six of the eight participants all mentioned mentoring by an older esteemed faculty or department chair yet none of the mentors were persons of color. Based on the age of the participants, ranging from ages 47-65, the research indicates that during the time when they initially were hired as faculty it could easily have been twenty or more years ago. This suggests that finding a mentor of color would probably been slim to none.

Based on Warde's (2009) research and findings, the African American male faculty is able to accomplish their goals by being a team player, having opportunity to embrace a good mentor, believing in them-selves to achieve higher accolades and having a good professional and social network. Although community colleges do not offer tenure, it can assume that the African American male instructors may still have similar influences when it comes to offering up opportunities to achieve higher level positions. Warde (2009) concluded in his research that the support of the institution was a key factor to allow for African American male faculty to reach tenure regardless of racial or lack of diversity demographics.

The Educational Environment for African American Males

For the lower socio-economic families that typically enroll in community colleges, those that make up the African American family with young African American males face various challenges coming from high school into college. In today's society, the lack of an African American male role model or father is missing from the home due to more single mothers raising young adolescent boys. When these young men attempt to transition into the college environment they are faced with challenges that may include a cultural shift, classroom expectations, continued lack of support from instructional resources and even worse the lack of interest to have a faculty-student interaction (Weaver-Hightower, 2011).

McClure (2007) stated that African American male instructors are lacking in community colleges, so the support or the cultural connection for young males could be almost non-existent. In a phenomenological case study by Cartwright and Henriksen (2012) conducted a study with young African American male students transitioning from high school to college, a major concern is presented in regard to the educational and home environment of these young men.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological narrative study was to explore the habits, characteristics and expressions of African American male community college instructors and understand their influence on students, colleagues and the surrounding community. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What educational affiliations or other programs are African American male community college instructors participating in outside of the classroom environment?
2. What were the perceptions of African American male community college instructors regarding the educational environment during their time as students?
3. How have the perceptions of African American male community college instructors changed during their role as an instructor?
4. What are the perceptions of African American male college instructors regarding the educational environment of the future?
5. What barriers do African American male community college instructors recognize that may inhibit their progress in the educational environment?

Research and Design

This phenomenological narrative qualitative approach conducted at a Southeast Texas community college used interviews, classroom observations, and personal testimonies from students and colleagues. A phenomenological study is used to describe the lived experiences of several individuals based on a common meaning (Creswell, 2013). The design included interview questions, which allowed for more direct response from the participants in order to gain first-hand knowledge of their experiences. The researcher was able to collect data from first-hand classroom observation within the participants' teaching environment. The responses gathered from the interviews and observation were all recorded and transcribed by the researcher allowing for detailed accuracy.

Participants

Five community college instructors were selected by the researcher to serve as participants in this study. The instructors selected were African American males that teach at least one course on campus. A few participants did serve in other capacities within the college; however, their direct employment status was in facilitating instruction. These participants range in various ages and from various departments. The participants selected were open to express ideas in regard to their lived experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to select these participants regarding this study. Initially there were nine instructors available for the study and five were finally chosen and accepted the invitation to participate. Each participant was either a current full time or part-time instructor located on the campus where the research is being conducted. All of the participants are housed at the same location and teach courses during the daytime hours. All participants had attained a minimum baccalaureate degree and had experiences with student success in higher education at the community college level.

Setting

The college district consisted of three distinct campuses separated by an average of twenty miles in the metro-complex in Texas. The selected campus was the smallest campus as it related to the student and faculty population. The total number of students enrolled at the time of the study was a 7,312 with 18.6% enrolled full time and 81.4% were enrolled part time. Hispanic/Latino students made up roughly 54.6%, Caucasian 20%, African American 16.8%, Asian 2.5%, International 1.5%, Native American .7%, other 3.8% and Native Hawaiian .2%. Female students constituted 61.4% of the total population while males represented only 38.9%.

Data Collection

Data were collected through personal in-depth interviews using a guided protocol with open ended questions, a tape recorder device and classroom interactions. During the interview sessions, instructors were asked to express their concerns for various topics affecting community college students and staff.

The interviews were audiotaped and extensive handwritten notes were taken by the researcher during the interview session to guarantee proper transcription. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed within one week of the interview in an attempt to identify specific patterns that may emerge. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of data and records, coding of data and pseudonyms were used for each participant in the study. After all data were collected and examined, the results of the study were emailed to the participants to elicit feedback about the accuracy of the findings.

Data Analysis

The researcher gathered, transcribed and analyzed manually all information without the use of any electronic media or programs. Data analysis consisted of deconstructing what was found in the interviews and putting student interview answers into categories in order to summarize findings and conclusions. The researcher then reflected upon the meaning of those findings and conclusions, in an attempt to remain as neutral as possible during the study. In an attempt to show the essence of the participants' responses, details from the interviews were included along with direct quotes from the participants.

FINDINGS

Research Question One

What were the important and determining factors that influenced African American males to become instructors as it relates to cultural influences, financial stability, and academic development?

It can be concluded that salary is not always a huge deterrent when it comes to African American males seeking employment in higher education. The findings do suggest that it is a concern in that a few of the participants had other opportunities beyond the classroom they were eager to do. K.A. Griffin's (2012) findings suggest little time is spent considering how faculty socialization—defined as the ways in which those aspiring to academic careers develop knowledge and adopt the skills and values necessary to be successful in their roles (Kirk & Todd-Mancillas, 1991; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001)—translates into the time African American professors spend working with students (Griffin, 2012). The research suggests that

administrators may want to employ better tactics to recruit black males and also find other means of incentives for financial support. A cultural concern is still valid as it related to how black males are perceived as well as what the students think of them as well. Research indicates that relationships between African American faculty and undergraduates revealed African American professors feel a special connection with their African American students and are drawn to working with them (Griffin, 2012; Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). The research suggests that appearance is important as well as the opportunity to continue developing in academia.

Research Question Two

What educational affiliations or other programs do African American male community college instructors participate in outside of the classroom environment?

The research indicated that African American male instructors are eager to participate in leadership organizations, support students and diversify their skill set in order to become more effective. In K.A. Griffin's (2012) research review, she noted that African American faculty are often described as carrying heavier advising and mentoring loads than their peers (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Patton & Harper, 2003; Umbach, 2006; Williams & Williams, 2006). The research talks about cultural environment of creating a social family or a bond. Mr. Murray used sports as avenue to engage students because he recognized the impact that sports could have on a nation. The concept is really about finding out what brings people together so as to create a relationship with them. Once you have created a relationship and have broken down barriers then instruction is easy. African American male community college instructors want to be engaged and they want to participate in order to build on their own experiences as well as support student success.

Research Question Three

What were the perceptions that African American male community college instructors had about the educational environment during their time as a student?

Based on the findings, the participants felt like the classroom experience has not made a drastic change in regard the diversity as it relates to the student population. The research indicates Dr. Branch only had two black male teachers and based on the statics from the college district if a student enrolls in the central or south campus it is very likely they will not have a black male teacher at all. Student-faculty relationships expressed a varied interaction among faculty and students involving different roles and responsibilities (Evans et al., 1998). The research also reflects hiring practices regarding effective recruitment tactics used to engage qualified personnel. Establishing Identity included comfort with gender and sexual orientation, social and cultural heritage, comfort in one's lifestyle and role, and comfort in body and appearance (Evans et al., 1998).

Research Question Four

How have those perceptions changed during their tenure as instructors and what are their perceptions of the educational environment of the future?

The participants noted that they still feel that although they have attained an upper level degree and are maintaining active participation in various other capacities they still recognize

that their voice is not being heard. Brown (2009) addressed a similar concern in regard to the quality of education that black teachers had when they taught students because of their beliefs, their values and their ability to relate to conflicts of society. The third and final stage of Phinney's model is *Identity Achievement* where the individual develops a healthy bicultural identity and resolve identify conflicts in coming to terms with ethnic racial concerns (Evans et al., 1998). These areas allowed for the participants to be able to connect with students and thus give them a real-world perspective regarding the importance of education.

Research Question Five

What barriers do African American male community college instructors recognize that may inhibit their progress in the educational environment?

Cultural barriers are a major concern as well as a poor academic standard in a lack of dedication in completing degrees. Chang (2005) suggested that students in the study felt difficulty in connecting with predominantly White faculty members.

Implications

Suggestions to implement for practice include the following:

1. Seek out African American males that are industry and those are recent college graduates as a recruitment tool. Use advertisement media effectively in places such as barbershops, local family diners or restaurants, churches, sports areas or fitness centers and social media.
2. Provide opportunities within the college environment for African American males to be available to the students and be more visible on campus. Allowing the create and facilitate programs, utilized their social skills, gifts such as playing an instrument, cooking, or any area that allows them to generally connect in creating a community or family environment.
3. Support African American males in continuing their education. Suggest means for them to actively seek and attain scholarships, offer areas of low cost tuition for employers to go back to school. Host banquets or luncheons where the institution recognizes the accomplishments of employees.
4. Allow African American males to influence change in being able to update preexisting policies in order to accommodate their needs and the needs of the students.
5. Approach African American males with regard to advancement within the institution rather than seek other applicants from areas outside of the college.

Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the increased enrollment of students from various ethnic backgrounds, it is important to make sure that the campus reflects the student population. Not just by affirmation action, hiring the best candidate should be the major priority. Recruitment tactics and marketing venues should be explored in order to provide for active engagement of African American male instructors. There are several areas that can be explored as it relates to this population. Other research recommendations include the following:

1. Interview students taught by the instructors along with the administrators that supervise African American males.

2. Ask various questions as it relates to other areas within the participants' personal life.
3. Use a wider data collection model to gather information from African American males at various campuses and compare/contrast their experiences.
4. Interview the family members, friends and colleagues of the participants.
5. Research programs state wide that African American males participate in the most.
6. Research what percentage of African American males in the industry currently wouldn't mind coming back to teach and why?

Conclusion

It is apparent that although the participants faced various challenges, they genuinely have maintained a positive and uplifting career, have excelled academically and just simply seek the recognition and opportunity to lead that they feel they have earned. This study provided insight into what African American male community college instructors often perceive about education and obstacles they may encounter. The study can be explored more in-depth utilizing a variety of methods and theories. During the time of this research study, there was very limited research regarding African American male instructors at the community college level. The research indicated that most researchers conduct research at a major university or go the public school system without taking into consideration the community college. In Texas, community colleges are on the rise because of campus convenience, low cost tuition and occupational programs that get students into the workforce in little to no time (citation).

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School Administrators as a Successful Change Agent in America's Schools with the Application of Postmodernism

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of postmodernism on school transformation. Moving away from rigid paradigms of structural reform, the postmodern approach suggests a fluid acceptance of discordant voices and diversity, as necessary ingredients in the construction of meaningful change. Transformation implies interconnectedness, which by itself is inconsistent with the notion that the process of change can be truncated to convenient and easily identifiable compartments. The article suggests that a vision for reform that is inspired, or at least influenced, by a postmodernist approach will consider learning and instruction as part of an undivided process. However, success will be measured not on the basis of how efficiently instruction was delivered, but by how much learning occurred.

Introduction

School administrators' roles have changed dramatically in the past decade as public school systems have endured increased political scrutiny and policy intervention. Today, the work of administrators has moved away from leadership and toward management, which has continually posed problems so challenging and daunting enough to erode the very core of administrative values. The purpose of this article is to discuss implementing postmodernism in changing the role of school administrators in America's schools. Several major points will emerge concerning postmodernism and the effect on educational change, school, and administration.

Postmodernism literally means after modernity. It refers to the incipient or actual dissolution of those social forms associated with modernity (Sarup, 1993). Anthropological critic Spiro (1996) noted the following basic tenets of postmodernism: The postmodernist critique of science consists of two interrelated arguments, epistemological and ideological. Both are based on subjectivity. First, because of the subjectivity of the human object, anthropology, according to the epistemological argument, cannot be science; and in any event the subjectivity of the human subject precludes the possibility of science discovering objective truth. Second, since objectivity is an illusion, science, according to the ideological argument, subverts oppressed groups, females, ethnics, third-world people.

Flax (1990) commended that profound yet little comprehended change, uncertainty, and ambivalence seem pervasive in the contemporary West. Hargreaves (1993) refers to a “moving mosaic” of school structures. These concepts of change are part of the postmodern condition. Therefore, a consideration of school change does not seem out of the question. The postmodern condition demands, however, that such change take a different form.

Postmodern theorists elaborated noted the following overlapping strategies that seem relevant to the postmodern consideration of school change:

1. Recognize difference (Tierney, 1993): Replace the quest for sameness in school practices, values, and beliefs with recognition that difference cannot be eliminated; seek for members of school communities to work together in full recognition and even celebration of this difference.
2. Pay attention to margins (Lather, 1991): Look beyond sites of power and commonly accepted discourse in schools to find the spaces of individuals and ideas that are underrepresented.
3. Heed postmodern voices (Flax, 1990): Hear the voices of difference; the voice at the margins will include knowledge, sources of authority, and ways-of-doing that are unfamiliar to and unrecognized by the mainstream.
4. Resist metanarratives and seek the local and contextual (Seidman, 1994): Challenge assumptions about how all schools work, what all teachers do, or what every parent wants, recognizing that in the multiplicity of voices and spaces found in any school situation there are myriad ways to conceptualize problems and solutions.
5. Recognize discursiveness (Lather, 1991): Perceive that discourse—how individuals talk, act, and represent themselves in any situation determines what is considered normal and who has power in schools; help others to see that how things are in schools is a creation of discourse and not a statement of the only reality possible.
6. Consider power (Seidman, 1994): Develop awareness that the preceding strategies will challenge existing power relations in schools and school districts, and use these very strategies to confront and overcome this resistance.

Proposals for change focus on all aspects of school life—from the curriculum to assessment to teacher preparation to school calendar and institutional structure (Boyer, 1991, 1995; NCREL, 1997; Slattery, 1995). Each of these components is interconnected. Behind the discussion among educators about systemic changes needed, is a phenomenon called postmodernism. Postmodern philosophy constitutes a paradigm shift manifested in the following worldview:

This postmodern shift involves rethinking some very sacred beliefs and structures that have been firmly entrenched in human consciousness for at least the past five hundred years...humanity is moving to a new zone of cognition with an expanded concept of the self-in-relation. (Slattery, 1995, p.17)

Postmodernism offers an explanation for the breakdown in the metanarrative of history, to make room for non-mainstream viewpoints from multi-cultural perspectives. The shift, from a mono-cultural approach to education, to a multi-cultural approach, carries with it curricular approaches in which learners are encouraged to construct meaning grounded in relationships of self to others, self to knowledge, and self to nature. Emerging curriculum models emphasize interdisciplinary courses, open-ended systems, intergenerational and inter-professional

relationships, Socratic dialogue, multi-dimensional assessments, and multiculturalism (Boyer, 1991, 1995; Slattery, 1995).

The real work of principals becomes that of supervising learning versus supervising teaching. The viability of future generations of teachers and students to thrive is largely dependent on principals making this shift (Childs-Bowen, 2005). Childs-Bowen indicated that leader of leaders, chief instructional officer, and chief learning officer is the new job description of the principal's roles. This role requires a new set of assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills of leadership. Skills include analyzing and interpreting data, setting vision, and facilitating systems that support professional learning. Instructional leadership is accelerated when the leadership is distributed through an organizational culture and infrastructure that supports teaching and learning for both students and teachers. This requires skillful balancing in autonomy, support, and accountability of staff for student learning.

Administrators facilitate the development of vision and direction, orchestrate the change process, allocate resources in ways that help realize the vision, and create new opportunities for teacher and community leadership to emerge. These administrators see themselves as one node in a network that extends beyond the school itself. They seek to help direct the flow of energy throughout the network (Conley, D., 1991; Conley, S., 1991).

Post-Modernity and Implications for Change in Educational Leadership

In addressing post-modernity and education, it has been found that some schools are merely coasting along, some are inadequate in performance and declining quickly. The goal should be for each school to be "outstanding" (Waterman, 2015). The overarching goal for all education institutions should be to remove roadblocks, which can impede student progress and leave many pupils languishing in low performing institutions (Waterman, 2015).

One important perspective on change in this post-modern age is that policy makers, administrators, teachers, and other stake holders in educational institutions should be transparent in developing policies and procedures. Education policies and practices must change as the edicts of No Child Left Behind are implemented. Often the impetus for change in the post-modern era emphasizes educational choice, accountability, and privatization of education (Koyama and Kamin, 2016).

The discourse on transparency includes the idea that information about policy and programs are made widely known to the public and the public shall provide a perspective through public meetings and other means of communication. States, districts, schools, and individuals are accountable by making mandates and reforms transparent (Koyama and Kamin, 2016). In an effort to address transparency, school achievement data are made available to all constituents of the public. Transparency in making test results and school performance widely available is to ensure that no child is left behind and educational institutions are held accountable. The question arises: Does the emphasis on test results and accountability effectively reform schooling, especially for poor, black, and Latino youth (Koyama and Kamin, 2016)? Initially, it may seem that reform in school policies and practices is crucial in understanding school data. School information illuminates, and what is measured should be shared widely with all stakeholders.

Despite the emphasis on testing in the post-modern arena, teachers and principals often must take a nuanced approach to student achievement – if they are to be effective leaders. According to Koyama and Kamin, data can help understand what a "failing" school looks like. There should transparency in this post-modern era. Transparency helps to measure and evaluate

school performance and makes school systems accountable. Without numerical data, this could be difficult to accomplish. Teachers and principals are essential in our knowing whether reforms are working in this age of post-modernity.

Principals and Post-Modern Leadership

Effective leadership is essential to school improvement (Sheng, Wolff, Kilmer, and Yager, 2017). According to Sheng et al., it is held that principal leadership is second only to classroom teachers in influencing student success. Given that principals spend an enormous amount of time in day-to-day management, implementing reform reflective of post-modernity can be a challenge. Sheng et al. noted that principals who are instructional leaders have a positive influence on student achievement. However, the principal is often subject to many vector forces in an ever-expanding core of responsibility. The impact of school leadership by the principal varies by school context.

Asif and Rodrigues (2015) suggested that creative thinking is necessary in the postmodern, high tech world. Asif and Rodrigues noted that in carrying out leadership responsibilities, the principal must be adaptable to change in the twenty-first century. When thinking creatively, the principal must motivate employees and students, seek the sustainability of the organization for the future, engage in team building, and prepare the members of the team for future leadership positions (Asif, 2015).

According to Gage (2016), the principal, as a leader, should make things better. A hallmark of improved standards are increased effectiveness, efficiency, and quality in every aspect (Asif and Rodrigues, 2015). Gage (2016) stated that ideally, school leadership should be holistic, dynamic, and multidimensional, often the hierarchical nature of education makes it difficult to transform schools. Maxwell (2013) noted success for all students, especially embracing diversity and understanding that not all students need the same thing at the same time. Maxwell suggested that this equity attitude can exist when all the stakeholders engage in courageous conversations, understanding that these conversations should be held even in the face of discomfort, that leaders must be open to those even who are in opposition, and be willing to take risks. Maxwell shared that leaders must start from the perspective of persistence, patience, equity, and the idea that all constituents are assets.

Teachers and Post-Modern Change

According to Beam, Claxton and Smith (2016), the teacher also is an agent of meaningful reform. The researchers illuminated some challenges of educators in post-modern society, such as feeling the need to be accessible to pupils electronically 24 hours a day. Another vector force is the impetus to be available for extracurricular activities. The implication is that the process of mentoring would help novice school leaders in becoming successful school leaders and change agents.

Vandeyar (2017) shared that teachers must understand school reform and must be willing to adjust teaching practices. Vandeyar indicated that teachers must be ready to implement change in practice by:

1. Using new or revised material;
2. Possibly using new teaching approaches; and,
3. Possibly altering beliefs in regard to pedagogical assumptions.

Importantly, teacher beliefs and self-fulfilling prophecies play a vital role in diverse classroom. Teachers must be able to teach children from diverse backgrounds, particularly as diversity in society increases. Teachers should be able to cross cultural boundaries and renegotiate beliefs and ideas if they are to be effective teachers and leaders during this post-modern era. Teachers often must make a paradigm shift and proactively set out to make a difference by positively internalizing and embracing educational change (Vandeyar, 2017).

In conclusion, this article provided information on implementing postmodernism in changing the role of school administrators in America's schools. It was pointed out that the role of the administrator is not that of a top down leader of "do as I say" and not as I do, but one of sharing with the many facets of the "total team" concept. The African proverb states that it takes a whole village to raise a child. In alignment with the proverb, it can be shared that it takes an entire team to make a post modernistic change in America's schools.

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White Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness among African American Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which White teachers perceive giftedness among African American students when characteristics of African American culture are used to describe the aspects to be measured. A population of 124 White teachers at several selected elementary school campuses in a large school district in southern Arkansas completed a 43-item survey that measured their perceptions of giftedness among African American students. Analyzed through descriptive statistics, the findings show that the highest ranked items are characteristics associated with traditional expressions of giftedness. The lowest ranked items are characteristics related to African American culture.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, children in our schools are increasingly more diverse in their cultures, languages, abilities, interests, and learning styles. As a result, today's teachers face a variety of new challenges (Neil, 2010). Society's expectations for achievement in education, changing community demographics, and school reform initiatives place new demands on teachers—demands for versatility, flexibility, and creativity (Neil, 2010). The understanding is that teachers and schools must change to meet the diverse needs of students. In response to the need for educators to embrace the diversity of all students, Greene (1993) stated:

This is a time of newly acknowledged diversity in U.S. culture. Voices are becoming audible; faces are becoming visible; and we are realizing, some of us for the first time, how many silences there have been in the past, how many blank spaces in our history... We are

discovering the range of perspectives that must be taken into account as we work to remake community, as we strive to achieve a common ground (pp. 1-2). We must create environments where student differences are supported and celebrated so that all students are provided with the best opportunity to learn.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research question for this study is: “What are White teachers’ perceptions of giftedness among African American students at selected elementary school campuses in southern Arkansas?” The theoretical framework for this study is based on Howard Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. In his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Gardner stated that intelligence is categorized into three primary categories that influence abilities. He defined intelligence in accordance to the following terms:

1. Creating an effective product or offer a service that is valued in a culture;
2. Applying skills that increase the possibility of solving problems in life; and
3. Finding or creating solutions for problems through different forms of knowledge acquisition.

Gardner (1983, 1991, 1999) used these suppositions to support the idea that intelligence is about different sensory modalities—not a single general ability. This study provides a small example of how giftedness is interpreted across the intersection of race and cultural backgrounds. The findings of this study should not be generalized to all individuals that identify as White. However, the authors hope that the findings will spark open and honest discussions which will lead to the implementation of culturally responsive educational practices that will improve the school experiences of all students.

PERCEPTIONS OF GIFTEDNESS

There are gifted and talented students in every racial, gender, and socioeconomic group. However, there continues to be a huge underrepresentation of African American students identified as gifted and talented and enrolled in school programs for the gifted and talented (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford, Howard, Harris, & Tyson, 2000; Ford, Moore, & Milner, 2005; Ford & Troutman, 2001). A number of studies have traced the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted and talented programs to teachers’ lack of making recommendations for them to be assessed for placement (Ford, Howard, Harris, & Tyson, 2000; Ford, Moore, & Milner, 2005; Ford & Troutman, 2001; Grantham & Ford, 2003). White teachers may be hesitant to recommend African American students for placement in gifted and talented programs due to ingrained perceptions in our American society which equates difference (based on race, ethnicity, language, religion, disabilities, etc.) with inherent intellectual inferiority (Banks & Banks, 2013). These perceptions of inherent inferiority—referred to as deficit assumptions—continue to negatively influence our society and the expectations and practices of schools across the nation (Banks & Banks, 2013). In addition, the participants in this study may not have had opportunities to receive much needed professional development which challenges mistaken perceptions and assumptions about culture to gain an appreciation for variations within cultural groups and knowledge of individuals within their cultural contexts. These topics lead to a discussion on how culturally informed supports for learning at home, in the community, and in school can influence student success.

GIFTEDNESS AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude. A gifted level of aptitude is defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn or competence, which is documented performance or achievement in the top 10% or more rare, in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports) (Siegle, 2011).

According to Briggs and Reis (2004), when teachers have knowledge, understanding, awareness, and appreciation of students' culture, they are more likely to nominate them for gifted and talented programs. On the other hand, Briggs and Reis (2004) purported that when teachers misunderstand characteristics of diverse cultures; they are less likely to view culturally diverse students' displays of intelligence as reflecting giftedness.

In *The Miseducation of The Negro*, Carter G. Woodson (1933) wrote:

The difference between races is not evidence of superiority or inferiority. This merely indicates that each race has certain gifts, which the others do not possess. It is by the development of these gifts that every race must justify its right to exist (p.8).

The relevance of Woodson's statement to African American students' school experiences is that African American children bring unique gifts of cultural expression to schools with specific cultural knowledge or "cultural capital," including their particular experiences and prior knowledge (Banks & Banks, 2013). Culture is largely mediated by language, as manifested in metaphor, storytelling, songs, and greetings. A group's culture reflects its shared traditions, which can include a common history, language, religion, customs, and literary traditions (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996). According to Greenfield, Raeff, and Quiroz (1996), culture is the context within which diverse groups operate and make sense of the world. When individuals encounter a culture that is different from their own, one of the things they are faced with is a set of beliefs that manifest themselves in behaviors that differ from their own. It is important to note that culture is dynamic and ever changing; a group's culture includes the goals, ideals, and beliefs that will ensure the group's survival. However, there are variations among individual members of a cultural group in terms of their beliefs and values.

Dr. A. Wade Boykin (1983) identified nine dimensions of cultural expression that are embedded in African American life. The dimensions are: (a) spirituality, (b) harmony, (c) affect, (d) verve, (e) social time perspective, (f) expressive individualism, (g) orality, (h) communalism, and (i) movement.

Spirituality is based on two significant beliefs (Boykin, 1983, 1986). First, everyday events are controlled by God and have a distinct purpose. Second, people's everyday lives are influenced by nonmaterial influences. Taken together, these views place a higher value on the spiritual world than the physical world. An example of spiritual orientation to life is as follows: In 1999, Lee examined 127 fourth and fifth grade students' perceptions of Hurricane Andrew, a hurricane that struck southern Florida in 1992. Results of the inquiry indicated more African American students than White students attributed the hurricane to nonmaterial forces such as God. African American students also believed the hurricane happened for a specific purpose.

Harmony is characterized by emphasizing the whole rather than the parts that comprise the whole (Boykin, 1983, 1986). Harmony has been shown to be a valuable way of connecting to African American people. For example, research indicates that in addition to cognitive development, effective teachers of African American children focused on developing the

children's psychological, emotional, and social development well-being (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001, 2004, 2005).

Affect is the centrality of affective information and emotional expressiveness linked to the co-importance of feelings and thoughts (Boykin, 1983, 1986). Affect is considered to be just as important as cognition because feelings are believed to connect to thoughts and behaviors. Priority given to affect over cognition may include working hard on tasks because of their personal importance and interests. Affect is also shown in the explicit sharing of emotions in the classroom.

Verve focuses on energy, movement, and intensity (Boykin, 1983, 1986). Verve also entails the tendency to attend to several concerns at one time instead of focusing on a single concern or series of concerns in a rigidly sequential fashion. Boykin, Tyler, and Miller (2005) indicated that teachers should allow African American students to display verve-oriented activities such as playing the radio while working and talking amongst themselves during activities.

Social time perspective is defined as time measured through social action instead of clock orientation (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). That is, the event makes the time instead of the time formalizing the event. In this realm, the focus of a social time perspective is not regarding time itself, but on the social bonds created and nurtured during an event. In classrooms, social time perspective may be enacted by allowing students to use socialization as a part of their pursuit of achievement (Roth, Tobin, Carambo, & Dalland, 2004).

Expressive individualism connotes a person's display of unique and creative expression (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). Examples of the individualistic expression are unique hairstyles and distinctive names. From a classroom perspective, expressive individualism is display in the creativity in students' projects and assignments.

Orality denotes the tendency to thrive on expression that is based on oral and aural modes of communication (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). By centering communication in spoken language, people are better able to use speaking as a performance and for creating discussion with feeling and meaning.

Communalism is the unconditional commitment to the interdependence and social bonds and relationships between people. From this perspective, the group supersedes the individual by playing a significant part of the identity of the individual (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005).

Movement describes the interrelatedness of movement, dance, percussiveness and rhythm personified by the musical beat (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). Boykin (1983, 1986) maintained that African American children excel in school when they are able to apply the dimensions of African American culture to their educational experiences. However, in most school settings, these dimensions are overlooked by teachers. The lack of attention is a part of the larger context of relational issues between many White teachers and African American students.

Research has shown that many interactions between White teachers and African American students are often framed through classroom management issues (Monroe & Obidah, 2004); communication difficulties (Gay, 2002, 2010); and low teacher expectations (Boykin, 1983, 1986; Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005). These stressors create negative conditions for the academic, psychological, and emotional experiences for African American students (Irvine, 2003; Norman, Ault, Bentz, & Meshiman, 2001; Ogbu, 1995).

Several factors have contributed to strained relationship between White teachers and African American students. First, some White teachers have been found to hold negative attitudes towards and perceptions of Africa American students (Boykin, Albury, Tyler, Hurley,

Bailey, & Miller, 2005; Scheurich, 1993). In addition, Sleeter (2001) explained that White teachers seldom bring the rich cross-cultural experiences needed to effectively teach non-White students. According to Banks and Banks (2013) the most successful White teachers bring experiences that allow them to make a cultural match to their students.

Overall, these factors are embedded in the hegemonic framework that describes White teachers' interactions with African American students (Scheurich, 1993; Sleeter, 2001). Hegemony is the cultural domination of one group of people over other groups of people. The dominant group manipulates the culture of society to impose their views as the cultural norm for all groups (Banks & Banks, 2013; Scheurich, 1993; Sleeter, 2001). Through a racial hegemonic lens, White teachers enact the privileged-based minimization of the cultural background of African American students and their families (Ayers, 1995). As a result, African American students' cultural background is less likely to be acknowledged and included in the classrooms of White teachers. In this study, the researchers sought to determine the extent to which White teachers perceive giftedness among African American students when consideration is placed on culture.

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was comprised of 124 elementary school teachers (75 teachers taught fourth grade and 49 taught third grade). The population was comprised of 105 females and 19 males. The teachers were employees at several selected elementary campuses in a large school district in southern Arkansas.

A 43-item survey was used to collect data for this research. The survey was developed from research on gifted and talented children (Houghton, 1994), gifted and talented African American children (Grantham & Ford, 2003), and cultural characteristics of African American children (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). The items were divided into the following categories: (a) Traditional, (b) Gifted Black, (c) Standard Black, and (d) Distractors. The Traditional items represented commonly recognized characteristics of giftedness. The Gifted Black items represented characteristics of gifted African American students. The Standard Black items represented cultural characteristics of African American children who may or may not be identified as gifted students. The Distractors were items designed to distract participants.

The survey was issued to 246 elementary teachers at a district wide professional development training for elementary teachers. The teachers were asked to complete and return the survey to the data collector by the end of the day. At the end of the day, the data collector received 124 surveys, which resulted in 50.4% return rate.

The teachers used a five-point Likert scale to indicate their views of whether each survey item described characteristics of a gifted student. The rating scale items were 1=Not a Characteristic; 2=Barely a Characteristic 3= Somewhat of a Characteristic 4=A Characteristic; 5=Very Much a Characteristic. The higher the mean score, the more the respondents believe the survey item was a characteristic of a gifted and talented student.

The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each survey item. The mean scores were ranked from highest scores to lowest scores.

FINDINGS

A descriptive statistical analysis was used to calculate and rank the mean scores. The five highest ranked items consisted of four traditional items and one distraction. The traditional items included the following characteristics: “Has an advanced vocabulary and reading level” (4.70); “Is willing to risk failure in new or unfamiliar situations” (4.66); “Is not easily discouraged by failure of experiments and projects and spends a great deal of time on projects of his/her own” (4.59); and “Is resourceful—can solve problems by innovative methods” (4.54). The distractor item was “Consistently makes grades of B or above” (4.69).

A significant representation of the middle-ranked items were distractors. The distractors were as follows: “Is highly motivated in school” (3.64); “Is a teacher pleaser” (3.48); and “Demonstrates tendencies toward social withdrawal from interaction with others” (3.28). The remaining two distractor items were drawn from the Standard Black category- “Easily gets bored when participating in activities that consist of only one approach/procedure for mastering concepts” (3.59) and the Traditional category- “Displays a keen sense of humor” (3.50).

The lowest ranked items were from the Standard Black category. In order of ranking, the items were as follows: “Uses colorful verbal expressions” (2.33); “Is direct in appraisal of people, as well as situations” (2.29); “Shows sensitivity and alertness to movement” (2.27); “Possesses social intelligence and feelings of justice and responsibility for the community” (2.24); and “Is loyal to peer group” (2.11) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Teacher Perceptions of Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

Item	Mean	Category
1. Has an advanced vocabulary and reading level	4.70	Traditional
2. Consistently makes grades of B or above	4.69	Distraction
3. Is willing to risk failure in new or unfamiliar situations	4.66	Traditional

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Mean	Category
4. Is not easily discouraged by failure of experiments and projects, and spends a great deal of time on projects of his/her own	4.59	Traditional
5. Is resourceful—can solve problems by innovative methods	4.54	Traditional
6. High creative productivity	4.44	Traditional
7. Comprehends most information in logical/sequential manner	4.23	Traditional
8. Has a long attention span	4.19	Traditional
9. Demonstrates exceptional academic more than physical abilities	4.15	Distraction
11. Views class assignments as interesting and challenging	4.12	Distraction
12. Goes with the flow in a variety of situations	4.11	Standard Black
13. Has a wide range of interests	4.06	Traditional
14. Completes all homework assignments	4.04	Distraction
15. Is a good "follower" in group situations	4.01	Distraction
16. Possesses a high energy level	3.99	Traditional
17. Has a pleasant personality	3.88	Distraction
18. Demonstrates outer locus of control rather than inner locus of control	3.76	Gifted Black
19. Is highly motivated in school	3.64	Distraction
20. Demonstrates outer locus of control rather than inner locus of control	3.76	Gifted Black

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Mean	Category
21. Is highly motivated in school	3.64	Distraction
22. Easily gets bored when participating in activities that consist of only one approach/procedure for mastering concept(s)	3.59	Standard Black
23. Displays a keen sense of humor	3.50	Traditional
24. Is a teacher pleaser	3.48	Distraction
25. Demonstrates tendencies toward social withdrawal from interaction with others	3.28	Distraction
26. Is adept at visual art expression	3.01	Gifted Black
27. Communicates with others in expressive and sometimes emotional ways	2.99	Standard Black
28. Loves to learn with and from other students because of need for social connection with others	2.94	Standard Black
29. Responsive to situations that integrate rhythm and movement into learning	2.76	Standard Black
30. Is very cooperative	2.71	Distraction
31. Uses persuasive language	2.68	Gifted Black
32. Tells very imaginative stories	2.62	Gifted Black
33. Body or facial gestures are very expressive	2.54	Gifted Black
34. Connects information better when it is presented in a storyline or story context	2.50	Standard Black

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Mean	Category
35. Tells and relates information to personal lives in elaborate ways	2.44	Standard Black
36. Prefers to talk about as much as (in some cases more than) write about information	2.41	Standard Black
37. Very demonstrative and expressive (with hands, head, etc.) when explaining ideas	2.39	Standard Black
38. Often thinks out loud to process information	2.37	Standard Black
39. Uses colorful verbal expressions	2.33	Gifted Black
40. Is direct in appraisal of people, as well as situations	2.29	Gifted Black
41. Shows sensitivity and alertness to movement	2.27	Gifted Black
42. Possesses social intelligence and feelings of justice and responsibility for the community	2.24	Gifted Black
43. Is loyal to peer group	2.11	Gifted Black

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicate that White teachers that participated in this study are not able to determine giftedness when elements of African American culture are used as indicators of giftedness. Instead, White teachers' views of giftedness are centered on traditionally accepted beliefs about the characteristics that constitute giftedness.

These findings support and contradict the theoretical premise for this research. In essence, Gardner (1983, 1991, 1999) purported that schools focus on two main indicators of intelligence-verbal-linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence. Verbal linguistic intelligence describes the ability to manipulate the sounds, meanings and rhythms of words. The highest ranked mean score for this research was for "Has an advanced vocabulary and reading level" (4.70). Logical-mathematical intelligence describes people who are effective with measurements, calculations, reasons, and experiments (Gardner, 1983, 1991, 1999). The participants in this study provided the highest mean scores for the following logical-mathematical related items: "Is willing to risk failure in new or unfamiliar situations" (4.66); "Is not easily discouraged by failure of experiments and projects, and spends a great deal of time on projects of his/her own" (4.59); "Is resourceful—can solve problems by innovative methods"

(4.54); “High creative productivity” (4.44); and “Comprehends most information in logical/sequential manner” (4.23). In other words, one-half of the top ten ranked items showed that the teachers viewed giftedness through a logical-mathematical intelligent perspective.

These findings contradict Gardner’s (1983, 1991, 1999) suggestions to look at multiple forms of and singular form of intelligence. The difference in perspectives is further supported by the findings on the lowest ranked mean scores. To the point, the lowest ranked mean scores were for characteristics of African American culture (Boykin, 1983, 1986, 2005). The lowest ranked items for characteristics of gifted black students ranged from “Uses colorful verbal expressions” (2.33) to “Possesses social intelligence and feelings of justice and responsibility for the community” (2.24). The lowest ranked items for characteristics of African American culture were “Tells and relates information to personal lives in elaborate ways” (2.44) and “Very demonstrative and expressive (with hands, head, etc.) when explaining ideas” (2.39).

Overall these findings are relevant to the research that has documented the relationship between White teachers and African American students (Gay, 2002, 2010; Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Much of the reasons for the strained relationships point to cultural differences. The findings suggest that the teachers do not view the characteristics of African American culture with the same regard as the traditional indicators of giftedness. The rankings of the mean scores support the findings.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The implications for this research leads the researchers to believe that additional information is needed to address this very important educational concern. The additional information may be obtained through administering a second part of the current survey. The survey should be designed to determine why White teachers do not associate the characteristics of African American culture with giftedness. The second data collection should be obtained through structured interviews with the participants that responded to the first survey. The interviews would be designed to elicit answers the following questions:

1. What is your definition of giftedness?
2. What does giftedness look like in action?
3. Have you ever considered an African American student to be gifted? If yes, Why? If no, why not?

The third part of the inquiry should be classroom observations. The purpose of the observations should be to identify African American students who display any of the following culturally conditioned characteristics:

1. Goes with the flow in a variety of situations;
2. Demonstrates outer locus of control rather than inner locus of control;
3. Easily gets bored when participating in activities that consist of only one approach/procedure for mastering concept(s);
4. Is adept at visual art expression;
5. Communicates with others in expressive and sometimes emotional ways;
6. Loves to learn with and from other students because of need for social connection with others;
7. Responsive to situations that integrate rhythm and movement into learning;
8. Uses persuasive language;
9. Tells very imaginative stories;
10. Body or facial gestures are very expressive;

11. Connects information better when it is presented in a storyline or story context;
12. Tells and relates information to personal lives in elaborate ways;
13. Prefers to talk about as much as (in some cases more than) write about information;
14. Very demonstrative and expressive (with hands, head, etc.) when explaining ideas;
15. Often thinks out loud to process information;
16. Uses colorful verbal expressions;
17. Is direct in appraisal of people, as well as situations;
18. Shows sensitivity and alertness to movement;
19. Possesses social intelligence and feelings of justice and responsibility for the community;
and
20. Is loyal to peer group.

Observations should be made of how White teachers respond to African American students' display of these characteristics. There would need to be questions about teachers' behaviors. Sample questions could include but not be limited to:

1. Did the teacher notice the display of the characteristics?
2. What was the teachers' attitude towards the display of the characteristics?
3. Was the teacher affirming of the display of the characteristics?

The final part of the inquiry should be reflection followed by professional development regarding multiple intelligences and culturally responsive teaching. Teachers would be asked to reflect on the questions that were developed from the observations. From this reflection, teachers would learn to recognize and maximize African American students' cultural displays of intelligence. This approach could increase teachers' awareness and sensitivity towards viewing African American students' displays of intelligence as giftedness.

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