African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity

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AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 EDUCATION:
A LIMITED QUANTITY

by
Kelley A. Peatross

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Submitted to the
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AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 EDUCATION: A LIMITED QUANTITY

Kelley A. Peatross, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2011

This study examined the underrepresentation of African American (A/A) male teachers in three Midwestern school districts. The study sought to determine: (1) the perception of A/A teachers concerning their K-12 teaching experiences when disaggregated by the number of years of teaching, (2) their perception of why they went into teaching when disaggregated by the number of years of teaching, (3) their perception of the need for A/A male teachers, and (4) their perception of value and accomplishments as A/A male teachers in the classroom.

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological design and was based upon Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs and Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) motivation-hygiene theory. The conceptual framework was supported through the research literature of Moran, Woolfolk, and Hoy (2001), Kimbrough and Salomone (1993), Leong (1995), and Milner and Howard (2004), which focuses on the “motivational factors” leading to A/A males selecting teaching as a career.

Utilizing a qualitative interview design, individual interviews, along with a focus group session, 14 participants were identified, with 7 participants agreeing to participate in this study. The researcher utilized the NVivo 8 program to categorize the data and
identify recurring themes as well as to assist in analyzing, shaping, and managing the data generated from this research study.

Findings in this study revealed that all participants agreed, regardless of their years of teaching, that there were not enough A/A males in K-12 education, that there was value in having A/A males as K-12 teachers, that they enjoyed sharing their experiences with their students, and that the level of pay served as a deterrent to A/A males going into the teaching field.

This study adds to the current body of literature by exposing additional motivational factors that influence A/A males to select teacher education as a career. Findings in this study may prove to be invaluable to teacher education programs and educational leaders as they redesign, promote, and seek ways to sustain A/A males in the teaching profession.
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Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not thank God for his continuous strength during my journey, for Isaiah 40:31 (NIV) states, “but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on the wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” God has truly blessed and renewed my strength! He has provided me with a positive attitude and the desire to continue to dream.

Kelley A. Peatross
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The K-12 public education system has the task of preparing all students to become productive citizens and members of a global society. Tragically, many students will not achieve this goal, and an overwhelming majority of those who do not will be members of an ethnic or racial minority group (Gay, 2000). One factor influencing students’ lack of achievement is school districts not being able to provide minority students with minority teachers to help them attain necessary knowledge and skills.

It is believed that African American (A/A) male teachers can serve in a significant role in schools, especially those with A/A male students (Watson & Smitherman, 1996). Bowman (1994) indicated many minority students drop out of school early, or never make it into college because of academic tracking, substandard teaching, and poor academic preparation. It is further revealed that the underrepresentation of ethnic and racial minorities in the teaching force can exacerbate minority students’ difficulties and contribute to their low achievement levels (Gay, 2000).

Only 12% to 14% of teachers are minorities in the United States, while over a third of the students in American classrooms are minorities (Howard, 2001). As the student population in public schools becomes increasingly diverse, the teacher workforce continues to be predominantly Caucasian (West, 1993). This is one of the major reasons for the drive to recruit minority teachers. Unfortunately, this effort has become more
difficult simply due to successful minority high school and college students often regarding teaching as a low-paying, low-prestige job (Banks, 1996).

Research aimed at identifying the reasons that influence A/A males to choose and remain as K-12 teachers is limited. In more recent times, A/A males have become teachers who have made a positive difference in the lives of A/A students (Thomas-EL, Murphey, & Schwarzenegger, 2003). African American (A/A) male teachers can serve as role models and often share insights with majority (Caucasian) teachers in helping minority students succeed.

Most experts feel it is necessary to have minority teachers in all schools where minority students attend. Even where there are no minority students present, it is important to have minority teachers in place to provide a multicultural perspective that is lacking for majority students with just majority teachers (Salinas, 2001). For all students, minority teachers bring positive role models and images along with varied experiences to the students (Bolich, 2002).

The teaching profession is losing some of the most talented and experienced teachers to retirement with few college graduates entering the profession. If we value students’ contact with talented and experienced teachers, then it is important to include African American (A/A) male teachers in this grouping and find out why they choose the profession.

When you look at the K-12 public education system in America, the underrepresentation of A/A male teachers in comparison to the increasing racial and ethnic demographics of students is a growing concern. Although it does not take A/A male teachers to teach minority students per se, teacher diversity is still extremely
important. Although findings from research are divided regarding the impact A/A teachers have on the achievement level of A/A students (Jencks & Phillips, 1998), there has been a nationwide charge for A/A teachers to teach in the public school system and to serve as positive role models for all students, especially A/A students (Hunter-Boykin, 1992).

Background of the Study

Education has long been recognized as one of the important ways in which the American promise of equality of opportunity can be fulfilled. The public schools have traditionally provided a means by which those newly arrived in cities—the immigrants and the impoverished—have been able to join the American mainstream. Like other ethnic groups, black people saw education as the vehicle to economic opportunity and social integration. (Burt, 1975, p. 2)

The supply of A/A male teachers is insufficient and few A/A males are entering teacher education programs. There are many minority students who wish to pursue a career in teaching; however, colleges and universities fail to expose students to a curriculum that is exciting, engaging, and multicultural (Coley & Jenkins, 1995). Majority (Caucasian) teachers cannot do this alone, yet they currently lack the authenticity of relating to minority students in ways that are needed to reach many of them today (Lankard, 1994). Data provided show minority students having the highest rates of poverty and the highest school dropout rates (Williams et al., 2002). We know the teaching profession is having difficulty keeping pace with other occupations. While minority teachers have been found to be especially at risk, many teachers leave the profession within a few years of entering (Betancourt-Smith, 1994).
Demographics and a poor economy have combined to produce a crisis in education: a minority teacher shortage. In some states, especially in urban areas, the shortage is dire, and it is a problem that is just becoming apparent to the public. A review of demographics by state (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2006) shows the need across the country. Minority underrepresentation is embedded within an overall national teacher shortage. Given that minorities make up more than one-fourth of students in public schools, the situation is especially severe (Williams et al., 2002).

Unless the teaching profession becomes more diversified, this gap will continue to widen, with deep implications for the professional cultural competence that leads to learning achievement for all students. Much can be gained from teacher-training program partnerships. The collaboration involves relationships of trust and long-term interest in students’ success. Through partnerships, benefits are mutual as school faculty members track students and obtain feedback on the program, while university faculty members help others understand educational innovations and students’ pathways to college (Pipho, 1998).

Although school districts strive for high academia along with providing a diverse cultural experience for all students through awareness programs, individual students and teacher lessons, they fall short in recruiting and retaining A/A male teachers and thus must expand the make-up of the teacher population to better represent the student population. As minority student enrollment in public schools increases, the population of minority teachers decreases.
The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE, 1988) cautions that if a national intervention policy is not instituted to reverse this trend, the faces of minority teachers will disappear from the nation’s classrooms. Based on the data reviewed, it is safe to conclude that the supply of minority teachers is limited (AACTE, 1988). While there are some programs targeted towards increasing the number of minority teachers, more are needed. Successful institutional programs typically reflect genuine concern, commitment, collaboration, and creativity. Broad-based commitment is needed from all segments of society to increase the supply of minority teachers (Otuya, 1988).

Teacher education programs are going to have to eliminate some of the barriers and roadblocks that keep A/A male teachers out of the profession if they are going to continue to select teacher education as a profession. Although a study revealed that Caucasian teachers could be successful with A/A students, in order for more appropriate and meaningful learning to occur with A/A students, we are going to have to change dramatically the way we train teachers (Howard & Milner, 2004).

Students with high self-efficacy beliefs are often likely to develop interests in professional careers and higher education and have aspirations far greater than those being advanced by the individuals (e.g., teachers, parents, etc.) around them. If these students perceive little or limited environmental support and sense barriers to desired career paths, they may not pursue those careers despite their interest or ability. Self-efficacy, according to Howard (2001) is mediated by a person’s beliefs or expectations about his/her capacity to accomplish certain tasks successfully or demonstrate certain behaviors. Bandura (2000) postulates that these expectations determine whether or not a
certain behavior or performance will be attempted, the amount of effort the individual will contribute to the behavior, and how long the behavior will be sustained when obstacles are encountered. In the case of minorities, differential socialization experiences, including social and institutional discrimination, may cause children and youth to restrict their career interests and avoid particular career paths (Polite & Davis, 1999).

While the literature is replete with factors influencing the career choice processes of individuals from various races and nationalities, research highlights the influence and support of significant others as foremost factors in the career choices of African Americans (Kimbrough & Salomone, 1993). African-America parents, specifically, serve as major influences that define the career choices of A/A youngsters (Leong, 1995). Teaching is a career that is widely available for A/As today; yet, extreme shortages exist within many teaching concentrations.

Statement of the Problem

A clear understanding does not exist of A/A male teachers choosing to select and remain in K-12 education as teachers. History shows minorities were not allowed to pursue a career in the field of education as K-12 teachers (Lewis, 2006). Further, A/A males is an underrepresented group in K-12 education (Gordon, 2000). Experts such as Howard and Milner (2004) feel it is necessary to have minority teachers teaching in all schools where minority students exist. Census trends (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2006) identify an increase in minority students in K-12 education where the teacher workforce continues to be predominantly Caucasian. Increased career options have decreased A/A males selecting K-12 education as a profession (Hill, 1985).
African American students comprise approximately 17% of the public school student population, yet A/A teachers account for less than 8% of public school teachers (Toppo, 2003). In the year 2000, it was estimated minority students would comprise 33% of the school population and that this percentage would grow to 39% by the year 2020 (Johnson, 1991). The multicultural classroom, which is relatively new to the educational system, creates a demand for teachers who are aware of the cultural differences within the student population, “differences that affect learning styles, behavior, mannerisms, and relationships with school and home” (Skylarz, 1993, p. 22). Martinez (1991) contends that the lack of minority teachers to provide ethnic role models in schools could “contribute to the underachievement of minority students, provide little incentive for minority students to advance in school and negatively affect their career and life aspirations” (p. 24).

What we do not know enough about are the determinants that influence A/A males to select and continue to stay in K-12 education as a profession. We do not know what importance they, as A/A male teachers, believe about the importance of their presence in K-12 education, and there is a paucity of information from A/A male teachers about their beliefs about why the representation of A/A teachers in K-12 education is so low.

Preliminary Conceptual Framework

A preliminary conceptual framework helps to define “either graphically or narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs or variables—and the presumed relationships among them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18). A
graphic display of the preliminary conceptual framework is included in Appendix A, described here in narrative form. This conceptual framework was modified throughout the data collection and analysis process and then fully elaborated on in subsequent chapters.

The preliminary conceptual framework is organized into shapes containing conceptual constructs or entities indicating the influence between them. As displayed in the preliminary conceptual framework, the “Motivational Factors” for A/A male teachers was established through the research literature of Moran, Woolfolk, and Hoy (2001), Kimbrough and Salomone (1993), Leong, (1995), and Milner and Howard (2004), and others served as a guide for understanding why A/A males do not select teaching as a career. Just as these researchers identified specific elements that impact the career choice of A/A males, this study will create an emerging framework leading to an understanding of A/A males’ perceptions of their motivation to enter and remain in the teaching profession. Additionally, through the literature review, I looked at motivation theory from the research of Maslow, Herzberg, and others.

From my perspective, other identifiers in the preliminary conceptual framework represent possible extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors, Influence and Beliefs, that may have influenced the A/A male participants to enter the K-12 teaching profession. This notion is supported by Kimbrough and Salomone (1993), who highlight the influence and support of significant others as foremost factors in the career choices of African Americans. Additionally, Leong (1995) indicates African American parents, specifically, serve as major influences that define the career choices of A/A youngsters. Research by Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) states that teachers of color tend to believe that
they have the power to influence students’ self-perceptions and influence their aspirations beyond the immediate limitations of their environments, supporting the researcher’s notion that the belief of being present for all students is important.

Extrinsic is defined, from my perspective, as being on the outside or outward. When looking at Influence as an extrinsic motivational factor, I looked at what external determinants influenced the A/A male teachers to select teaching as a career. Family members and former teachers are examples of extrinsic factors. For intrinsic, I looked for internal determinants. Beliefs are an intrinsic motivational factor and are defined as belonging to essential nature or within a psychological state in which an individual holds a proposition or premise to be true. An example of an intrinsic factor is family members and role models based upon one’s belief system.

Other identifiers in the preliminary conceptual framework are a subset of the possible extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors that may have influenced the A/A male participants to select K-12 teacher education as a profession. After interviewing all participants, the framework was modified to represent all intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that have influenced each of them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, which is embedded in the preliminary conceptual framework, is to describe and explain the responses of A/A male teachers that have chosen K-12 teaching as a career. The primary source of information was in-depth interviews. Answers to the following exploratory questions include the following:
1. What are the beliefs of A/A male teachers that have contributed to the underrepresentation of A/A male teachers?

2. What are the lived experiences of A/A male teachers that may have influenced their behavior to go into the teaching field?

3. What factors, or conditions, contributed to the decision of A/A male teachers to enter, stay, and/or disaffiliate from the teaching profession?

In keeping with principles of sound design, the exploratory questions help to determine appropriate study methodology (Yin, 2003). When “what” questions are asked “about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (p. 9), a qualitative study method is preferred over other methods. In particular, it allows for the “situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as a result, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (pp. 12-13) (Yin, 2003). In this study, the set of events is contemporary and the researcher is not seeking to manipulate the events. The described and explained responses from the A/A male teachers that have chosen K-12 teaching as a career and who agreed to learn more about this study addressed the purpose of this study, which was to describe and understand the experiences of A/A male teachers and why they chose teaching as a profession and career.

**Research Questions**

Quantitative research questions are closed-ended and data-driven (Hatch, 2002). Although the majority of this research was qualitatively based, there were some quantitative data shown to provide the history of A/A male teachers in K-12 from the
early 1900s forward, and specifically within Ingham County in the state of Michigan.

Four specific questions are derived from my purposes of study:

1. How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications (years in teaching) perceive their K-12 teaching experiences?

2. How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications perceive the reason they went into the teaching profession? Are they different? If so, what are those differences and the reason they decided to go in the profession and make it a career?

3. How do selected A/A male teachers perceive the need for A/A male teachers?

4. How do selected A/A male teachers perceive their value and accomplishments as A/A male teachers in the classroom?

Significance of the Study

The intent of the study should be useful in helping us to understand the history of A/A males in K-12 education, particularly in the teaching field. In comparison, the study looks at the current trend of the decreasing number of A/A males in K-12 education by identifying the determinants that influence A/A males to select teacher education as a career. Further, this study examines and describes the experiences of A/A male teachers with varying degrees of teaching experience and compares their experiences with the findings from the literature for experienced teachers. Another major emphasis of the study is to identify themes that impact A/A males’ decision to teach and how the conditions identified influenced them to select or remain in teaching.
This study is framed within a phenomenological standpoint. Creswell (1998) states, “a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experience for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon” (p. 51). In this case, the study seeks to examine a single phenomenon—the A/A male teacher. One focus of this study was to examine how A/A male teachers from different categories entered into the K-12 teaching profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on A/A males in K-12 education by formulating and developing educational principles of A/A males’ motivation to enter into and stay in the teaching profession. Also, this study will contribute to this dialogue and offer strategies to A/A males that will assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession.

Popular commentary would have us believe that the cause of the shortage of A/A male teachers is low pay (Moran et al., 2001). Assumptions at a glance are lack of encouragement and negative K-12 school experiences, low status of the teaching profession, more opportunities elsewhere, negative image of teachers, poor student discipline, and lack of respect, poor school conditions, and racism as additional factors (Milner & Howard, 2004). This research showed if this were true, as identified by Moran et al., and also what other factors for A/A teachers impact their decision to select teaching as a career. The research also revealed whether or not it supports the assumptions as identified by Milner and Howard.

As an A/A female in the field of education for over 20 years, I see the researchers’ assumptions as minimal or surface identifiers. Being of the same ethnicity and exposed to perhaps more than what the researchers have identified, I believe the reasons why A/A males do not choose education as a profession is deeper than what has been discovered.
Although I may agree with some of what the research shows, more reasons exist as to why they choose not to go into the field of education as a profession.

From my viewpoint, I would add to the research by identifying areas such as lack of academic support during their K-12 experience as another factor for why A/A males do not select teacher education as a profession. Other assumptions would be race perception; self-worth; entrance exams for teacher education programs; forms of discriminations; varying standards from college experience to professional experience for black versus non-black teachers; lack of mentor/role model at home, in school, or in college; or a “why should I care about them? No one cared about me” attitude. While I am confident there are more assumptions, the interviews with my participants revealed them.

Just as there are reasons why A/A males choose not to enter the field of K-12 education as teachers, there exist reasons why they choose to enter the profession, which is why this study is so relevant. Further, the findings may enhance the recruitment and retention strategies employed by states and local school districts to attract and retain A/A male teachers. If states and local school districts develop recruitment strategies that focus on influential factors revealed in this study, they may increase the likelihood of recruiting and hiring A/A males as public school teachers.

Although Moran et al. (2001) suggested past studies have identified reasons why A/A males have selected teacher education as a profession, the conceptual framework developed in this study identified possible themes that may surface showing why A/A males have chosen to stay in the profession. While Moran et al. indicated past studies exist, I was unable to identify or uncover literature that supports reasons for why A/A
males choose teaching as a career, with the exception of one. In an article, Chance Lewis (2006) notes:

The number of African American males who go into teaching is influenced by the number of African American males who attend college, which in turn is influenced by the number of high school graduates and so on . . . unfortunately the pipeline that moves African American students from public school to public school teaching is a leaky one. (Brown & Butty, 1999, p. 282)

Given this information, the purpose of this exploratory study is to understand the experiences of current A/A male teachers and uncover why they chose teaching as a profession. This study also hopes to identify effective recruitment and retention strategies for A/A male teachers and to document what A/A males deem important for school district personnel to understand when attempting to recruit and retain A/A males in teaching positions in the future.

Qualitative research techniques were employed to examine the personal experiences of active A/A male teachers in K-12 education. In-depth interviews provided an opportunity of uncovering descriptive data and the nuances of a particular phenomenon or culture where little knowledge has been previously recorded.

Methodology Overview

The purpose of this study is to describe and understand the experiences of A/A male teachers and why they chose teaching as a profession and career. This research design is based upon the characteristics of qualitative research that Creswell (2003) describes. Creswell describes qualitative research as a study that uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The researcher looks for involvement of their participants in data collection and seeks to build rapport and
credibility with the individuals in the study. The researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. (p. 181)

The use of qualitative research methods has grown considerably in the field of education (Lancy, 1993), a field that has traditionally relied upon a quantitative custom of standardized testing, surveys, and numbers crunching.

A phenomenological research approach was used to design and conduct this qualitative study to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (Van Manen, 2001). Established historical data were gathered and reviewed along with interviews with nine A/A males from three Midwestern school districts grouped according to years of teaching. Data collected were analyzed to describe historical and demographic characteristics of the sample. The data are reported in narrative and tabular form.

The researcher incorporated a variety of methods to uncover the underlying meaning or structure of these perceptions in this phenomenological study. The researcher examined the perceptions of A/A male teachers through a qualitative interview design, individual interviews, and a focus group.

Limitations and Delimitation

This study was confined to 14 A/A male teachers in three teacher career categories from three Midwestern school districts. The sample size was at its maximum due to the total number of A/A male teachers in 18 Midwestern school districts. While the framework for this study was based on minority teachers, the focus is specifically on A/A
male teachers. Teachers were selected from three career categories: 0–9 years as a teacher, 10–19 years as a teacher, and 20 years or more as a teacher.

Limitations of this study include collecting data from three Midwestern school districts in the state of Michigan. More specifically, the study was limited according to the following schema:

1. The size of the sample was limited to 14 comprehensive interviews and a focus group.

2. As commonly found in qualitative studies, the researcher’s interpretation of the data collected may not reflect the true opinions of the participants in the research.

3. This study was limited to three Midwestern school districts in Michigan.

Since this is a qualitative study, it was limited to those individuals who participated in the study. There was no attempt to make generalizations beyond this population. The scope of this study is limited to 14 current A/A male teachers with varying degrees of teaching experience. Therefore, the findings of this study are trustworthy only to teachers in the districts that participated in the study. Finally, this study assumes the responses provided by the participants are accurate and represent a valid representation of their perceptions.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature Review

Gordon (2000) revealed there is a shortage of A/A male teachers in the K-12 public school system. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of why representation by A/A male teachers is so low. Specifically, this study looks at the (a) history of A/A males in education; (b) absence of A/A male teachers; (c) significance of A/A male teachers; and (d) college and university involvement in the recruitment, preparation, and retention of A/A male teachers.

The strategy that was used for searching the literature was focused on uncovering historical legislation that may have contributed to the present racial and gender make-up of the current teaching force. To obtain these documents, a visit to the local college library was necessary to obtain hard copies of historical and legislative books on the American education system and African Americans in education. Once this information was obtained, the focus shifted to uncovering current scholarly research on teacher diversity, A/A male teachers in K-12 education, and understanding why the numbers are so low. For this, the researcher employed electronic database searches of all available educational abstracts such as ERIC and JSTOR. Educational research institutions such as the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Education Association (NEA), as well as sites related to current legislation such as the Department of Education
(DOE) were also used. I also used databases containing full-text dissertations, journal articles, and on-line books.

Historical Perspective

Before the Civil War, higher education for African Americans was virtually nonexistent. Those who did receive schooling would study in informal and also hostile locations. Some schools for elementary and secondary training did exist, such as the Institute for Colored Youth, which was a school that was established in the early 1830s by a group of Philadelphia Quakers (Allen & Jewell, 2002). A college education was also available to a limited number of students at schools like Oberlin College in Ohio and Berea College in Kentucky.

Sabbath Schools, which were known as African American church-sponsored schools in the 1800s, operated on the weekends and evenings, providing basic literacy instruction for people of color (Anderson, 1988). Franklin (1980) indicated that Frederick Douglass began a Sabbath school to teach other slaves how to read and write during this time period as well.

Anderson (1988) revealed there were an estimated 1,500 schools with approximately 6,100 teachers and over 107,000 students who attended these schools. It was at this time that the arrival of public education in the South appeared to lessen the purpose of Independent Black Institutions (IBI) or Sabbath Schools (Butchart, 1980).

In the years following the Civil War, with the 13th Amendment’s abolition of slavery and reconstruction in the South, education began to change for African Americans. In 1862, Senator Justin Morrill spearheaded a movement to improve the state
of public higher education throughout the United States (Franklin, 1980). This movement put an emphasis on the need for institutions to train Americans in the applied sciences, agriculture, and engineering. The Morrill Land-Grant Act gave federal lands to the states for the purpose of opening colleges and universities to educate farmers, scientists, and teachers. Although many such institutions were created, few were open or welcoming of African Americans, particularly in the South. In Mississippi, Alcorn State was the only university created explicitly as a black land-grant college (Jones, 1974). It was 28 years before Senator Morrill rectified this problem. The remedy came with the second Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890, which indicated states that were using federal land-grant funds would have to either make their schools open to both African Americans and Caucasians or allocate money for segregated black colleges to serve as an alternative option to white schools. There were a total of 16 exclusively black institutions that received the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 funds (Jones, 1974).

After the Civil War concluded in 1865, it became possible for A/As to attend public schools in the South, albeit under the displeasure of the white residents. During this era, A/As were confronted with many opposing opinions held by Caucasian Southerners, including the viewpoint of Wilber Cash, who believed that their freedom, and subsequently their education, would “upset the equilibrium of Southern society by teaching dangerous and subversive ideas to the ex-slaves” (Brazzell, 2002, p. 28). Regardless of A/As’ status as slave or free, most Southerners of European descent did not consider African Americans equal to Caucasians. The Caucasians missionaries from the North faced persecution as well. Henry Swint portrayed them as “purveyors of social and political equality for A/As without regard for the traditions and sensibilities of White
Southerners” (Brazzell, 2002, p. 28). Despite the accusations, the Northern missionaries remained convinced that “group advancement and community empowerment . . . necessitated the development of institutions that would produce a highly educated, politically astute generation of leaders, capable of representing Black interests within the White power structure while remaining independent from it” (Allen & Jewell, 2002, p. 243).

Financial support for the education of former slaves was often in jeopardy. Following the Civil War, the federal government took a “hands-off” approach in policy formation in ex-Confederate states. Some of the Freedmen’s Aid Societies and missionaries did not have the finances necessary to maintain their operations in the South. For this reason, while some missionaries became frustrated and discouraged by the struggle and returned to the North, others continued to persevere (Brazzell, 2002). Because this was occurring, the government established the Freedmen’s Fund to assist in building schools, which expanded with the aid of the Freedmen’s Aid Society, an association of northern churches.

Between 1861 and 1870, the American Missionary Association (AMA) founded 7 black colleges and 13 normal (teaching) schools. Many of these institutions became the backbone of black higher education, producing A/A leaders for generations to come (Franklin, 1980). Prior to the mid 1800s, it was the support of the AMA, the Freedmen’s Bureau, and African Americans themselves that was responsible for establishing colleges and universities for A/A people.

As education for African Americans became more available, so did institutions created specifically for them. African American colleges sprang up, partly from the large
numbers to be educated, and partly because the traditional colleges, publicly or privately, still would not accept more than token numbers of A/A students. Thirty-seven colleges/universities were established between 1864 and 1894 (Hill, 1985). There are still over 100 A/A colleges in America today.

Negro schools in the South offered an opportunity for advancement in education. Negroes could aspire to such jobs as teachers, supervisors, principals, and college teachers. These individuals were exemplars of status and middle-class respectability. As the dual school system was eliminated, so were the jobs of many teachers and principals. (Burt, 1975, pp. 5-6)

Independent and Historically Black Institutions

African American churches ran their own elementary and secondary education programs for southern African Americans, preparing them for vocations or advanced studies. In doing so, this created a demand for higher education, particularly for institutes to train teachers for work in A/A schools. From 1930-1960, two Independent Black Institutions (IBI), both the University of Islam, were established to provide A/A children with instruction and guidance that centered on self-knowledge, self-reliance, and self-discipline (Rashid & Muhammad, 1992). During this time, A/A families, many with little to no education, built over 5,000 schools throughout the southern states and drove over 5 million children through the doors of the school and out into the world to become teachers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, business people, and military leaders (Hill, 1985). It was a crusade that rivaled any crusade in human history.

It has been stated that historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have a unique chapter in the history of American postsecondary education (M. C. Brown, 1999; Davis, 1998; King, 1993a). Despite the tremendous obstacles that these institutions faced,
there are 104 HBCUs as of 2002—approximately 3% of U.S. higher education institutions (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2006). While there was a period where HBCUs had fallen from the research literature, current research scholars have developed a renewed interest in these institutions. This renewed interest stems partly from the fact that these institutions still play a vital role in higher education. While A/A students in the early 21st century can choose to attend any type of institution, many are electing to attend an HBCU (Davis, 1998). While these colleges and universities achieve tremendous success, it is important to further investigate the unique identity and the diversity they bring to higher education.

Since the establishment of the first HBCU, there has been a recurrent debate over the role of these institutions within the larger framework of higher education (M. C. Brown, 1999). During the years of strict and legal racial segregation in the United States, HBCUs served as “islands of hope” where blacks could learn to read and write without the fear of being retaliated against (Franklin, 1980). The primary purpose of HBCUs was to educate black Americans, which they did almost exclusively from 1865 to the 1950s. The overwhelming majority of HBCUs opened after 1865 in response to the need to have institutions to educate newly freed slaves and to avoid admitting those newly freed slaves into the existing white institutions (Hill, 1985).

The first HBCUs were established in the North and were products of independent religious institutions or philanthropic Christian missionaries. The first two were Cheyney University (Pennsylvania), founded in 1837, and Wilberforce University (Ohio), founded in 1856. However, historically black colleges and universities cannot be examined
without revisiting major legislation and court decisions that led to the birth of many and the death of a few.

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established to provide educational opportunities for people of color when others would not allow them to participate (Gasman & Palmer, 2008). Two individuals from the first generation of students to attend these new black institutions of higher learning came to the forefront in the early 20th century, each backing a different course for the black college to take.

As a freed slave from Virginia, Booker T. Washington attended the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (Hill, 1985). As a student at Hampton, he experienced a black vocational education like no other in the nation. Hampton was founded by the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the Freedmen’s Bureau and focused its efforts on preparing young African Americans throughout the South to fill jobs in the skilled trades. In 1881, Washington took the helm at the fledgling Tuskegee Institute (Franklin, 1980). Tuskegee quickly became known for its practical curriculum and focus on preparing African Americans for agricultural and mechanical trades. Washington gained popularity and soon became a star among A/A and Caucasian people as the proponent of black advancement through vocational training and racial conciliation.

Washington believed the best way for freed slaves and other A/As to attain equality in the United States was through the accumulation of power, wealth, and respect by means of hard work in practical trades (Franklin, 1980). The inscription on the Tuskegee University monument to Booker T. Washington reads, “He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people and pointed the way to progress through education and industry.”
Another student, W. E. B. DuBois, took a very different view of how African Americans ought to function in society. Raised in Massachusetts and first exposed to segregation during his undergraduate work at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, DuBois believed it was essential that African Americans receive training not only in vocational fields, but also in the liberal arts (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). An advocate for civil rights, DuBois feuded very openly with Washington over the proper strategy for educating black university students (Lucas, 1994). DuBois felt strongly that Washington’s universal vocational training only perpetuated the servitude of slavery. DuBois believed equality and a sense of purpose would come only if A/A people were allowed to study the arts and sciences (Lucas, 1994). This philosophy and focus would allow African Americans to become leaders and teachers for the next generation. Both points of view were valid. Each, in its own way, lives on today in modern HBCUs.

Historical black colleges and universities would soon face many new challenges, though. The Great Depression and World War II left many black colleges in a financial crisis. Despite improvements in funding in previous years, most land-grant HBCUs were still dismally underfunded when compared to their white counterparts. Private HBCUs were in an even tougher bind (Jones, 1974). The Depression had wiped out many of their sources of philanthropy. Fundraising was becoming very difficult and distracting administrators from issues of improving education. In 1943, Dr. Fredrick D. Patterson, president of the Tuskegee Institute, published an open letter to the presidents of private HBCUs urging them to band together, pooling their resources and fundraising abilities. The next year, the United Negro College Fund began its activities soliciting donations to
private HBCUs, with far greater efficacy than any one of its member colleges alone (Davis, 1998).

The First Morrill Act (also known as the National Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862) made postsecondary education accessible to a broader population of American citizens. Ten years after this act was legislated, the Freedmen’s Bureau was established to provide support to a small number of HBCUs. The Second Morrill Act of 1890 led to the establishment of 19 HBCUs. Although these three legislative acts provided an atmosphere for change, it was the segregation movement in the South that provided the impetus for black higher education, particularly with the 1896 Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which ultimately established by law the right to set up *separate but equal* schools for blacks. This decision led to the expansion and growth of historically black colleges and universities (Fultz, 1995).

During the early 1940s and World War II, some African Americans were given the opportunity to enter technical fields heretofore denied to them because of racial discrimination. During these years, most African Americans who were fortunate to have completed degrees in physics or engineering knew that professional opportunities were limited to teaching, preaching, and the legal or medical profession.

Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the professional career opportunities for A/A males were limited other than teaching in a black-only school. This was especially true in the South. In the mid 1900s, many occupations for A/A males of working age were overwhelming concentrated in agriculture and domestic service. Other career opportunities were just not made available to A/A individuals in general during that time. It was not until the early 1970s that a flurry of A/A people chose the career of teacher
education (Jaynes & Williams, 1989). Nationally, only about 7% of teachers are A/A or Latino, and data show that minority teachers are retiring faster than new minority teachers are replacing them (Jaynes & Williams, 1989). Teaching has always been a female-dominated profession. Men are becoming an increasing minority in classrooms, particularly A/A males and particularly in elementary schools, where they may be needed now more than ever.

Historically black colleges and universities increased from 1 in 1837 to more than 100 in 1973. Most of these colleges were founded after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. According to Jacqueline Fleming (1984), “The majority of black public colleges, then, evolved out of state desires to avoid admitting blacks to existing white institutions” (p. 5). On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that separate education for blacks in public schools was unconstitutional because separate facilities are inherently unequal. This decision, which ended de jure racial segregation in public schools, also impacted higher education, as states were required to dismantle dual systems of higher education. This required predominantly white institutions (PWIs) to open their doors to black students, who prior to this time could not attend these institutions (Freeman, 1999).

*Brown v. The Board of Education*

Ten years later, public HBCUs and black students across the nation became the beneficiaries of the Supreme Court’s decision in the case of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. The court’s ruling that “separate but equal” schooling was anything but equal meant that states would be forced to better fund the HBCUs and open their other
universities to black college-bound student (Fultz, 2003). The case, won by lawyers trained at Howard University, didn’t bring immediate relief in many cases, as states protested the ruling. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave the federal government greater power to enforce desegregation.

Over 50 years after Brown v. The Board of Education, the American educational system is fraught with separate and unequal opportunities for historically underrepresented and underserved populations. However, unlike the 1950s when race was the single most important predictor of educational disparities, most contemporary scholars agree that it is a convergence of multiple factors that shapes the circumstances in which America’s neediest students exist (Strayhorn, 2007). Individuals of ethnic and racial minority and/or with a biracial/multiethnic/multiracial heritage represent an increasingly large percentage of the population in the United States (Judy & D’Amico, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Wehrly, Kenney, & Kenney, 1999). While these demographic trends have been discussed since the previous census of 1990, educational institutions, employers, government agencies, and professional and accrediting bodies are now beginning to engage in systematic efforts to become more knowledgeable, proficient, and multiculturally responsive.

As a result of school desegregation in the 1960s, the traditional A/A schools disappeared and were integrated with European American schools. Dougherty (1998) reported even though integration was law, European American parents refused to allow their children to be educated by A/A teachers. The result of these attitudes caused a mass exodus of A/A teachers from the classroom.
Higher Education Act

In 1965, the federal government provided aid to HBCUs through the Higher Education Act. It was followed by another important judicial decision, *Adams v. Richardson*. This case found 10 states in violation of the Civil Rights Act for supporting segregated schools. The states were ordered to work actively to integrate institutions, as long as that integration was not carried out at the expense of HBCUs, which were deemed to play an important and unique role in the education of African Americans (Fultz, 2003).

Another pivotal court ruling came in 1992 with the United States Supreme Court’s ruling in *United States v. Fordice*. The court’s decision required that Mississippi do away with the remnants of a dual, segregated system of education. This was similar to the *Adams* decision, except that no special circumstances were outlined for the treatment of HBCUs. Supporters of black colleges worried that the decision might hurt A/A students in the long run if the support and attention they received at HBCUs were taken away. Desegregation was important, in their view, but should never be viewed as a reason for putting black students in a disadvantaged situation.

The historical black college or university provides a unique education for African Americans. Students who attend HBCUs graduate with greater frequency than A/A students at predominantly white universities, and these students get more academic and social support. HBCUs must be protected because they are an important part of not only our history, but also our future.
Conclusion

Historically black colleges and universities have been crucial in the development of black professionals. For more than 160 years, these institutions have educated a population that has lived under severe legal, education, economic, political, and social restrictions. Early HBCUs were established to train teachers, preachers, and other community members to remedy the despairs of slavery that scarred African Americans.

First and foremost, HBCUs opened the door of educational opportunity for many blacks who were once legally denied an education. Secondly, they provided educational access to those who were educationally underprepared to enter predominantly white institutions. By 1950, HBCUs were responsible for serving 90% of black students in higher education. Moreover, HBCUs had produced 75% of all black Ph.D.s, 75% of all black army officers, 80% of all black federal judges, and 85% of all black physicians (Freeman, 1998). In 2001, HBCUs served 14% of all black students enrolled in college, but were annually responsible for 26% of black baccalaureate degrees (Freeman, 1998).

By the 21st century it was little remembered the enormous faith these families had in themselves and their children in the face of racism, poverty, ignorance, and government indifference to their plight decades after the end of slavery. The homogeneity of the elementary teaching force has always been an issue. Foster (1997) reported that in 1950, before the Civil Rights Act, almost half of the A/A professionals in the United States were teachers. These legal and political factors have contributed to trends of decline in the presence of African Americans in public schools.
Census 2000 data clarify the changes in U.S. diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Overall, about 67% of the population identify as Caucasian (white). Of the remaining 33%, approximately 13% indicated they were A/A, 1.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 13% Hispanic, and about 7% indicated some other race. These categories overlap, since individuals were able to choose more than one racial affiliation.

In the 1980s, the low number of minority teachers became a national concern as America’s student population became more diverse in public schools and the percentage of minority teachers decreased (Yasin & Albert, 1999). This shift in populations has impacted the quality of the learning experiences of A/A students.

During this time, men accounted for a third of all teachers and 18% at the elementary level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Men now account for 21% of the teaching force and a scant 9% at the elementary level. Amid the reasons experts and pundits, alike, offer is pay and prestige. Teaching has historically trailed other vocations in pay. As late as the early 20th century, it was not unusual for districts to have two pay scales, one for women and another for men that was 30 to 40% higher (Maurer, 2006).

The lack of A/A males in our schools has been well documented (Gordon, 2000). This trend is perhaps most problematic in urban environments, where the challenge of reaching students has become more difficult for teachers who are often cultures and generations removed from their students. In a society where many women are single parents and positive male presence is lacking in the lives of some urban youth, the lack of A/A male teachers as role models is even more profound.
Research that addresses specifically the characteristics, beliefs, life experiences, and pedagogical practices of A/A teachers and that highlights the role they play in enhancing the schooling experiences of A/A students has been conducted in a number of different social and cultural contexts such as the rural South, the urban Midwest, the Northeast, and the West Coast, as well as Europe, Canada, and the West Indies (Bailey & Moore, 2004). According to Foster (1995), studies of A/A teachers could be categorized into three areas: (1) policy-oriented research that addresses the decline of A/A teachers in the United States, (2) first-person narratives of the lives and experiences of A/A teachers, and (3) anthropological and sociological analyses of the practices and characteristics of culturally relevant A/A teachers. The latter category has been the framework most often used in recent scholarship of A/A teachers’ work and lives.

The vast majority of the studies, except for those that are strictly analyses of historical documents (Fultz, 1995; Walker, 2001), are based on empirical evidence such as interviews and classroom observations. The studies often describe how exemplary A/A teachers—most of whom are women—teach in ways that improve the academic and personal well-being of A/A students, particularly those from poor backgrounds, A/A women teachers become “other mothers,” according to Henry (2006), who foster the academic and the social and cultural well-being of their students. Moreover, they take seriously their roles as advocates who act on behalf of A/A children inside and outside the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Through their own advocacy work and their pedagogies that emphasize critical thinking and the real-world application of academic knowledge, they instill in their students a consciousness and a drive to become agents of
change. Although the researcher supports A/A women teachers in the classroom, it is not enough to meet the needs of all students, especially A/A males.

Diversity is necessary. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2006), in 1993 minority students comprised 30% of the elementary student population. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 1996) study reported nearly one-third of students were minorities in that year. In 2002, that number rose to 38%, and one year later NCES (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) reported that minority students made up almost 40% of the school-age population nationally. These trends are expected to continue.

In Michigan public school districts during the 2007-08 school year, about 90% of the 112,000 teachers were Caucasian. Of the 1.6 million students enrolled, 71% were white. Minorities such as A/As, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians made up the other 10% of teachers. Non-white students made up about 30% of the student population. Tim Larrabee (2007), president of the Michigan Association of Teacher Education, stated it is a national trend. Larrabee continued, indicating Michigan tends to be more segregated, thus it seems to be more apparent. Students are rarely taught by teachers of different ethnic backgrounds. Stereotypes and prejudgments can develop as a result. It is a problem that has been around for a long time and continues to exist (Larrabee, 2007).

Absence of African American Male Teachers

Research aimed at uncovering the reasons why A/A males choose K-12 education as a career is quite limited; however, three studies were found that identified A/A males as participants. King (1993b) investigated the career choice indicators considered by A/A

While the presence of the A/A male educator traces as far back as the early 1800s, (Mabee, 1979; Rury, 1983), there has been very little historical and contemporary literature that focuses specifically on their practice. With the exception of memoirs and personal narratives by famous educators such as Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, and Frederick Douglass, and a few qualitative and historical pieces (Douglass, 1845/1995; DuBois, 1899; Richardson, 1979; Washington, 1901/2000; E. West, 1979), little attention has been given specifically to the experiences of A/A male teachers. This absence in the literature can be attributed to a number of factors, including the rapid decrease of A/A males in the teaching profession since the 1800s (Fultz, 1995, 2003). Current data show that nationwide A/A males comprise less than 2% of the teaching population (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2006).

Other factors can be attributed to the myriad of education (e.g., increased dropout rates), sociological (e.g., incarceration rates), and economic (e.g., unemployment) challenges A/A males face as a group, which impede the possibility to pursue any career path, including education (Lewis, 2006).

The shortage of minority teachers continues to be a problem throughout the United States, said David Saba, president of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence in Washington, D.C. Of the approximately 3 million teachers in the nation, 2 million are white females. “It’s one of those things that people don’t like to talk
about,” Saba said about the lack of diversity. “It’s seen as a profession dominated by White females. It’s kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.” Saba said, “There needs to be more programs that get minorities excited about going into the profession” (Saba, 2005).

**Cultural Understanding**

The literature supports the argument that A/A male teachers are critical to the education and social development of A/A children, especially boys (Brown & Butty, 1999; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Dee, 2003; Futrell, 2004; Irvine, 1988; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; King, 1993a; Kunjufu, 2001; Lewis, 2006; Milner & Howard, 2004; Stewert & England, 1989; Wilder, 2000). Davis and Jordan (1994) clarified this argument by stating, “The increased presence of committed and successful black male adults in educational settings is essential for enhancing black boys’ academic and social development” (p. 571).

Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990) suggested that teachers who are successful teachers of black students view positively the role and use of African culture in teaching students and “recognize that they work in opposition to the very school systems that employ them” (Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990, p. 84).

It is likely that A/A male teachers are able to build on the distinctive cognitive and interactive styles often present in A/A students (Alexander & Miller, 1989). The expanded presence of A/A male teachers and an affirmation of the importance of an A/A teaching philosophy and pedagogy relate to the research of scholars who have explored the interrelationships among culture, cognitive style, and school experiences of students (Anderson, 1988; Au, 1980; Bokin, 1982; Hilliard, 1976; Irvine, 1990; Shade, 1982).
Shade (1982), Anderson (1988), and Irvine (1990) report that A/A and Euro-American children may hold differing world views and possess unique learning styles. For these reasons, it is important to have A/A male teachers’ presence for all students, particularly A/A males.

Values and Accomplishments

The consideration of the many possible positive values, roles, and conceptual frameworks associated with the presence of A/A teachers, particularly males, is warranted. This research does not mean that African Americans can learn or teach only in a particular way, but rather suggests that multiple ways of knowing and practice exist. Such an expanded conceptualization of the roles of A/A male teachers becomes essential so that researchers can avoid thinking narrowly about A/A male teachers as only role models, thus effectively suppressing other possibilities.

Teachers of color value education themselves, yet they often “feel like they are ‘less than’ other teachers” (Burant, Quirocho, & Rios, 2002, p. 11). Nieto (2003) indicated A/A male teachers contribute culturally as a source of energy to minority students. He labeled racial-ethnic identity as “the motor that keeps teachers passionate about their work” (Nieto, 2003, p. 30). African American male teachers have personal experiences as well as knowledge that can be of enormous value and shared with A/A students. King (1993a) posits:

African American teachers are able to communicate with A/A students about the personal value, the collective power and the political consequences of choosing academic achievement as opposed to failure. Such a communication process between A/A teachers and students includes A/A teachers’ ability to involve students in exchanges, which
help students to become empowered and involved in their own education. (p. 118)

Lewis (2006) supports King (1993a), indicating A/As male teachers serve as role models that provide an image that is positive and yet something different from the normal athletes, entertainers, actors, rappers, musicians, and convicted felons.

It is not just about minority students. African American male teachers are also important in the classroom for non-minority students (Brown & Butty, 1999). This change would alter the negative perception and stereotypes of A/A males held by both minorities and non-minorities. Increasing the representation of A/A male teachers could allow for more experiences to be shared with one another along with an improved hope that A/A male teachers can make a difference.

Significance of African American Male Teachers

Culturally relevant A/A teachers draw from multiple sources to prepare A/A students not only for school but also for life. They view education as a holistic process that should prepare A/A students for participation in the larger society (Ladson-Billings, 1994). To that end, the scholarship on A/A teachers has expanded notions about what constitutes a sound and healthy pedagogical practice. Moreover, these studies remind us that one’s ethnic and racial identity can be a driving force for developing the commitment to improve the lives of A/A youth in urban schools. To what extent do A/A male teachers, who express a commitment to serving A/A youth, embody the characteristics of culturally relevant women teachers? The research on men and the classroom begins to address this question.
Teachers who lack a comprehensive understanding of their students’ ethnic and cultural backgrounds and who are insensitive to the students’ different learning styles cannot effectively teach those students (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yasin & Albert, 1999). Thus, many educational leaders believe a diverse teaching population will enhance the learning opportunities and experiences of all students, particularly minority students, by providing them with teachers who share similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This belief has results in research focused on understanding why A/A males choose teaching as a career in K-12 education.

**Academic Impact**

The Joint Center for Political Studies (1989) divulges that A/A males affirm the role of education as the most prominent factor in improving the life circumstances of A/A males and promoting social change. Adair (1984) noted that often A/A teachers see themselves as being responsible for educating A/A youth as one step in the improvement of the quality of life for all Americans. Additionally, Foster’s (1990) research suggests that A/A teachers are able to communicate with A/A students “about the personal value, the collective power and the political consequences of choosing academic achievement” (p. 15) as opposed to failure.

Many educators operate under the assumption that all students basically share the same experiences and frame of reference. Subsequently, many of the experiences that A/A students have are not valued and respected (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Shujaa, 1994). African American students are oftentimes taught by educators who rarely understand the meaning of belonging to a minority culture. Kunjufu (2002) suggested that many non-
minority teachers know and understand very little about A/A culture and “are ill prepared to work with A/A children” (p. 18). Davis (2003) echoed this sentiment by stating, “These cultural messages, without a doubt, carry over into schools and negatively influence the ways young black male students are treated, positioned, and distributed opportunities to learn” (p. 520).

Teachers of color bring knowledge, insights, and perspectives to the school that otherwise would not be there, including raising issues of structural inequality present in schools and society (see Delpit, 1995, for a discussion of African American teachers’ voices). This allows them not only to connect with students of color, but also to raise awareness among white teachers, and bring insights to white students. As the growth of minority students spreads to districts that were formerly almost all white (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2008), the presence of teachers of color in these districts could help their schools equitably integrate and educate their changing student enrollment. Though the presence of teachers of color is often cited as important for students of color, exposure to teachers of color is also important for white students who generally experience the highest racial isolation, because these teachers could bring new ideas and perspectives to help prepare students for a racially changing society (Orfield & Lee, 2007).

Role Model and Influence

Growing concerns about the experience and achievement of minority students calls for more minorities to serve as teachers and lay mentor role models in schools. Maylor (2009) expressed there is need for an increase of A/A male teachers as role models and that they will make a connection with all students, particularly minority
students. Maylor posits that minority student behavior, aspirations, and achievement will improve with having A/A male teachers as role models.

Frequently, the discussions center around the increasing number of minority students in public schools, which is then coupled with a call for teachers of color because minority children need role models that look like them. Loehr (1988) states:

Positive role modeling and characterization are crucial for ensuring commitment of minority youngsters to schooling. Without sufficient exposure to minority teachers throughout their education, both minority and majority students come to characterize the teaching profession—and the academic enterprise in general—as better suited to whites [sic] . . . As the proportion of minority teachers falls, the perceived importance of academic achievement to minority students also declines. (p. 32)

Cooper (1892/1988) supported Loehr (1988), indicating that A/A teachers are “particularly important in the lives of inner city children who may otherwise lack daily contact with educated, intelligent, successful Blacks” (p. 123). Sanders (1999) explained that there are two major areas in which A/A male teachers provide the greatest impact within the school system: “to add to the gender diversity in the school environment, and to serve as role models and father figures for both A/A males and females” (p. 39).

For many A/A children, A/A teachers represent surrogate parent figures (Alexander & Miller, 1989; Foster, 1989), disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and advocates (Alexander & Miller, 1989). It may be that the role of the teacher in the lives of students of color is far more important than the teacher’s role in the lives of middle-class Euro-American youth (Irvine, 1988).
College/University Involvement

Mentor programs for student teachers could help encourage more minorities to go into the professions, said W. Neal Holmes, director of the Call Me Mister (2008) program at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. Call Me Mister is an initiative at colleges and universities across the nation that seeks to recruit young men of diverse backgrounds into education. “We’re especially trying to get young African American men to teach,” Holmes said. He said it is important for A/A youths to see male role models of the same race. He also said the program is designed to get people interested in teaching elementary school. “That’s when you really shape and contribute to a child’s life.”

He said the shortage of minority teachers has a tremendous impact on a student’s education. “If you don’t see anybody that looks like you in that (teaching) position . . . that’s an unspoken message that this is something alien,” he said. “You want to have classrooms that reflect the diversity of society at all levels” (Call Me Mister, 2008). The presence of A/A males in our classrooms is a significant factor in improving the educational outcomes for minority students, since these teachers can serve as important role models. Some people in higher education are seeking to reverse the current trend.

Many states and local school districts offer a variety of incentives as a way to attract new teachers. Some states offer signing bonuses, while other states have raised teacher salaries. Even with incentive and recruitment strategies in place, state departments of education and local school districts continue to encounter obstacles in placing qualified teachers in public schools, especially in poor and minority communities (Haberman, 1999; National Education Association, 2002). Mandatory teacher competence tests have
some states struggling with their recruitment efforts. These tests have negatively impacted the possibility of increased minority teachers. Findings show that A/A and Latinos scored significantly lower and had a higher failure rate than Caucasians on the teacher certification tests (Berlak, 1999). Teacher recruitment is impacted by teacher retention. A low teacher retention rate increased the number of new teachers that must be recruited and hired to replace the ones who exit the system.

Recruitment and Retention

Literature supports that teacher retention should begin early in the formation of the employee-employer relationship. Butcher and Kritsonis (2007) stated that “employee retention starts at orientation.” Likewise, studies by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2008) support this declaration and add that program participants should “start to internalize the ‘elements of retention’ . . . long before placement.” When school districts or principals discover candidates who surpass their hiring criteria, the dynamics of the interview should change such that both employer and candidate are promoting themselves to the other. In contrast to traditional hiring practices, employers must now provide candidates with compelling reasons and incentives for joining their organizations. Those incentives must exceed the parameters that an attractive salary once provided.

Why do some teachers stay with a particular school or school district for years, while others never seem to be satisfied? Although individual priorities may differ somewhat, the undergirding theme is that people gravitate to environments in which they are comfortable. This entails that the work environment or the job itself has to meet certain criteria on a personal level for each individual teacher. The work must fulfill some
need, aside from the financial, that each teacher uses to define his or her life’s purpose. Practices that involve maintaining substantive relationships with faculty; understanding that people, not programs, make the difference; collaboration; cultivating campus culture and climate; empowerment and a student-centered focus contribute to the universal portrait of an effective leader. It is no mystery that such practices underscore the essential elements of teacher retention as well (Harris, 2008; Whitaker, 2003).

Teacher Supply

In the 1950s and 1960s, education was the major of choice for many African Americans due to the fact that there were very few professional opportunities for African Americans to pursue as a career. Cole (1986) pointed out that in 1950, around 50% of A/A professionals were teachers. This profession was an admirable and well-regarded profession (Irvine, 1988). However, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number of African Americans entering the education field as a possible profession decreased, and A/A made up only 7.8% in 1981 (Cole, 1986). Teaching has lost its zest and appeal to the A/A population. Wilder (2000) stated:

The African American teacher shortage has been of great importance as well as a concern to educators for many years. Numerous studies have explored why so few A/A today pursue careers in teaching, particularly in light of act that the teaching profession was once very highly regarded in A/A communities. During the 1950s, when segregation was still legally enforced, nearly half of the black educated professionals held teaching positions. Teaching professions were attractive African-Americans prior to and well into the 1950s, in part because many other professional career opportunities (i.e., medicine, dentistry, law, and politics) were closed to them. (p. 207)

Researchers report that new teachers are more diverse than their veteran colleagues, but the entire teaching force still remains overwhelmingly white (Kirby,
Berends, & Naftel, 1999; Shen, Wegenke, & Cooley, 2003). The racial composition of undergraduate teacher preparation programs also lags in terms of diversity as compared to students (AACTE, 1999), and there may be declining shares of minority teachers (Hodgkinson, 2002), although data on the demographics of teachers and in particular new or young teachers are contradictory (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005).

An additional barrier to a more diverse teaching force is the teacher credentialing process, which, in many states, requires that teachers pass standardized tests. One study found that A/A candidates had disproportionately low passing rates on a commonly used test that teaching candidates are required to pass for certification (Gitomer, Latham, & Ziomek, 1999).

Gordon (1994) believes that African Americans are choosing not to go into the field of education because of economic, educational, and social/cultural reasons. It is perceived that the teaching profession does not allow one to reach middle-class status nor does it allow one to have the desired respect in the school environment or community as it once had.

Tomorrow’s teacher workforce depends in large part on the supply of newly credentialed teachers, which in turn depends on the number of teacher candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs. As both enrollment and credential numbers continue to decline, we consider the impact of recent state policies on teacher preparation programs to improve both the quantity and quality of the workforce (Cole, 1986).
Motivational Factors Influencing African American Teachers

Extrinsic and Intrinsic

What motivates teachers to stay in or leave the teaching profession? Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory is explored to address this question. Maslow (1970) was one of the key figures in the development of humanistic psychology. His theory proposes that there is a hierarchy of needs. The lower order needs (extrinsic) are made up of life-sustaining or physiological needs and safety or security needs. The higher-order needs (intrinsic) are social (affiliation), esteem (recognition), and self-actualization. Maslow’s theory describes how individuals strive to fulfill these needs.

According to Maslow (1970), needs are not exclusive or single determinants of behavior, as most behavior is multimotivated; nor must a need become completely satisfied prior to the emergence of another need. For most individuals, needs are partly satisfied and partly unsatisfied at any given time. The hierarchy of needs is not precise; movement may occur in either direction as needs become satisfied or unsatisfied at any given time. Individuals are motivated by the desire to achieve or maintain the conditions that support satisfaction of their basic needs.

Maslow’s theory of motivation was based on the concept of gratification versus deprivation. Gratification allows the individual to move from one level of needs to the next. Deprivation, on the other hand, is characterized by unsatisfied needs. Maslow theorized that individuals who have been deprived in the past will react differently to needs than individuals who have never been deprived. Higher-order needs are intrinsic in
nature, whereas lower-order needs are *extrinsic* in nature. Maslow provided a basic structure for understanding motivation based on this hierarchy. Herzberg recast Maslow’s theory into two factors: motivators and hygiene factors. The two factors are independent of each other and affect behavior in different ways. The hygiene factors correspond to Maslow’s physiological and safety needs and, like them, are extrinsic motivators.

Hygiene factors involve company policies, administration, supervision, salary, security, status, interpersonal relations, and working conditions. They must be maintained continually, but they are never completely satisfied. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) theory contends that working conditions are equated with extrinsic rewards, which, when unsatisfied, cause job dissatisfaction.

In contrast to hygiene factors, motivators consist of intrinsic factors that motivate people to superior performance. They include achievement, responsibility, recognition, and advancement. Motivators are equated with intrinsic rewards which, when satisfied, cause job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. maintained that the factors leading to job satisfaction are different from those that lead to job dissatisfaction. The factors are not on a continuum from satisfied to dissatisfied, but may overlap, with one being stronger than the other at any given time for an individual.

Blanchard and Hersey (1996) have supported Herzberg et al.’s theory that working conditions are equated with extrinsic rewards which, when unsatisfied, cause job dissatisfaction. Blanchard and Hersey explained the relationship between Maslow and Herzberg. They indicated Maslow is helpful in identifying needs or motives, while Herzberg provides us with insight about the goals and incentives that serve to satisfy those needs.
In reviewing both Maslow’s and Herzberg’s work, it is important to remember that all people do not have the same needs and value structures. Bartel (1994) used the Vroom-Atkinson theory in defining an incentive as an inducement to behavior. She indicated what serves as a motivator for one person or group of persons does not always become an incentive that would motivate another. If one does not value something, the possible receipt of it can hardly be a motivator.

Herzberg et al. (1959) recast Maslow’s theory by suggesting that the hygiene factors in motivation are extrinsic factors found in the environment and tend to be related to working conditions. Motivators are intrinsic and tend to be related to individual self-fulfillment. As working conditions are improved and dissatisfaction is decreased, satisfaction will not necessarily follow. Herzberg et al.’s theory states that even though hygiene factors are a condition for satisfaction, they are crucial to the determinants of a worker’s satisfaction and desire to remain in teaching. That is, hygiene factors must be satisfied before the emergence of higher-order needs, or intrinsic motivation, can occur.

Although most teachers who enter the profession do so with specific expectations about the intrinsic rewards they will receive, teachers who choose not to enter the profession offset the expected intrinsic motivators with the expected low extrinsic rewards. The extrinsic reward system does not meet their basic needs. Stevenson (1964) found that minority teachers have greater security needs (extrinsic). Findings for A/A teachers in Gottlieb’s (1964) study supported Stevenson’s research. African Americans related their job dissatisfaction to problems within the physical setting of the school, such as lack of proper equipment and overcrowded conditions.
Hopkins (1997) indicated minorities who complete college often pursue employment outside education where opportunities for advancement and remuneration are greater. Although there are insufficient numbers of minority teachers to draw definitive conclusions, trends show that minorities view teaching as a career alternative, a career they can pursue for a brief period before pursuing other interests.

Niklos and Brown (1989) reported that education used to be respectable career for African Americans, but three factors have converged to reduce their participation: (1) fewer are attending college, (2) they do not pass standardized tests at the same rate as other groups (perhaps because of the standardized tests being used), and (3) those who attend college are choosing other careers.

Researchers assert that for many teachers of color, particularly A/A teachers, teaching represents a form of ministry and they feel compelled to change the lives and save the souls of the students they teach (Irvine, 2003; Lynn, 2006). They often embody a sense of hope and possibility as it relates to teaching in urban schools. According to Nieto (2003),

Hope is the essence of teaching, and these teachers demonstrate hope in many ways. They have hope and faith in their students, in their own abilities as teachers, in trusted colleagues and new teachers, in the promise of public education, and in the profession of teaching. (Nieto, 2003, p.16)

The belief that all students of color can and will learn is a representative characteristic of many teachers of color and the potential to have a positive impact on the lives of students of color contributes to their motivations to teach (Nieto, 2003). As a result of this enduring hope and promise, Lynn (1999) found many A/A teachers hold themselves and others accountable for the educational development of every A/A child (Lynn, 1999).
Nieto (2003) conducted a case study to explore that motivation and persistence of teachers of color in urban schools. Her research explored the lives of seven urban high school teachers in Boston Public Schools. The teachers were from diverse backgrounds—African American, Cape Verdean, and Haitian. Collectively they had several years of teaching experience; most had been teaching for more than 25 years. According to Nieto, teachers in the inquiry group spoke about love to describe how they feel about their students and the subject matter that they teach. Love for them is not only a sentiment, but also combines trust, confidence, and faith in their pupils. Teachers demonstrate love through high expectations and rigorous demands on students and by keeping up with their subject matter through profession activities (p.16).

Research shows many A/A teachers tend to view the behavior of students of color more favorably than white teachers, thus demonstrating an understanding of and appreciation for students’ race, culture, and ethnicity that is important in teaching (Madhubuti & Madhubuti, 1994). Downey and Pribesh’s (2004) study revealed that many A/A teachers viewed their A/A eighth-grade students’ behaviors and efforts more positively than did white teachers and overall rated their behavior more favorably than white teachers (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). A/A teachers in this study also rated A/A students as having fewer behavior and academic problems (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). Furthermore, rather than viewing students of color as lacking will, ability, or moral character, they tended to reflect on their own teaching as the source of the problem and sought ways to adjust their instruction (Nieto, 2003).

Teachers’ beliefs about and expectations of students play a significant role in determining of the levels of empathy and support they provide for marginalized student
populations. Irvine’s (2003) research shifts the focus from teachers’ beliefs about students to teachers’ beliefs about themselves and how empathy and caring impacts their instruction. They assert that empathetic dispositions are desirable characteristics among teachers; however, caution should be taken when empathy is overly emphasized. As such, empathy is important; however, empathy alone is not sufficient nor the sole requirement for becoming a culturally responsive teacher (Irvine, 2003). His research examined the beliefs of 34 inservice teachers (33 female and 1 male). Of the 34 participants, there were 25 African American women, 2 Latinas, 6 white women, and 1 white male. All 34 of the teachers believed that empathy was an essential characteristic when working with diverse populations of students, but not enough to be an effective urban educator. Irvine (2003) asserted, “The participants believed that empathy was an implicit part of being caring, supportive, and responsive to their students. Empathetic disposition led to more positive interactions with their students, supportive classroom climates, and student centered pedagogy” (p. 442).

Foster’s (1990) research on A/A teachers sought to capture the wisdom and practices of experienced teachers of color. She studied 16 exemplary teachers—12 female and 4 male who were chosen by community nomination to learn more about their childhood experiences, their families and communities, and schooling experiences. The participants were born between 1905 and 1973—the majority of whom were in their forties and fifties with 20–60 years of teaching. Foster found that many of her participants remembered A/A teachers who lived in their communities and served as surrogate parents to children in their neighborhoods and church communities. Foster asserted, “Teachers
growing up in segregated communities were firmly anchored in their A/A communities with their community life reinforced by their schooling experiences” (p. 125).

Teachers expressed their awareness of the marginal positions African Americans occupied in the U.S. (Foster, 1990). Due to a close proximity to their students and shared experiences with oppression and marginalization, these teachers held exceedingly high expectations of their A/A students. Many believed that a high quality education was the tool to alleviate the harsh conditions facing people of color in the U.S.

This body of research reveals many teachers of color draw from a rich spiritual tradition, which, they assert, played a significant role in their decision to become educators. Some also draw heavily from early lessons learned from A/A teachers, primarily women, in their schools and communities. Therefore, spiritual beliefs and connection to a legacy of teaching seemed to significantly impact their beliefs about the academic potential and success of students of color and influenced the ways in which they held themselves accountable for ensuring their students’ success. Though being a teacher of color is not a prerequisite of culturally responsive teaching, research suggests that many A/A teachers, particularly women, possess qualities and have adopted instructional strategies that benefit students of color. According to Irvine (2003), these teachers view teaching as a spiritual calling, as a form of caring, as a way of mothering, and as a way of believing in students’ abilities, by demanding the best from all students and disciplining students in a compassionate yet nonsense manner (Irvine, 2003).

Research on A/A male teachers reveals that they tend to be motivated to impart knowledge and prepare students to survive in a racialized society. A/A male teachers possess a commitment to teaching A/A children, particularly males who live in difficult
circumstances, because in many ways they see themselves in the students they teach (Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, & Parker, 2002). Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, and Parker’s (2002) research on A/A male teachers shed light on the motivations, persistence, and self-perceptions of this underrepresented but critically important population. The majority of A/A male teachers tended to identify themselves as persons with the ability or the responsibility to change the lives of A/A youth, particularly those living in working class poor communities (Lynn et al., 2002).

African American men possess an invaluable knowledge about their communities to help change the conditions of poor people in the United States (M. C. Brown, 1999). These teachers are confident that their knowledge and experience in the community are important factors in shaping their identity (Lynn et al., 2002) and they see teaching as their contribution to the greater good of the community (M. C. Brown, 1999; Foster, 1997; Lynn, 1999; Lynn et al., 2002). These men also see themselves as father figures with a responsibility to provide leadership in the lives of young men, and they position themselves as a protector of the humanity of A/A boys who live in a society that is structured for their demise (Lynn et al., 2002).

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) and Dixon (2003) argued that A/A teachers, from a historical perspective, utilize culturally responsive teaching practices because “black teachers were able to create homelike atmospheres in school where students experienced a continuity of expectations and interactional patterns between their home and schools, their parents and their teachers” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 80). However, teaching is also political; therefore, educators feel personally committed to and responsible for breaking the cycle of subordination (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002).
Furthermore, teachers of color tend to believe that they have the power to influence students’ self-perceptions and influence their aspirations beyond the immediate limitations of their environments (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002). Beauboeuf-Lafontant asserted,

The history of “good” Black segregated schools and the teachers fondly recalled in those schools is important to the concept of political relevance because it evidences this positive struggle and demonstrates that politically relevant teaching has a long and proud past. (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 84)

Michelle Foster’s (1990) research on A/A teachers from multiple generations highlighted teachers dedicated to talking with children in the language that they understand while focusing on social justice, political consciousness, and activism. The teachers in her study expressed an earnest interest in engaging students in critical dialogues about racism and injustice. Foster (1990) summarized, “These teachers share the beliefs that teaching African American students successfully requires more than merely mastering subject matter and the accompanying pedagogical skill, but consists of engaging them in a dialogue that questions and seeks to change the status quo” (p. 138). These dispositions are largely derived from their experiences, as students, with A/A teachers who possessed similar qualities. As a result of their historical experiences with A/A teachers, many developed an interest in education that reaches beyond imparting subject matter knowledge on black children (Foster, 1990).

Lynn et al. (2002) and M. C. Brown’s (1999) research on A/A male teachers sheds some light on the motivations, persistence, and self-perceptions of this underrepresented but critically important population. They contended that these teachers tend to be motivated to prepare students to survive in a racialized society and possess a commitment
to teaching black children, particularly males who live in difficult circumstances, as they see themselves in the students they teach. The teachers in Lynn et al.’s (2002) study believed that they had the ability, knowledge, and the responsibility to change the lives of A/A youth, particularly those from poor communities. A/A male teachers saw themselves as father figures with a responsibility to provide leadership in the lives of young men, and as the protectors of the humanity of A/A boys who live in a society that is inherently racist and structured for their demise (Lynn et al., 2002). Moreover, their knowledge of and experiences within urban communities were important factors in shaping their identity as teachers.

Summary of Literature Review

Unlike the literature on A/A students, the literature on A/A male teachers is scant. A number of the studies I reviewed in the previous section tended to focus on women or minorities in general. Since this area has been the cornerstone of my own research agenda, I will spend some time describing the nature of my own research, what I have to learn from it, and how it relates to some of these other studies. There are some larger quantitative studies that solicit practicing A/A male teachers’ views on the best ways to recruit A/A male teachers. The Schools and Staffing Survey by the Department of Education does list some data regarding this population, including some of their overall characteristics and numbers; however, this is not the focus of my study.

This literature review has identified several important facts regarding public school education in America. Research clearly points out that A/A male students are at-risk in school and there is a dire need for A/A male teachers to teach them and serve as
positive role models (Hunter-Boykin, 1992; King, 1993a; Watson & Smitherman, 1996).
There is also a critical shortage of A/A male teachers. To address this shortage, states and local school districts need to develop specific strategies to enhance their teacher recruitment efforts. Lastly, there are certain reasons why A/A males have chosen to be teachers and remain in it as a profession. Due to the limited amount of literature in this area, there is a need for more research to be conducted.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand and explain the responses by A/A male teachers as to their motivation for entering and remaining in the teaching profession. Current data show there is an increase in minority student enrollment in K-12 schools, while there is a decline in minority teacher educators, particularly A/A males. With this study, it seemed likely I would find common patterns in teacher responses to a variety of set interview questions. Hence, this study was designed to interview all A/A male teachers within three Midwestern school districts in Michigan and explore their responses to teacher education as a profession and to consider themes and patterns that may reflect the responses of the participants.

In this chapter, I describe the research design and methodology used in this study, the process involved in data collection, and procedure for data analysis. The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the current trend of the decreasing number of A/A male teachers in K-12 education by identifying why A/A males choose to select and remain in education as a teacher.

Quantitative and qualitative studies both share the same goal of identifying clear and consistent patterns of phenomena by a systematic process (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this particular study, I sought, through a qualitative study, to examine the personal experiences of active A/A male teachers in K-12 education. In-depth interviews
provided the opportunity of uncovering descriptive data and the nuances of a particular phenomenon or culture where little knowledge has been previously recorded.

We know a clear understanding does not exist of A/A male teachers and the factors influencing them to teach in a K-12 setting. This qualitative research was used to obtain a richness of responses from the subjects in order to describe a phenomenon.

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

This research design was based upon the characteristics of qualitative research that Creswell (2003) describes. Creswell described qualitative research as a study that uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The researcher looks for involvement of their participants in data collection and seeks to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. The researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. (p. 181)

The use of qualitative research methods has grown considerably in the field of education (Lancy, 1993), a field that has traditionally relied upon a quantitative custom of standardized testing, surveys, and numbers crunching. This research method was used instead of a quantitative one, which would have incorporated numerical indices to summarize, describe, and explore relationships among traits as defined by McMillan and Wergin (2002). Using a qualitative approach, in-depth narratives and detailed context to the thinking of the participants was acquired.
A Phenomenological Study

While there are several different ways to perform qualitative research, the method for this particular study was phenomenological, where the actual experiences of 14 individuals (A/A male teachers) about a specific phenomenon (choosing and remaining to be a teacher) were examined in detail. As a result, I obtained a description of the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. (Moustakas, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 15)

The purpose of this section is to offer the conceptual and theoretical ideas that shaped the approach taken to collect, code, and analyze data for this study. This section further discusses the methods to be used to gather and analyze the data. Procedures consistent with qualitative research methods were used to gain access by conducting semi-structured interviews with each participant and analyzing the data collected from this study.

In any qualitative study, the outcome desired is for the researcher to understand the perspectives of the participants being studied by viewing the phenomenon in the same manner as they themselves view it. This study is framed within a phenomenological approach. Creswell (1998) stated, “A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experience for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon” (p. 51). Van Manen (2001) supported Creswell by indicating a phenomenological approach is designed to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences.
In this case, the study sought to examine a single phenomenon—the choice of the teaching profession by A/A male teachers. One focus of this study was to examine how A/A male teachers from different generations entered into the K-12 teaching profession. The study also explored A/A male experiences to see how those experiences impacted their decision to select K-12 education as a profession. It examined how A/A males in the K-12 teaching profession view the need for African American males to serve in this role. The study also examined A/A males’ experiences as K-12 teachers and how those experiences either foster or detract from retaining them in the profession.

Among the various traditions of qualitative inquiry, phenomenology is the specific approach that is used in this study. Polkinghorne (1989) stated, “The aim of phenomenologically informed research is to produce clear and accurate descriptions of a particular aspect of human experience” (p. 44). Emphasis is placed on understanding of the essence of the experience through the participants’ descriptions of the meaning of their experience (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1989). Thus, phenomenology is an appropriate approach used in understanding the essence of how A/A male teachers chose to select and remain in the field of education.

Since the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants were the focus of this research study, the phenomenological method was used to collect and interpret the data. The lived experiences are the “ordinary conscious experience of everyday life” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 114), but these experiences are the heart and soul of the individuals who are the recipients of this study.

We know the teaching profession is losing some of the most talented and experienced A/A male teachers to retirement, with few college graduates entering the
profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on A/A men in K-12 education. Also, this study contributes to this dialogue and offers strategies to A/A males that will assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession. I incorporated a variety of methods to uncover the underlying meaning or structure of these perceptions in this phenomenological study. I examined the perceptions of A/A male teachers through a qualitative interview design, individual interviews, and a focus group study.

Purpose and Background Information

We do not know enough about what determinants influence A/A males to select K-12 education as a profession and stay in it as an educator. We do not know what importance they, as A/A male teachers, believe exists in K-12 education or why they believe the representation in K-12 education is so low.

A clear understanding does not exist of A/A male teachers choosing to select and remain in K-12 education as teachers. History shows minorities were not allowed to pursue a career in the field of education as K-12 educators (Lewis, 2006). Further, we know A/A males are an underrepresented group in K-12 education (Gordon, 2000). Experts (Howard & Milner, 2004) feel it is necessary to have minority teachers teaching in all schools where minority students exist. Census trends (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2006) identify an increase in minority students in K-12 education where the teacher workforce continues to be predominantly Caucasian. Increased career options have reduced the number of A/A males selecting K-12 education as a profession (Hill, 1985).
Subject Recruitment

After receiving gender and ethnic data from various local districts within the county, it was discovered there were only 14 eligible participants for this study. Based on this information, the collection of data started by identifying all 14 African American male teachers located in three Midwestern school districts located in the state of Michigan who were in one of three categories/stages in their teaching career (0–9 years of teaching, 10–19 years of teaching, and 20 or more years of teaching). I began the process by contacting my Human Resource colleagues in the three districts identified and requested they provide their A/A male teacher names and e-mail addresses. From there, I contacted each teacher individually. The recruitment letter was sent to potential participants inviting them to learn more about the study and seeking their involvement. Those who were interested received the consent document via e-mail for review before deciding whether to participate and be interviewed. If the potential participant decided to participate, he was asked to sign the consent form prior to participating in the interview. Once the interview was scheduled, I sent a follow-up email to confirm the date, time, and location of the interview. Prior to beginning the interview, I reviewed the consent form with the participant and answered any questions he had. McMillan (2000) suggested that in purposive sampling the researcher selects participants particularly informed about the subject matter.

At the conclusion of the one-on-interview process, I sent an e-mail to each participant individually thanking him for his participation. Thereafter, I sent another e-mail to the participant inviting him to participate in a focus group to discuss the themes
and subthemes that arose from the individual interviews. Those who were interested received another consent document via e-mail for review before deciding whether to participate and be interviewed. If the potential participant decided to participate, he was asked to sign the consent form and bring it with him to the focus group gathering. Once I heard back from each original participant, I sent a follow-up email to confirm the date, time, and location of the focus group gathering. Prior to beginning the focus group session, I reviewed the consent form with the participants and answer any questions they had.

*Informed Consent Process*

I complied with the requirements of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) standards by obtaining the written consent of all participants. A consent form was used to obtain agreement from subjects to participate in the study. Prior to beginning the one-on-one interview and focus group, I reviewed the consent form with the participant and answered any questions he had for each. Samples of these forms are included. The consent document was forwarded to the potential participants who were interested in learning more about the study. With written permission from all participants, the interviews were audio recorded to allow the researcher to listen and observe rather than being distracted by having to take notes and asking the participant(s) to repeat answers. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim into printed form. If a participant agreed to participate but did not want to be audio taped, I accommodated his request by taking detailed notes from the interview only. Member checking followed,
allowing the participants to review the transcribed information for accuracy. To ensure participants were protected, I adhered to this protocol of informed consent.

Again, at the conclusion of the one-on-interview process, I sent an e-mail to each participant individually thanking him for his participation. Thereafter, I sent another e-mail to the participant inviting him to participate in a focus group to discuss the themes and subthemes that arose from the individual interviews. Those who were interested received another consent document via e-mail for review before deciding whether to participate and be interviewed. If the potential participant decided to participate, he was asked to sign the consent form and bring it with him to the focus group gathering. Once I heard back from each original participant, I sent a follow-up email to confirm the date, time, and location of the focus group gathering. Prior to beginning the focus group session, I reviewed the consent form with the participants and answer any questions they may had.

To ensure confidentiality for both the one-on-one interview and focus group, pseudonyms for each participant such as “Teacher 1,” Teacher 2,” and so on, were used to protect the identity of each participant. Numbers were used to identify the audiotapes in order to protect the participants’ identity. Any participant quotes would not be identified except by the word “teacher” (i.e., “According to one teacher . . . ”; “Five teachers acknowledge that . . . ”; etc.). I did not specifically link individuals with each other; answers to questions were generalized to incorporate major themes that emerged from the study. Any other identifying information was masked as well. Confidentiality was maintained for all participants at all times. The only people who had access to the responses were the principal investigator and student investigator.
Research Procedure

After receiving gender and ethnic data from various local districts within the county, it was discovered there were only 14 eligible participants for this study. Therefore, 14 participants were purposefully selected based on current number of years in the teaching processing (0–9 years, 10–19 years, and 20 or more years). McMillan (2000) suggested that in purposive sampling the researcher selects participants particularly informed about the subject matter. When initial interviews are combined with a possible follow-up interview, a large amount of data may be collected without need for a larger sample if the participants talk at length about their experiences (Meloy, 1994). If follow-up interviews were needed, they would be conducted through telephone conversations and/or personal e-mails accounts. I would know that saturation had been reached when each additional interviewee added little to nothing to what was learned (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

I utilized one-on-one interviews of selected A/A male teachers as the primary mode for collecting data in this research study. All interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for each of the participants. I requested the one-on-one interviews take place in the participant’s classroom setting after the school day to gather a better understanding as each participant shared his story. According to Owens (2001), a place where the experiences occur for the participants that describes “the atmosphere, the tone and the personality of the total environment of the school building” (p. 401) is vital to the study since the focus centers around the lived experiences of the participants.
A focus group of the 14 participants interviewed was also used to allow them an opportunity to discuss the themes and subthemes that were anticipated from the one-on-one interviews conducted allowing the researcher to observe (Hatch, 2002). Having a group experience with the participants fostered an even richer narrative of each participant’s life story as it was told. It also allowed the participants to share their thoughts with one another and to explore the topic in greater depth.

Data Collection

According to Creswell (1998), in a phenomenological study, participants must be “individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored” (p. 111). I, as the primary “instrument” of data collection, interviewed 14 current A/A male teachers. Specifically, the methodology called for interviews designed to draw out stories of the A/A male teachers. The individually defined approaches and the sociocultural and historical time period were understood through conducting interviews, having a focus group, and narrating the lived experiences of each participant.

The goal was to elicit a story about the life course for each participant. The stories were analyzed for themes that emerged as the stories were analyzed. The participant selection strategies included the sample selection, sample size, recruitment, and human subject protection. Each is outlined in detail in the following sections.

The site for data collection for this study was three Midwestern school districts located within the state of Michigan. Both urban and suburban school districts were selected. The rationale for selecting these districts was based on the fact that these districts had the participants suited for this study. It was essential that all participants
experience the phenomenon being studied; therefore, purposeful selection was utilized (Creswell, 1998).

An underlying premise of a phenomenology is that people try to make meaning of their experience and the meaning made is contained in their stories (Jones, 2005). Consequently, the aim of the interview was to bring out stories about their lives (Jones, 2005). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Member checking occurred with each participant to allow the opportunity to provide clarification on the transcription of the interviews.

To gain the trust of the participants, we met at least twice so they engaged in open discussion (Meloy, 1994). This theory is also supported by Arminio and Hultgren (2002), who indicated that one of the characteristics important in any research, but especially qualitative research, is the ability to develop a relationship of trust between the researcher and the participants. It was my role to ensure trust was developed and maintained throughout the entire study process. To answer the research questions, personal stories of their individual relationships, personal agency, the timing of the events in their life, and the social-historical events were gathered. For instance, participants may tell stories of work when asked about their life as a young adult. This would be considered in relation to the social and historical knowledge of their work. The participants were able to state what was meaningful to them, and rich descriptions of these events or objects were developed. This permitted me to develop a thick description of specific content instead of superficial themes that did not situate the events in their life course.
Instrumentation

Through formal semi-structured interviews, I engaged 14 A/A males around the choice of the teaching profession, their experiences in the profession, and their beliefs about the role of A/A males in the profession. Each interview was approximately 1 to 2 hours in length. Following the in-depth interviews, I transcribed the interview tapes and identified themes and subthemes. Numbers were used to identify the audiotapes in order to protect the participants’ identity. A story-frame was developed based on the themes and subthemes. The transcription was shared with the participants for member checking, further input, and feedback as well as for analysis.

A focus group then met to discuss the identified themes and subthemes that surfaced from the in-depth interviews. The participants shared their thoughts about the themes and subthemes in relation to their interview and what they believe could be done to increase A/A male teachers in K-12 education.

In this study, I was not seeking to manipulate the themes or subthemes. It was my hope that the described and explained responses from the A/A male teachers, who have chosen K-12 teaching as a career and have agreed to learn more about this study, would address the purpose of this study, which is to describe and understand the experiences of A/A male teachers and why they chose teaching as a profession and career with their detailed responses.
Location of Data Collection

Each one-on-one interview was conducted in the participant’s classroom after the school day. The focus group gathering was held at my home to contain confidentiality to the participants only. Following each individual interview and focus group gathering, the audio recordings were transcribed. These data were collected and stored. An effort was made to protect the identity of the participants. Pseudonyms for each participant, such as “Teacher 1,” Teacher 2,” and so on, were used to protect the identity of each participant. Every attempt was made to maintain confidentiality, including holding interviews in private locations. Confidentiality was maintained by carefully storing the audiotapes in a secure, locked file cabinet located in my home office. The audiotapes were destroyed once the data analysis was completed. Transcripts were also stored in a confidential manner as was electronic material, which was saved on an external media storage device and again stored in a locked file cabinet located in my home office.

To support the intent of this qualitative phenomenological research study, participants were interviewed in a setting that would hopefully allow for little prompting in order to lead them into conversations regarding relevant content (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Validation of Data

According to Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000), there are three threats to validity that must be addressed in qualitative research: (1) accurate descriptions, (2) threat of personal biases, and (3) reaction of interviewees to the researcher that may impede acquisition of data (p. 103). As mentioned previously, it was my intent to ensure accurate
descriptions by providing each participants with a copy of the draft summary of their comments so that any inaccuracies or misrepresentations could be eliminated, which Creswell (2003) terms “member-checking” (p. 196). I also used “peer debriefing” (Creswell, 2003) to review and question the study “so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher” (p. 196).

Duration of Study/Dissemination of Findings

The study began in April 2010 and was completed by April 2011. The findings were then disseminated as a doctoral dissertation relating the outcomes of the research.

Results were disseminated through a dissertation I prepared. A PowerPoint presentation was developed and shared with the dissertation committee during the oral defense, along with sending the PowerPoint to each participant via e-mail.

Methodology

The research design was based upon the characteristics of qualitative research that Creswell (2003) described. Creswell described qualitative research as a study that uses multiple methods that is interactive and humanistic. The researcher looks for involvement of their participants in data collection and seeks to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. The researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. (p. 181)

The use of qualitative research methods has grown considerably in the field of education (Lancy, 1993), a field that has traditionally relied upon a quantitative custom of standardized testing, surveys, and numbers crunching.
A phenomenological research approach was used to design and conduct this qualitative study to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (Van Manen, 2001). Established historical data were gathered and reviewed, a cross-case analysis from different categories of A/A males in K-12 education was completed, and interviews with 14 A/A males from three school districts in three different stages in their career were conducted. Data collected were analyzed to describe historical demographic characteristics of the sample. The data were reported in narrative and tabular form.

This study was framed within a phenomenological standpoint. Creswell (1998) stated, “A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experience for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon” (p. 51). In this case, the study sought to examine a single phenomenon—the A/A male teacher. One focus of this study was to examine how A/A male teachers from different categories entered into the K-12 teaching profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on A/A males in K-12 education. Also, this study contributes to this dialogue and offers strategies to A/A males that assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession. I incorporated a variety of methods to uncover the underlying meaning or structure of these perceptions in this phenomenological study. I examined the perceptions of A/A male teachers through a qualitative interview design, individual interviews, a focus group, and narrative and storytelling.

The interviews, focus group gathering, and field notes were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. Next, the data were checked for accuracy by listening and comparing it to the transcribed notes. The data were merged into NVivo8, which is the
newest qualitative software program from the makers of NU*DIST for qualitative data analysis. Each audiotape was transcribed and then destroyed. Transcribed notes and collected demographics were kept in a locked cabinet at all times except when they were being analyzed.

Following qualitative research convention, all data were recorded and remained confidential. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms for each participant such as “Teacher 1,” “Teacher 2,” and so on, were used to protect the identity of each participant. Numbers were used to identify the audiotapes in order to protect the participants’ identity. The data were recorded and categorized. After interviewing each participant, I developed a biographical portrait of each individual. Biographical portraits were analyzed by the investigator for each research question.

This analysis provided insight into ways in which A/A male teachers perceive themselves. I also conducted a cross-case analysis of how A/A males from different categories enter into and experience the K-12 teaching profession, I explored A/A males’ experiences to see how those experiences impacted their decision to select K-12 education as a profession, and I explored A/A males’ experiences as K-12 teachers and how those experiences either fostered or detracted from retaining them in the profession.

Results were disseminated through a dissertation I prepared. A PowerPoint presentation was developed and shared with the dissertation committee during the oral defense.
Risks and Costs to and Protections for Subjects

No major risks were anticipated for participants in this study. Inconvenience was reduced by allowing the participants to arrange the time and place of the interviews. The focus group gathering was held at my home to contain confidentiality to the participants only. The initial interview lasted up to 2 hours at length or at a time mutually agreed upon. The focus group gathering lasted up to 2 hours as well. Each participant could terminate the interview at any time and subsequently reschedule or drop from the study without explanation. Should a participant withdraw from the study, all audiotapes and transcripts would be destroyed. Each participant was informed at each interview session that they could refuse to answer any question, talk about any topic, or end the interview session whenever they wished. The interview ended if the participant appeared to be growing fatigued. No invasive procedures were included in the study. There were no alternative procedures of lesser risk than the interview format. The audio transcripts were destroyed once the transcription process was completed and a written record was produced and the participant was confident that the written transcript accurately reflected his comments during the interview. There were no other known risks/discomforts associated with participating in this study.

Benefits of Research

As mentioned previously, we know the teaching profession is losing some of the most talented and experienced A/A male teachers to retirement, with few college graduates entering the profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on A/A
men in K-12 education. Also, this study contributes to this dialogue and offers strategies to A/A males that will assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession. I incorporated a variety of methods to uncover the underlying meaning or structure of these perceptions in this phenomenological study. I examined the perceptions of A/A male teachers through a qualitative interview design, individual interviews, and a focus group study.

Confidentiality of Data

Confidentiality was maintained for all participants at all times. The only people who had access to the responses were the principal investigator and student investigator. I did not share information from this study with anyone else and kept all information confidential. Confidentiality was maintained by carefully storing the audiotapes in a secure, locked file cabinet located in my home office.

I transcribed the audio recordings. The audio recordings of the interviews and focus group were erased from the voice recorder after the transcripts were completed. Transcripts were also stored in a confidential manner, as was electronic material, which was saved on an external media storage device and again stored in a locked file cabinet located in my home office. During transport, all notes, transcripts, voice recorder, and tapes were kept in my locked briefcase. At the completion of the study, the principal investigator will keep the interview transcripts in a locked cabinet in his office for a minimum of 3 years.

All participants in the study signed an informed consent for participation prior to becoming involved in the study. Each participant was informed that the study would be
used for academic purposes only. When the data were transcribed, each participant was given a pseudonym, so that other individuals who viewed the data would be unaware of his actual identity.

Steps were taken to protect each subject’s identity. This involved the use of pseudonyms for each participant such as “Teacher 1,” “Teacher 2,” and so on. Gender and grade level were not identified. Each teacher was educated about the fact that he was free to depart from the study at any point, and an explanation of the data collection and storage process was provided. Upon conclusion of the study, the data were stored on a CD that I transported to WMU. Federal regulations require that data be maintained in a locked file in the Primary Investigator’s office or in the University Archive for at least 3 years after the study closes.

Each participant received a $25 gift card as a way to thank each of them for their time and participation at the conclusion of this study. It was my hope that each participant would gain from contributing to the existing knowledge base and may gain some therapeutic benefit from narrating their stories (Frank, 1995).

Data Analysis

This section describes the data organization, analysis, and bias reduction. It must be remembered that the strategies of data collection and analysis are sequential and were ongoing throughout the study.

The interviews and field notes were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. Next, the data were checked for accuracy by listening and comparing it to the transcribed notes. The data were merged into NVivo8 for qualitative data analysis. Each
audiotape was transcribed and then destroyed. Transcribed notes and collected demographics were kept within a locked cabinet at all times, except when they were being analyzed.

Following qualitative research convention, all data were recorded anonymously and remain confidential. To ensure confidentiality of respondents, each respondent was given a label number and at no time were participants identified by their given name. The data were recorded and categorized. After interviewing each participant, the research developed a biographical portrait of each individual. Biographical portraits were analyzed by the investigator for each research question.

This analysis provided insight into the ways in which A/A male teachers perceive themselves. I also conducted a cross-case analysis of how A/A males from different categories enter into and experience the K-12 teaching profession, I explored A/A males’ experiences to see how those experiences impacted their decision to select K-12 education as a profession, and I explored A/A males’ experiences as K-12 teachers and how those experiences either fostered or detracted from retaining them in the profession.

The Researcher

As I embarked on the first major research project of my career as a researcher, I looked for materials that would help me through some common obstacles in qualitative research. This material outlined those problems and offered some solutions from one researcher’s perspective. Assistance with the use of theory and how to integrate it with data was helpful. It was important that I understood the issues that might arise from being a simultaneous researcher and participant, and how to represent participants with integrity
and authenticity. This methodological piece offered suggestions for novice researchers, such as myself, as I embarked on my journey as a qualitative scientist.

As an adult A/A, I have watched the struggles our A/A male youth experience in society today. Many have limited or no male influence in their life from home to school. This study follows my heart as I want all students to be successful, especially A/A males. Having African American male teachers as role models is a step in the right direction to assist our A/A adolescent males. Through this study, themes revealed the necessary path for districts to take in order to recruit and train young graduating A/A males to “pass it forward” in the area of teaching.

I studied 14 A/A male teachers in various places in their careers. Each participant is an A/A male teacher educator with 0–9 years experience, 10-19 years experience, or 20 or more years of experience. My research determined how these teachers define and describe their experiences.

As exciting and interesting as this research is, I anticipate there may be issues with which I, as a novice researcher, may find myself struggling. For support, I turned to my mentors and books for answers, and, when all else failed, I tried to come up with a satisfactory answer on my own.

Summary of Methodology

The problem statement and purpose of this dissertation was to examine the under-represented A/A male educator to learn more about his experiences, which may provide greater insight into why representation by this group is so low. At the same time, acknowledgement of the multicultural classroom, which creates a demand for teachers
who are aware of cultural differences within the student population affecting learning styles, behavior mannerisms, and relationships, with school and home creating an environment conducive to learning and thinking, was also reviewed (Haberman & Post, 1990).

The research framework focused on four questions that were addressed in this study. Validation of the study was supported by research showing that by the year 2010, 38% of school children are expected to be minority students. More than half of those students live in nine states, including Michigan (Haberman & Post, 1990). I hope that the study will help educators develop a better understanding of why A/A male teachers choose to select and remain in K-12 education as teachers.

The review of literature was extensive and informative. I began by gathering data on the current state of teacher education and teacher education reforms. Additional literature was provided on preparing teachers for multicultural classrooms, defining and providing basic assumptions of multicultural education to educators, meeting the challenges of classroom diversity, and the impact on court rulings on multicultural education (Haberman & Post, 1990).
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter begins with the purpose of the study followed by the recruitment process, participant characteristics and profiles, data analysis, addressing the exploratory questions, findings applied to the research and focus group questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings from this study.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the experiences of A/A male teachers and why they chose teaching as a profession and career. In particular, the study concentrated on what factors motivated this select group of A/A males to enter, stay, or disaffiliate from the teaching profession. By capturing their personal experiences about the various roads that led them to become K-12 public education teachers, I was able to identify theories and strategies that may facilitate the development of new and innovative programs to entice more A/A males to enter the teaching profession. Conducting a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study in helping to understand the psycho-social world of A/A teachers. The teachers themselves were able to provide the most insight into the experiences they have had before and during their career. No one other than those experiencing this phenomenon of being an A/A male teacher can truly describe this experience.
Choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project since it is rarely practical, efficient, or ethical to study whole populations. Part of the concern was realizing the actual size of the sample to be studied. Literature supported by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (in press), Marshall and Rossman (1996), and others suggest sample size and sampling are not issues in qualitative research and that sampling does not explain what is undertaken in qualitative inquiries. Marshall and Rossman also expressed that because most qualitative research does not involve making statistical generalizations, sample size and sampling is irrelevant. Because qualitative researchers typically are not interested in making generalizations to underlying populations, it is not unusual for qualitative researchers to conclude that sampling is not an issue (Marshall & Rossman, 1996). Yet, sampling is also important in interpretive research because many qualitative studies, if not most, involve making generalizations. Specifically, qualitative researchers tend to make analytic generalizations (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which are “applied to wider theory on the basis of how selected cases ‘fit’ with general constructs” (Curtis, Gesler, Smith, & Washburn, 2000, p. 1002). That being said, there are a few methodologists that have provided sample size guidelines for several of the most common qualitative research designs and techniques. Specifically, Creswell (2002) and Morse (1994) have recommended, with respect to phenomenological studies, sample size ranges from 6 to 10 participants. Therefore, although this research study has only 7 participants, the researcher is relieved the sample size falls within prior methodologists’ sample size guidelines.

Three exploratory questions helped to determine appropriate study methodology (Yin, 2003). The first question asked, What are the beliefs of A/A male teachers that
contributed to the underrepresentation of A/A male teachers? The second question asked, What are the lived experiences of A/A male teachers that may have influenced their behavior to go into the teaching field? The last question asked, What factors, or conditions, contributed to the decision of A/A male teachers to enter, stay, and/or disaffiliate from the teaching profession?

Four specific questions provided the structure and focus for the current study, which are derived from my purpose of study. The first question asked, How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications (years in teaching) perceive their K-12 teaching experiences? The second question asked, How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications perceive the reason they went into the teaching profession? Are they different? If so, what are those differences and the reason they decided to go in the profession and make it a career? The third question asked, Do these selected A/A male teachers perceive the need for A/A males? The final question asked was, How do selected A/A male teachers perceive their value and accomplishments as A/A male teachers in the classroom? To provide answers to these questions, the researcher used the NVivo8 software system, which assisted in searching for meaning in text and audio files. This software assisted in making sense of the data collected by providing a sophisticated workspace that allowed me to work through material, discovering patterns, identifying themes, gleaning insight, and, ultimately, delivering informed findings.
Recruitment

After receiving gender and ethnic data from various local districts within a Midwestern county in the state of Michigan, I discovered that there were 14 eligible participants. Based on this information, the collection of data started by identifying all 14 African American male teachers located in three Midwestern school districts located within the state of Michigan. The participants were organized into one of three categories/stages in their teaching career: 0–9 years of teaching, 10–19 years of teaching, and 20 or more years of teaching. The researcher began the process by contacting Human Resource administrators in the three districts identified and requested they provide their A/A male teacher names and e-mail addresses. Afterwards, each participant was sent a letter requesting his participation in the study.

Each consenting participant received an e-mail for review prior to making a decision whether he would participate in the study. If the respondent decided to participate, he was asked to sign the consent form and e-mail it back to me. Upon receipt of the signed consent agreement, I sent a follow-up e-mail confirming the date, time, and location of the interview. When the interview was scheduled, and prior to the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the consent form with the participant and answered any questions he had.

To ensure the confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were provided to each participant according to the following scheme: “Teacher 1,” “Teacher 2,” and “T1,” “T2,” and so forth. Numbers were used to identify the audiotapes in order to protect the participants’ identity. Any participant quotes used by the researcher were not identified
except by using “Teacher 1,” or “Teacher 2,” or by the word “teacher” (i.e., “According to one teacher . . .”; “Five teachers acknowledge that . . .”; etc.). The researcher did not link the responses to participants, and generalizations were made to each query based upon general themes that emerged from the interview.

Participant Characteristics and Profiles

The demographic characteristics of the participants were diverse in age, colleges attended, and years of teaching experience. Of the 14 participants contacted, 7 (or 50%) agreed to participate. Two (29%) of the 7 participants currently teach in a suburban school district. The remaining 5 (or 71%) participants teach in an urban school district. Four (57%) of the participants held an advanced degree.

Teacher 1 teaches middle school social studies. He has been teaching for over 30 years. Teacher 2 teaches high school technology and business courses and has been teaching between 20 and 30 years. Teacher 3 teaches high school world history and economics and has less than 10 years of teaching experience. Teacher 4 teaches high school health and physical education. He has been teaching between 10 and 20 years. Teacher 5 teaches elementary education and has over 20 years of teaching experience. Teacher 6 teaches high school health and physical education and has between 10 and 20 years of experience. Lastly, Teacher 7 teaches high school physical education and has been teaching for over 30 years.

Of the seven participants interviewed, one (14%) has been teaching 0–9 years of teaching, three (43%) have been teaching for 10–19 years, and three (43%) have been teaching for 20 or more years. The average number of years in teaching was 18.71 years.
The participants’ years in teaching by category, school level, and content area taught are visually displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Participant School Level, Years of Experience, and Content Area Taught*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Years of Exp</th>
<th>Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>SS/Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Business/Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SS/Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>MS/HS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Physical Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2nd grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Physical Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Physical Ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

The major themes that developed from this study are discussed from the perspectives of the participants. The principal researcher recognized biases and the need to interpret the data not from the researcher’s perspective, but from the view of the participants.

Coding data and drawing out major themes helped to interpret the data in an informative manner. Initial coding consisted of circling certain words or expressions that were frequently mentioned by the participants as they were interviewed. It was also
helpful to interpret the overall phenomena under study and to describe in detail the essence of what the participants related in regard to being an A/A teacher. The process of member checking was an essential element in this regard to make sure there was proper accounting for the actual perspectives of the participants. This method helped to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. This was important to the phenomenological nature of this study. Therefore, coding themes and words from the individual interviews and putting all of the data together were essential to the interpretation of the data.

As the researcher, I utilized the NU*DIST program, which allowed me to categorize the data and identify recurring themes that occurred during the participant’s interview. In addition to this, I used the NVivo8 program to assist in analyzing, shaping, and managing the data generated from this research project. The transcribed interviews were printed and then analyzed through a multi-step process. The first step in the data analysis process was listening to the audio recordings of each interview in its entirety to gain a general understanding of the collected data. The second step involved reading each transcribed interview to gain further understanding of the data collected. The third step was to highlight statements or words made by each participant that had significant relevance to the proposed research questions and the experience of each participant as an A/A teacher. Each transcript was then downloaded to a qualitative data analysis system, NVivo 8, to assist in further data analysis. The highlighted words and statements from the transcripts were then divided into categories based upon the interview questions that were asked of participants and how they related to the exploratory questions, research questions, and the conceptual framework.
Before I could identify themes and subthemes, I needed to establish an operational definition of what would constitute a theme or common characteristic. I also had to take into consideration the need to give a degree of value to each of them as well. How would I reconcile a characteristic or experience that was evident in all participants, but at a low level, against a factor that was present in only two participants, but was very significant for them? I decided the best way to proceed would be to sort each common characteristic by the degree of evidence among the participants. To this end, I decided that only common characteristics present in at least four out of the seven participants (57% response ratio) would constitute a “theme,” and that I would provide a narrative only to the theme that appeared to be at a strong or moderate (3 out of 7 participants, or 43%) level of evidence and exclude those that appeared to have low or no evidence among participants. All themes, subthemes, and other characteristics and experiences identified by the participants are reported in Tables 2 through 6, along with their level of evidence. Additionally, if there were any serendipitous discoveries, they too were identified regardless of the response ratio due to the nature of the discovery.

Addressing the Exploratory Questions

In an effort to explore and describe beliefs, lived experiences, and factors or conditions that influenced participants, answers to the exploratory questions were sought from each participant in the various categories. The exploratory questions focused the research on the intrinsic (beliefs) and extrinsic (influences) factors for each participant. The goal was to gain an in-depth understanding from each participant to better understand
why he chose teaching as a profession. This information generated a broader understanding of the phenomenon of A/A males selecting teaching as a career.

Teachers were selected from three career categories: 0–9 years as a teacher, 10–19 years as a teacher, and 20 years or more as a teacher. To provide answers to each question, in this section I will restate each question and then provide summative data in table form.

The first exploratory question is: What are the beliefs of A/A male teachers that contributed to the underrepresentation of A/A male teachers? Table 2 provides answers to this first question.

Table 2

*Participants’ Beliefs About Underrepresented A/A Male Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief About Underrepresentation</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>Group Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Patience</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pay</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>ellar</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Disrespected</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Valued</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Current A/A Teachers</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Confidence</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Commitment</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Values</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Totals Subthemes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In examining Table 2, it appears that the participants involved held similar beliefs about why A/A male teacher representation is so low regardless of their number of years in the profession. Three strong themes throughout their responses to this question were *low pay, lack of patience,* and *feeling disrespected.* Further, there seems to be an underlying theme from the participants’ responses that indicates the lack of feeling “valued” and the current lack of A/A male teachers as to why they do not choose teaching as a profession. Listed below are participants’ data references that support this finding.

*Low pay.* All participants’ responses indicated low pay is a major contributor as to why A/A males do not go into the teaching profession. Teacher 4 shared:

> I believe that they feel that the pay is low. There’s not a status in being a teacher. It is what it is. I think once they move on, they want to feel that they’re doing something that’s more lucrative and where someone is going to say that their job is more important than just being a teacher.

With so many career opportunities available today for A/A males that are more lucrative, the teaching profession is not the career path chosen.

*Lack of patience.* Teacher 5 stated, “Lack of patience in not wanting to deal with kids. And it’s unfortunate because all children are not bad.” Teacher 6 supported this statement by stating, “I think children have changed so much that most black males don’t have the patience to deal with students today.”

*Feeling disrespected.* Teacher 5 commented, “As educators we feel disrespected not only by the districts we work for but also the community and parents and what people need to understand is we’re people too; we’re parents too. We have problems just like you do.”
The final six subthemes related to (1) not feeling valued, (2) lack of current A/A male teachers, (3) lacking confidence, (4) lack of commitment, (5) not having values, and (6) not feeling supported, which drew comments from less than one-third of the participants or only one participant.

*Not feeling valued.* Teacher 4 shared, “In other countries teachers are valued as much as doctors, lawyers, whomever, but here you’re just a teacher.”

*Lack of current A/A male teachers.* Teacher 2 stated, “Guys I talk to now that are 25-30 years old don’t want to teach and want to get out into corporate America. They hear the horror stories and say forget it.” Teacher 6 also agreed that “I don’t think black males choose teaching as a career because they don’t see enough of us now.”

*Lacking confidence.* Teacher 1 indicated, “I think a lot of black Americans, male students anyway, don’t have the confidence in themselves.”

*Lack of commitment.* Teacher two shared, “A lot of guys are in to what they want to do and making a whole lot of money and there is not a lot of commitment today.”

*Not having values.* Teacher 3 shared, “I think losing our values and morals has done great harm attributing to the breakdown of family and society whereas our young don’t really want to follow therefore they don’t want to teach.”

The second exploratory question is: What are the lived experiences of A/A male teachers that may have influenced their behavior to go into the teaching field? Table 3 indicates responses of each participant and their lived experiences and what may have influenced them to select teaching as a career. Again, in some situations, more than one related support was referenced and is indicated below.
Table 3

Participants’ Lived Experiences and the Influence(s) on Selecting Teaching as a Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lived Experiences &amp; Influence on Selecting Teaching as a Career</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>Group Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring program</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to work with kids</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It chose me</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members as educators</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career assessment tool</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Totals Subthemes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows a variety of influences for the participants and years in the profession again does not seem to make a difference. All seven participants identified they wanted to work with students. Family members as educators and coaches appeared to be the most influential variables for three of the seven participants. Two participants indicated that the profession chose them. There seems to be a recurring theme with the participants that centers around the importance of relationships and the connections that are built. Listed below are participants’ data that support this contention.

Wanted to work with students. Teacher 1 shared he wanted to give students a different perspective. Teacher 2 indicated, “I wanted to work with older males. Especially black males. They lack structure and guidance. It’s not that they lack ability—they have all the ability in the world.”
*Family members as educators.* Teacher 2 shared, “My mother was influential; she used to help me with my lesson plans.”

*Coaches.* Teacher 4 indicated:

The one thing about it I was actually guided that way by my head football coach in college, because he saw something in me said we need to go into education and become a coach, so because of that that was my only avenue is to go through the educational program.

Teacher 7 supported this notion by stating, “My coaches in high school. I respected them as they were teachers and coaches and they were white. They were very influential.”

*It chose me.* Teacher 3 shared:

I say that it chose me because it was something that I was able to excel at and be successful at as professional without really having the desire. So when I say it chose me, I think it was purpose and destiny for me to end up where I was so it chose me. I didn’t choose it. I accepted an assignment which gave me fulfillment.

Teacher 6 shared similar thoughts with

It chose me. I originally wanted to be a chef but there were no schools around for me to attend that I could afford. I also wanted to coach. So I decided to be a teacher where it would allow me to coach.

As indicated in Table 3, the desire to work with youth, the career selecting them, wanting to coach, and having teachers as mentors that influenced their career path all are reasons why these A/A male teachers chose to select teaching as a career. When you look at their comments, you again see a “relationship” to the earlier exploratory question responses.

The final exploratory question is: What factors, or conditions, contributed to the decision of A/A male teachers to enter, stay, and/or disaffiliate from the teaching profession? This question is very similar to the second exploratory question as are the responses given by the participants. Years of experience in the profession does not seem
to play a factor. Teachers 1, 3, 5, and 7 all indicated a former teacher was influential in their decision to enter and remain in the profession. Teachers 1, 2, and 7 all shared they saw teaching as a positive challenge, they enjoy watching the growth of students over time, and they want to make a difference with our youth. Teachers 4 and 7 both commented that their high school coaches were influential for them.

Many stated they teach to make a difference as the reason they have stayed in the profession, and no participants identified they had any intentions of leaving the profession. Again, a recurring theme here is with each variable (former teacher, coach, or parent) comes a relationship that was established and nurtured over time that impacted the decision of each of the participants.

Again, I would speculate that a strong relationship existed between the participant and the factor or contributor that supported their decision to teach. These factors/contributors align with the conceptual framework that links both intrinsic (beliefs) and extrinsic (influence) motivational factors to their lived experiences, values, and accomplishments.

Findings Applied to Research Questions

The initial round of data analysis revealed several similar themes from the open-ended, one-on-one interviews. Upon further review, it became quite obvious that the data collected identified six major themes:

1. The majority of participants agreed there is a shortage of African American male teachers.
2. Working with students was one of the major reasons participants chose teaching as a profession.

3. All participants indicated that serving as a mentor and building relationships are critical components for being effective teachers.

4. A former teacher, coach, or family member influenced the participants’ decision to go into the profession.

5. The participants believe African American males lack the patience to be teachers.

6. All participants indicated low pay as being a major contributor as to why African American males choose not to become teachers.

The following section provides a detailed analysis of each research question.

Research Question 1

The first research question is: How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications (years in teaching) perceive their K-12 teaching experiences?

According to the data, there are a number of similar elements that impact the bond of A/A male teachers, regardless of their number of years in teaching. All participants indicated they enjoy sharing their experiences with students, serve as positive role models and wouldn’t change a thing about their career choice. Five of the seven participants indicated they see themselves as mentors. Table 4 lists participant information that supports these data.
Table 4

Perception of A/A Male Teacher K-12 Teaching Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Teaching Experiences</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>Group Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing experiences with students</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See themselves as mentors</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive role models</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wouldn’t change a thing</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence youth</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Totals Subthemes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sharing experiences with students.* Teacher 1 commented:

Many times I talk to my kids being from Louisiana as I definitely have a different viewpoint and being the age I am which is 60 and coming through the era in which I did gave me a lot of experiences and a lot of opinions about certain things and I share that with the kids and they appreciate and enjoy that. I always tell the kids, it was nothing for me to walk downtown in my hometown and there were the Klan’s in their little uniforms standing on the street corners passing out literature so I grew up with that and I relayed that to the kids.

Teacher 5 shared, “So there are a lot of experiences I have personally that I can relate to, with what these kids are going through.”

*Wouldn’t change a thing.* Teacher 1 shared, “I wouldn’t even change the same path I took to get here. That path made me the person I am today.” Teacher 2 agreed with Teacher 1 by stating, “Couldn’t see myself doing anything else. You know you have chosen the right profession in education when you go away for spring break or some
break and you miss the students.” Teacher 3 commented, “I would have chosen it first; wouldn’t change anything about my career path.”

Summarizing the data gathered show an expressed desire by the participants to continue to influence youth in a positive way through teaching, mentoring, listening, supporting, and having a *relationship* with them.

*Research Question 2*

The second research question is: How do selected A/A male teachers from three separate classifications perceive the reason they went into the teaching profession? Are they different? If so, what are those differences and the reason they decided to go in the profession and make it a career?

According to the data, all participants, except for one, cited a parent, teacher, or coach that influenced their decision to go into the teaching profession. Another indicated he wanted to be a chef, although his father stressed to him the importance of getting an education. Two spoke of the profession choosing them and having the desire to work with youth. Their responses were not so different from each other.

This question aligns with the second exploratory question where responses have been identified earlier in Table 3. There were no apparent differences observed between the three categories of A/A teachers regarding the reason why they went into the teaching field except that one participant experienced an A/A male educator both in K-12 and also in college. This scenario was an extremely rare case among participants. What continues to be a recurring theme among participants is the establishment of *relationships* made between the participants and those influencing their decision to teach.
Research Question 3

The third research question posed was: Are these selected A/A male teachers satisfied with their careers? Do they perceive the need for A/A males to serve as a teacher?

The first part of this question also aligns with the second exploratory question. All seven participants indicated they were satisfied with their career choice and would not change a thing. Two indicated the profession chose them, and all seven participants stated they could not see themselves doing anything else. With regard to their perception of the need for A/A males as teachers, they all confirmed it is absolutely necessary that A/A male teachers are represented in the profession. Table 5 lists data that support this contention.

Table 5

Perception of Need of A/A Male Teachers in K-12 Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Need of A/A Male Teachers in K-12 Education</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>Group Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer a different view/perspective</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For society and all to see</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can relate to them</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to look up to</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive role model</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Totals Subthemes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Offer a different view/perspective. Teacher 1 indicated there is a need for A/A male teachers:

Not only for A/A youth but kids in general. It gives them a different view a different perspective of A/A males. If you just read the newspaper and media and a lot of times A/A males are characterized and generalized very poorly and I think being an A/A male in the classroom gives students in general a different view a different perspective in the classroom.

Teacher 6 shared, “All youth need the experience of having a black educator before them whether it be male or female.” Teacher 7 stated, “Blacks have insight that whites can’t and don’t have.”

They can relate to them. Teacher 4 shared it’s important to have A/A male teachers because we have such a large population of A/A male students. It’s one thing to teach a student who’s not from the background/culture, but once again I think it comes down to trust and from my experience a lot of our A/A students want to trust someone that they see, that they can relate to, that probably knows their plight, but I think A/A males would be outstanding teachers because that’s who they are.

Someone to look up to. Teacher 5 communicated he believes A/A men can serve as a buffer, that they can have somebody positive that they can look up to and that can relate to them. Especially, when you see somebody that looks like you, and they feel like you can relate to their experiences.

Positive role model. Teacher 6 shared that All youth need the experience of having a black educator before them whether it be male or female. For our black males, they need positive black male role models. So many of them do not have that influence in their life which I believe is needed. They need someone who can relate to them and identify with their experiences.

Data collected show all seven participants are satisfied with their career choices and believe that there is a need for A/A male teachers.
Research Question 4

The fourth research question is: How do selected A/A male teachers perceive their value and accomplishments as A/A male teachers in the classroom?

All participants indicated there is value in having A/A male teachers in K-12 education and they have pride in what they do. Their value and accomplishments are validated by the relationships they have with their students. Table 6 lists the responses from participants concerning this line of inquiry.

Table 6

Perception of Value as an A/A Male Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Value as an A/A Male Teacher</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>Group Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different viewpoint</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating students fairly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate a fear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who looks like you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Totals Subthemes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 6 show that the participants believe there is great value in having A/A male teachers present in K-12 education. In particular, when triangulating the
data between individual teachers and the perception of value as an A/A male teacher, it appears that sharing a different viewpoint is very important as well as having a better understanding of current A/A males in school. Although not specifically stated, “relationships” are created when focusing on both variables. This theme is critical both in value and in their accomplishments as A/A male teachers.

**Different viewpoint.** Teacher 1 shared:

You give them a different viewpoint a different perspective. Many times I talk to my kids being from Louisiana as I definitely have a different viewpoint and being the age I am which is 60 and coming through the era in which I did gave me a lot of experiences and a lot of opinions about certain things and I share that with the kids and they appreciate and enjoy that.

Teacher 5 offered support by stating, “We have a sense of culture that we can bring to students. Also, background experiences that they might not be exposed to if they’re with my Caucasian counterparts.” Teacher 6 also indicated, “Our experiences are different from others and we can share that with all students, particularly black males.”

**Better understanding.** Teacher 4 shared, “If you see someone that looks like you and once you talk with them I think you’re going to have a chance to interact better. Teacher 7 commented,” Blacks can relate to the students and have a better understanding and insight than whites do.”

**Findings Applied to Focus Group Questions**

The collection of data from focus groups is a process of gathering memories, thoughts, feelings, and personal observations from the unique perspective of the participant, as he or she experienced a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). The descriptive and comparative phenomenological methodology was applied to the data
analysis process (Merriam, 2009). The descriptive approach to analysis allowed me to find themes, patterns, context, and meaning of each dimension. I was fully immersed in the data by conducting a focus group meeting, followed by verbatim transcription of the audio-recorded meeting, coding the data, and thoroughly reading the transcript.

The most vital task for the phenomenological researcher is to identify common themes among the participants’ reports of their experiences (Leedy & Ormond, 2009). After the focus group meeting had been transcribed, I identified statements that related to the topic resulting in similar themes from the individual one-on-one interviews. Although all participants shared commonality among the broad themes, there was slight variation in some of the presented subthemes.

The focus group meeting was semi-structured. Although the researcher followed a semi-structured guide, the participants shared their stories with one another and interacted through open conversation. This interaction shaped the line of discussion during the focus group. Some ideas presented by the participants were also repeated throughout the focus group meeting, offering possible insight into what each participant considered issues of importance.

In order to accurately identify themes and subthemes in qualitative data, the qualitative program NVivo8 was selected to track the passages that were coded; this enabled the researcher to view all similarly coded passages simultaneously, which allowed for comparison and deeper coding. As any new themes emerged, a new code was created for it, and if subsequent answers to different questions or interview answers from different participants indicated a common theme, those answers were placed into already existing codes.
After the focus group interview was fully coded, the researcher began looking at the existing codes and considering how the codes were related, and if they were capable of being grouped into fewer categories. The focus group questions were developed with the intent to get in-depth information regarding the phenomena of A/A male teachers and the motivational factors that influenced them to choose teacher education as a profession. Each question allowed the participant to consider and respond to a different aspect of what the literature on A/A male teachers and the lack of them in K-12 education revealed to be of importance. The following is a review of the participants’ responses from each of the focus group questions followed by a summary of the data.

Focus Group Question 1

The first focus group question was, “Many of you commented that your teacher education program provided the pedagogical knowledge, but did not prepare you for the actual classroom experience working with students. What suggestions do you have to change this within the teacher education programs?” Teacher 5 indicated the college/university he attended has already restructured its teacher education program since he attended to meet the needs of the students. He indicated, “Juniors and seniors come in and work with the teacher and students to determine if this is the field they want to go in.” Additionally, Teacher 5 shared colleges should provide a variety of experiences and exposures for teacher education students in various urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Teacher 4 suggested colleges and universities “bring A/A male professors in to the high schools and teacher education classes in college to talk to the students about their experiences and what they can expect if they choose to go into the teaching profession.”
Teachers 3 and 4 both agreed with Teacher 5 when he stated teacher education students should visit a variety of schools every year they are in the teacher education program to determine if they still want to remain in that particular field of study.

Focus Group Question 2

The second focus group question was, “All of you indicated your professors were well-educated, you learned a lot and that you didn’t have an opinion about not being taught by any A/A professors. However, many of you talked about A/A males are needed because they have a sense of culture and can relate to the students. Why is this so important?” Teacher 1 stated, “A/A males bring a similar perspective and/or experience for the students.” Teacher 4 shared, “When you see it (A/A males as teachers), you (as students) know you can do it.” He also added:

Teachers can be outstanding but if they look like them, then you then you can relate to them (students) and (they say) “I want to be like them” and “The more you see them, the more you gravitate towards them. You say to yourself, I want to see what they are like; I might not like him but I want to see for myself.”

Teacher 3 indicated, “It’s important to have A/A males walk the hallways where students can see them.” Teacher 4 communicated, “Does it matter that A/A males are present, absolutely, but are you of quality?” He continued, “If you are of quality, then color doesn’t matter.”

Focus Group Question 3

The third focus group question is, “Many of you indicated one of the reasons why representation of A/A male teachers in K-12 public education is so low is because A/A
males either lack or don’t have the PATIENCE. What’s meant by this statement and how can it be explained or expounded upon?” All participants asked that I change the word “patience” to “love.” Teacher 3 stated, “Black males haven’t been loved; therefore, they do not know how to love and don’t feel they have any worth.” Teacher 3 continued with, “Because we have not received love, it is hard for us to reciprocate that to others.” Teacher 4 stated, “The problem is they are competing with their family values from home. Students say, I am the man at home and at school I have to become submissive because I am confronted with a black male teacher.” Teacher 5 shared, “The patience level equates to wanting to be around children and having a love for them. With students being young and impressionable, they challenge you.” He continued with, “When you show them love, you have to have the patience to deal with their baggage they bring. You have to build a relationship with your students and their parents.” The participants agreed, in general, that the black family is absent of a father figure at home. They shared the black family does not value education the way it used to. They said our parents used to say that we would do better than them, but things have changed now that “babies are having babies.” The participants believe the black family value system has been destroyed, that we don’t value education anymore and that students today have forgotten about their black history. They also indicated we now have the “first non-church generation,” which they believe is problematic.

**Focus Group Question 4**

The fourth focus group question is, “Many commented on one of the reasons why African American males don’t choose the profession is because the teaching profession is
not VALUED and there is a lack of RESPECT shown. How can we create a paradigm shift in this area?” The participants believe students in high school today don’t know what they want to do when they grow up yet. They said students are still trying to find out who they are. They believe students are already turned off by teachers and think, “I am not going into education because I am not going to have students talk to me the way they do today,” according to Teacher 5. The participants agreed that for value and respect to be shown towards the profession, administrators as leaders need to support and defend their staff. They also indicated that, as educators, they need to make connections with their students. Teacher 3 shared, “You can be hip, educated and deep with the students by being real which will improve the value and respect for teachers.”

Focus Group Question 5

The fifth focus group question is, “Many of you stated that influences that attributed to your going into and staying in the teaching profession were mentoring programs, family of educators, coaches and former teachers, it chose me, always wanted to work with kids, and a career assessment tool taken in college. How important are these influences and how can we bottle it up and sell it to increase the representation?” Teacher 3 was very passionate about this question. He indicated, “We need to find a platform and preach it and make people listen to it. We must go to their homes. If they see that we can be smart, intelligent and well-accomplished, then they too can believe they can do it.” He added, “If you want something bad enough, you have to own it, take it over and speak about it.” All participants agreed A/A males together need to get out there and preach this message and present it to potential high school and college students. Teacher 4 stated,
“We must continue to influence and be positive role models for all students, but particularly African American males.” He added, “Districts and superintendents need to come together to see how important this initiative is and develop programs and a platform to discuss it.” They indicated all positive influences are important and we need to do whatever it takes to promote the profession. Teacher 5 shared, “Teachers need to be a part of what students bring to school each day, but many teachers don’t want to be a part of it. Most teachers just want to teach and if the students don’t get it, it’s not their problem.” He added, “We as teachers need to reach out to colleges to discuss the issues and need for African American male teachers.” Teacher 4 agreed by stating we “need to reach out to our fraternity brothers and bring them in to talk about teacher education as a profession to our students.”

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to narrow the gap in the research by investigating the lived experiences of A/A male teachers to see what motivational factors (intrinsic/extrinsic) influenced them to choose teaching as a profession. The results indicated that each of the factors listed in the purpose of this study did impact the reasons why A/A males chose teacher education as a career.

The data from the focus group revealed that each A/A male participant came from a different walk of life, but that they all viewed one another as brothers of the same calling because they all shared many of the same experiences, hardships, victories, and triumphs. These men felt as if the struggles that are prevalent for A/A men could be
understood only by other A/A men and that in order to increase representation of A/A
male teachers, they must unite and begin to speak out about it.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of A/A male teachers and obtain a greater understanding as to the motivational factors that influenced these professionals to go into the field of teaching. More specifically, this study identified four purposes of study. These purposes were concerned with obtaining greater understanding about (a) the perception of A/A teachers concerning their K-12 teaching experiences when disaggregated by the number of years of teaching, (b) their perception of why they went into teaching when disaggregated by the number of years of teaching, (c) their perception of the need for A/A male teachers, and (d) their perception of value and accomplishments as A/A male teachers in the classroom.

In this final chapter, I will use the four purposes of study as a framework for providing answers to the major questions this study originally sought to address. These new findings will serve as a basis for further inquiry as presented in the recommendations for further study.

Summary of Findings

This phenomenological study relied upon personal interviews and a focus group session with the 7 A/A teachers who taught in a Midwestern county that consisted of 18
urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Of the 14 A/A teachers that worked in these school districts, seven (or 50%) agreed to participate in this study.

This study relied upon the conceptual framework developed by Maslow (1970) and Herzberg et al. (1959). This framework served as the foundation in the development of an instrument that consisted of 20 questions designed to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that may have influenced A/A male teachers to go into the field of teaching.

This study attempted to provide answers to the following four major purposes of study. In this regard, each purpose statement was restated and a corresponding answer was provided to give information that suggests how the findings in this study support or contradict the relevant literature. In several instances, this study will identify new findings that previous research has failed to investigate.

Purpose #1: What was the perception of A/A teachers concerning their K-12 teaching experiences disaggregated by the number of years of teaching?

The findings in this study strongly suggest that A/A teachers overwhelmingly like their roles as a teacher, even when disaggregated by the number of years of teaching. Intrinsic motivational factors such as enjoying teaching, being interested in teaching, seeing teaching youth as a challenge, and that there is purpose in teaching are evidenced by the participant responses, as these teachers readily admitted that they believe they (a) serve as positive role models, and (b) wouldn’t change a thing about their career choice. They also indicated they (c) see themselves as mentors, (d) enjoy sharing their experiences with their students, and (e) believe they have the opportunity to provide a positive influence on A/A male students as well as others. One respondent indicated,
Being from Louisiana I definitely have a different viewpoint and being the age I am which is 60 and coming through the era in which I did give me a lot of experiences and a lot of opinions about certain things and I share that with the kids and they appreciate and enjoy that. I always tell the kids, it was nothing for me to walk downtown in my hometown and there were the Klan’s in their little uniforms standing on the street corners passing out literature. So I grew up with that and I relayed that to the kids.

Another respondent shared, “So there are a lot of experiences I have personally that I can relate to, with what these kids are going through.”

These findings are supported by Lynn et al. (2002), who suggested that increasing the representation of A/A male teachers could allow for more experiences to be shared, and improve the hope that A/A male teachers can make a difference. Lynn et al. also asserted that African American male teachers possess a commitment to teaching African American children, particularly males who live in the difficult circumstances, because in many ways they see themselves in the students they teach. Brown and Butty (1999) indicated it is not just about minority students. African American male teachers are also important in the classroom for non-minority students. This change would alter the negative perceptions and stereotypes of A/A males held by both minorities and non-minorities.

Although this study supports the previous research findings, it does, however, add to the existing body of literature about the importance of having A/A male teacher representation for all students, especially minority students. It is noted that the responses by the participants regarding their perception of their teaching experience, as disaggregated by the number of years of teaching, are similar. They all indicated they enjoyed sharing their experiences with their students; they see themselves as positive role models and wouldn’t change a thing. Although previous research did not address this
topic, the rationale for looking at the perception of the participants’ teaching experiences, disaggregated by the number of years in teaching, was to see whether veteran teachers’ experiences were different from new teachers. I had assumed that this information would be different; however, the similar responses by participants show years of experience does not matter when looking at their teaching experiences.

Purpose #2: What was the perception of A/A male teachers as to why they went into teaching disaggregated by the number of years of teaching?

According to the data collected, all participants, except for one, cited a parent, teacher, or coach as the person that influenced their decision to go into the teaching profession. This finding supports the earlier studies conducted by Kimbrough and Salomone (1993), who highlighted the influence and support of significant others as foremost factors in the career choices of African Americans. Additionally, Leong (1995) indicated African America parents, specifically, serve as major influences that define the career choices of A/A youngsters.

This notion is also supported by Alexander and Miller (1989) and Foster (1989), where they found that for many A/A children A/A teachers represent surrogate parent figures, disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and advocates. Irvine (1988) observed that the role of the teacher in the lives of students of color is far more important than the teacher’s role in the lives of middle-class Euro-American youth, because education is not cultivated at home for students of color like it is for Euro-Americans. Many lack the structural, social, and academic support needed to survive, which is what Alexander and Miller and Foster stated above.
The belief that all students of color can and will learn is a representative characteristic of many teachers of color, and the potential to have a positive impact on the lives of students of color contributes to their motivations to teach (Nieto, 2003). As a result of this enduring hope and promise, Lynn (1999) found many African American teachers hold themselves and others accountable for the educational development of every African American child. According to Nieto (2003),

Hope is the essence of teaching, and these teachers demonstrate hope in many ways. They have hope and faith in their students, in their own abilities as teachers, in trusted colleagues and new teachers, in the promise of public education, and in the profession of teaching. (p. 16)

These findings, which identified a parent, teacher, or coach as influential in their determination to enter the teaching profession are consistent with the current literature. Although previous studies failed to consider whether the number of years of teaching would alter the perception of teachers regarding why they went into teaching, this study highlights the need for continued study in this area.

Purpose #3: What was the perception of A/A male teachers and the need for A/A males to serve as teachers?

The findings in this study revealed, overwhelmingly, that A/A male participants felt it absolutely necessary that A/A male teachers are represented in the profession. One respondent indicated:

There is a need for African American male teachers, not only for A/A youth but kids in general. It gives them a different view a different perspective of A/A males. If you just read the newspaper and media and a lot of times A/A males are characterized and generalized very poorly and I think being an A/A male in the classroom gives students in general a different view a different perspective in the classroom.

Another respondent shared that
All youth need the experience of having a black educator before them whether it be male or female. For our black males, they need positive black male role models. So many of them do not have that influence in their life which I believe is needed. They need someone who can relate to them and identify with their experiences.

The participants shared intrinsic comments like A/A male teachers can relate to students, serve as positive role models, offer a different viewpoint or perspective, and, by being present, give students someone to look up to. This notion is supported by Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002), who indicated teachers of color tend to believe that they have the power to influence students’ self-perceptions and influence their aspirations beyond the immediate limitations of their environments, supporting my notion that the belief of being present for all students is important.

Maylor (2009) also expressed the need for an increase of A/A male teachers as role models, as they will make a connection with all students, particularly minority students. Maylor continued by stating, “Minority student behavior, aspirations and achievement will improve with having African American male teachers as role models” (p. 139). Cooper (1892/1988) supported Maylor’s assertion by indicating that A/A teachers are “particularly important in the lives of inner city children who may otherwise lack daily contact with educated, intelligent, successful Blacks” (p. 123). Sanders (1999) explained that there are two major areas in which A/A male teachers provide the greatest impact within the school system. They “add to the gender diversity in the school environment, and serve as role models and father figures for both A/A males and females” (p. 39).

Martinez (1991) contended that the lack of minority teachers to provide ethnic role models in schools could “contribute to the underachievement of minority students,
provide little incentive for minority students to advance in school and negatively affect their career and life aspirations” (p. 24). My data strongly support the need for increased focus on mentoring, role modeling, and connecting with A/A males at an earlier age to gain and keep their interest throughout their elementary and secondary school years.

Purpose #4: What was the perception of A/A male teachers and their value and accomplishments of having A/A male teachers in the classroom?

When examining A/A male participants’ perception through an intrinsic lens, it appears that participating A/A male teachers believe that there is value in having A/A male teachers in K-12 education and that they have pride in what they do as teachers. This is clearly illustrated in an observation made by one respondent who stated, “We have a sense of culture that we can bring to students. Also, background experiences that they might not be exposed to if they’re with my Caucasian counterparts.” Another respondent also indicated, “Our experiences are different from others and we can share that with all students, particularly black males.”

The participants also identified A/A male teachers as positive role models because of (a) the similar cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds that they bring to A/A students, (b) the different viewpoint they bring in contrast to the majority culture, and (c) a belief that their value is validated by the relationships they have with their students. The literature supports the argument that A/A male teachers are critical to the educational and social development of A/A children, especially boys (Brown & Butty, 1999; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Dee, 2003; Futrell, 2004; Irvine, 1988; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; King, 1993a; Kunjufu, 2001; Lewis, 2006; Milner & Howard, 2004; Stewert & England, 1989; Wilder, 2000). Davis and Jordan (1994) added clarity to this argument by stating, “The
increased presence of committed and successful black male adults in educational settings
is essential for enhancing black boys’ academic and social development” (p. 571). King
(1993a) agreed that A/A male teachers have personal experiences as well as knowledge
that can be of enormous value and can be shared with A/A students. This is better
illustrated in his following observation:

> African-American teachers are able to communicate with African American
students about the personal value, the collective power and the political
consequences of choosing academic achievement as opposed to failure. Such a
communication process between A/A teachers and students includes A/A
teachers’ ability to involve students in exchanges, which help students to become
empowered and involved in their own education. (p. 118)

Lewis (2006) supported the sentiments of King (1993a) by indicating A/A male
teachers serve as role models that provide an image that is positive and yet something
different from the normal athletes, entertainers, actors, rappers, musicians, and convicted
felons.

These findings support the current literature about perception of A/A male
teachers in a Midwestern county and are consistent with the perception of other A/A male
teachers in the nation. The participants in this study provided valuable information on
why they initially entered the K-12 teaching profession and why they have chosen to stay
in the profession. They shared information that may be invaluable to how teacher
education programs and educational leaders can design, promote, and sustain A/A males
in the teaching profession.

Niklos and Brown (1989) reported that education used to be a respectable career
for African Americans, but three factors have converged to reduce their participation.
These perceptions are grounded on the following notions: (a) fewer (African American
males) are attending college, (b) they do not pass standardized tests at the same rate as other groups (perhaps because of the standardized tests being used), and (c) those (African American males) who attend college are choosing other careers. Although none of the participants identified (a) and (b) above as concerns, they did indicate that many A/A males who attend college are more likely to select other professional careers.

Most of the research participants in this study believed or had heard these same reasons listed as reasons for them not to enter the K-12 teaching profession. In fact, several of the research participants that failed to initially enter the K-12 teaching profession reported having experienced some of those same feelings and thoughts. However, after entering the K-12 teaching field, many of the above cited reasons tended to dissipate. There were two participants who selected other professions prior to selecting teaching as a career. One participant wanted to follow in his father’s footsteps and be a computer technician. However, after meeting with his college advisor and completing and seeing the results of a career assessment tool taken, he decided to change majors. The other participant wanted to be a chef and also coach high school football. When he found out there were no culinary programs available in local schools in his area where he could do both, he decided to change his major to education.

In this study, A/A participants were reluctant to leave once they entered the teaching profession. This finding is contradictory to the findings of Betancourt-Smith (1994), who suggested that minority teachers tend to leave the profession within a few years of entering. When considering the longevity of A/A male teachers in the profession, one respondent made the following observation: “I wouldn’t even change the same path I took to get here. That path made me the person I am today.” Another A/A male teacher
shared the following comment: “I couldn’t see myself doing anything else. You know you have chosen the right profession in education when you go away for spring break or some break and you miss the students.” Lastly, another A/A male teacher commented, “I would have chosen it first and wouldn’t change anything about my career path.” Thus, this study contradicts previously held notions about the tenure of A/A teachers in the teaching profession.

The findings of the study provided some indication that A/A male teachers mattered in the lives of the participants in this study. However, as mentioned in Chapter IV, not a single participant indicated that his positive relationships with A/A male teachers were simply a result of their teachers being Black and male. On the contrary, participants noted that their A/A male teachers employed specific pedagogical practices that helped to foster these positive relationships. The major point illustrated here is that the relationship established between the A/A male teachers and the participants was a matter of pedagogical effort. While I am not saying that Black and male is not important, I contend that neither their blackness, nor their maleness, can stand alone as a take-for-granted aspect in their pedagogy of cultural understanding. African American males often bring a cultural understanding, which enhances their pedagogical development. This may improve their ability to work successfully with A/A students, particularly male (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative research study was limited to the 18 school districts located in three Midwestern counties in the Midwest where there were 14 A/A male teachers that
taught in these counties. Consequently, this study was limited to A/A male teachers in these school districts and was further limited to the 7 (or 50%) of the A/A male teachers who agreed to voluntarily participate in this study. Two of the 7 participants indicated their schedule was too busy to participate in the study; however, both indicated there is a need for more A/A males in K-12 education. Unfortunately, I did not receive a response from 5 of the 7 participants who chose not to participate in the study, although I had contacted them via e-mail three times. The study was further limited to A/A male teachers in these Midwestern school districts and no generalizations are made, or inferred, beyond this population. While this study was limited to the population of A/A male teachers, the data and the literature suggest that similar trends have been found in previous studies that have dealt with this type of population.

While the perceptions of A/A teachers were extremely useful in helping me develop this study, their experiences may not be indicative of all A/A K-12 public education teachers. Therefore, the findings of this study are trustworthy only to teachers in the districts who participated in the study. Finally, this study assumes the responses provided by the participants are accurate and represent a valid representation of their perceptions.

Conceptual Framework

A preliminary conceptual framework helps to define “either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, constructs or variables, and the presumed relationships among them” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 18). A graphic
display of the preliminary and modified conceptual frameworks are included in Appendices A and B.

The preliminary conceptual framework is organized into shapes containing conceptual constructs or entities and arrows indicating the direction of influence between them. In constructing this framework, unidirectional arrows were used to posit a primarily one-way influence, whereas two-directional arrows indicated a reciprocal influence between the constructs or entities. As displayed in the preliminary conceptual framework, the “Motivational Factors” for A/A male teachers are listed at the top of the page as an oblong circle because I wanted to know what factors influenced A/A male participants to select teaching as a career and remain in the profession. Then I have my framework divided into two different boxes of “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” concepts because I needed to see what influences and/or beliefs played a role, if any, in the motivation behind why A/A male participants selected teaching as a career. Next, I have two long octagon shapes identified as “family members, former teachers, and role models” that indicate possible extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors that played a significant role in why A/A male participants chose a career in teaching. Lastly, I have a long oblong square that shows the “Lived Experiences” of my A/A male participants, which displays the consequences of the motivational factors for each A/A male participant. These attributes that I have described have been conceptualized to include the values and accomplishments of each A/A male participant. The two-way arrows reflect the mutual influence between the motivational factors and the predicted outcome.

After having interviewed the participants, I felt the need to make a modification from the initial conceptual framework. At the top of the framework, I have incorporated
an oval with “Lived Experiences” in it. This oval connects to a large triangle with “Motivational Factors” in the middle. At the bottom of the triangle on each point, I have incorporated two more ovals from left to right representing “Extrinsic” and “Intrinsic” factors, respectively. Motivational factors are at the center of the framework because it is the core of those factors that may have influenced A/A male participants to choose teaching as a career. Lived experiences are at the top of the framework because it represents their career and culmination of what influenced and motivated them to select teaching as a career. Both the extrinsic and intrinsic points identify either an influence, or a belief, that may have influenced their motivation to select teaching as a career path.

The initial framework is different from the modified framework in that my focus was most concerned with motivational factors that influenced A/A males to select teaching as a career. The initial framework was established through the earlier findings of Moran et al. (2001), Kimbrough and Salomone, (1993), Leong, (1995), Milner and Howard (2004) and others, which served as a guide for understanding this phenomenon. It was believed that certain motivational factors were either extrinsic or intrinsic as identified by Maslow (1970) and Herzberg et al. (1959). Other shapes were added for such attributes related to family members, or other role models, as a way to identify the types of influences and beliefs that existed for participants. Lived experiences were necessary because there was a need to have greater experiences about one’s lived experience.

As a result of my findings, I felt the need to make an adaptation to the initial framework that from which this study was based upon. I consciously made this change because my research revealed that what was at the core reason why these participants...
selected teaching as a career was somewhat different from what was previously conceptualized. Each point on the triangle has a significant contribution to the motivational factor that is at the center of this research. Naturally, my personal research agenda is to further investigate this phenomenon.

Conclusions

The participants in this study indicated that there is a need for A/A male teachers in K-12 education. One of the major reasons for A/A male teachers, as identified by participants in this study, was that A/A male teachers serve as positive role models and mentors to many. It is evidenced that there is a strong alliance between the participants and the factors that may have supported their decision to go into the teaching profession. These factors (lived experiences, values, and accomplishments) align with the conceptual framework identified in this study. The study revealed that each participant had common experiences, which presumably predestined them for success, based on the supportive measures provided for them throughout their lives. Thus, one might safely conclude that if positive components are prevalent in an individual’s life in their formative years, then the propensity for success is greater.

As attention is given to the need for more A/A male teachers, it becomes apparent that the issue impacts the sociopolitical realities of African American youth, particularly males, in ways that are regularly unnoticed. This was clearly evident by the numerous statements given by the participants in this study. What must be realized as a result of this study and parallel studies is the need for increased representation of A/A male teachers
that are knowledgeable, compassionate, and dedicated so as to provide a positive influence in the classroom, and in society as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study clearly demonstrates that A/A male teachers have sincere desires to contribute to the education of all children, especially to those children that look like them and have had similar cultural and familiar backgrounds. While the research is replete with the declining representation of A/A male teachers in public education schools, I offer several recommendations that will, hopefully, avert this debilitating trend:

1. First of all, it is recommended that this study be replicated. It is suggested that future studies should expand the sample size and include A/A male teachers in other geographical areas. Future studies should also consider A/A teachers in other geographical areas to see if similar results are obtained. Since this study utilized a qualitative research design, it is also suggested that a quantitative design be used to determine whether significant differences exist between the perception of teachers in other geographical areas pertaining to how they perceive their roles as teachers and whether there are certain intrinsic and extrinsic values that may impede their desire to enter the teaching field.

2. It is further recommended that future research studies investigating the paucity of A/A male teachers consider the role universities take to identify and recruit A/A male teachers. A study of this nature should provide relevant findings about the desire and intention of higher education institutions to increase the underrepresentation of A/A male teachers in the teaching profession.
According to Coley and Jenkins (1995), there are many minority students who wish to pursue a career in teaching; however, colleges and universities fail to expose students to a curriculum that is exciting, engaging, and multicultural.

3. It is also recommended that future studies consider the role of state departments of education in the development and implementation of state mentorship programs. In this particular case, further research may reveal, as past research has, that there is a need for state departments of education to provide greater substance to their current mentorship program, particularly with respect to providing greater emphasis on classroom management (Michigan Compiled Laws, Section 38.83a and Section 1526 of the Michigan School Code), instructional strategies (Michigan Compiled Laws, Section 38.83a and Section 1526 of the Michigan School Code), and mentorship (Michigan Compiled Laws, Section 38.83a and Section 1526 of the Michigan School Code).

4. It is also recommended that future studies consider the role professional organizations play in the development of learning opportunities for ethnic groups who are underrepresented in the teaching profession. In this particular case, further research may reveal that professional organizations may need to increase learning and professional development opportunities for A/A teachers who are about to enter the field of teaching. There is a need for professional organizations to be more proactive in the training of all teachers who work in school settings where the vast proportion of students comes from poor and culturally challenging environments. The research is replete with data that
suggest that the vast proportion of A/A male teachers will receive relevant training through their professional organizations. However, there is a need for these institutions to do more. Working closely with teacher training institutions, professional organizations, and local school districts will ensure that, through proper training, these individuals will be more likely to succeed once they accept these challenging positions. Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990) suggested that teachers who are successful teachers of black students view positively the role and use of African culture in teaching students and “recognize that they work in opposition to the very school systems that employ them” (Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990, p. 84). Thus, it is important for local districts to provide relevant professional development and allow staff, particularly underrepresented groups, the opportunity to participate in a variety of teacher trainings and professional organizations that support this cause.

5. It is further recommended that Midwestern school districts examine their policy and procedures concerning the recruitment of underrepresented populations. In this particular case, further research may reveal that school districts take a greater responsibility in the recruitment of underrepresented groups, particularly A/A male teachers. It is further suggested that school districts must take greater ownership in the recruitment and placement of teachers in classrooms that are more representative of students that they are responsible for providing culturally enriched learning experiences. To this end, school districts must include the collective experiences of these
individuals to ensure that their collective experiences are included in ways that would improve and enhance the teaching and learning experiences of all students, particularly the experiences of A/A students.

6. It is recommended that school districts make a more concerted effort to involve underrepresented populations in their existing teacher education programs. In this particular case, further research may suggest that teacher education programs need to provide opportunities for A/A male teachers to engage in critical discourses that enable them to integrate their own experiences and perspectives with relevant education theories and practices that would provide a more relevant and encompassing experience to their teacher training experience.

7. And finally, it is suggested that there is a need to investigate the beliefs held by preservice teachers. Research in this area may indicate whether teacher education programs need to provide opportunities for preservice teachers so that they will be able to critically examine their own beliefs and mental models they hold about A/A males. Findings from this examination may prove essential in helping them to shape their approach to working with A/A students.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Preliminary Conceptual Framework
Responses of K-12 A/A Male Teachers Motivational Factors of Selecting Teacher Education as a Profession

The preliminary conceptual framework is organized into shapes containing conceptual constructs or entities indicating the influence between them. From my perspective, other identifiers in the preliminary conceptual framework represent possible extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors, “Influence” and “Beliefs” that may have influenced the A/A male participants to enter the K-12 teaching profession.

Extrinsic is defined from my perspective as being on the outside or outward. When looking at “Influence” as an extrinsic motivational factor, I will be looking at what external determinants influenced the A/A male teachers to select teaching as a career. Family members and former teachers are examples of extrinsic. For intrinsic, I will be looking for internal determinants. “Beliefs” are an intrinsic motivational factor and defined as belonging to essential nature or within a psychological state in which an individual holds a proposition or premise to be true. An example of intrinsic is family members and role models based upon one’s belief system.
Appendix B

Modified Conceptual Framework
Responses of K-12 A/A Male Teachers Motivational Factors of Selecting Teacher Education as a Profession

At the top of the framework, I have incorporated an oval with “Lived Experiences” in it. This oval connects to a large triangle with “Motivational Factors” in the middle. At the bottom of the triangle on each point, I have incorporated two more ovals from left to right representing “Extrinsic” and “Intrinsic” factors, respectively. Motivational factors are at the center of the framework because it is the core of those factors that may have influenced A/A male participants to choose teaching as a career. Lived experiences are at the top of the framework because it represents their career and culmination of what influenced and motivated them to select teaching as a career. Both the extrinsic and intrinsic points identify either an influence, or a belief, that may have influenced their motivation to select teaching as a career path. Each point on the triangle has a significant contribution to the motivational factor that is at the center of this research.
Appendix C

Initial E-mail Participation Letter
Dear ______________________:

My name is Kelley Peatross and I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled “African American male teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity” in Michigan. So you know, this study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of a Ph.D. in Teaching, Learning and Leadership through Western Michigan University. I am the student investigator in this study (517-256-6514, kelley.a.peatross@wmich.edu or Peatross_ka@elps.k12.mi.us). My Doctoral Committee Chair, Principal Investigator and Supervising Professor is Dr. Walter L. Burt (269-387-1821, walter.burt@wmich.edu).

You are being invited to volunteer as a participant because you are an African American male teacher in K-12 education in one of three career categories currently in your career (1-9 years, 10-19 years or 20 or more years) and within the county of Ingham in Michigan. If you choose to participate in this study, it will include an interview conversation that should last approximately 60-120 minutes that will be conducted after school hours in your school building. This conversation will be recorded by a tape recorder, and I will also be taking written notes.

A follow-up conversation may occur via phone or e-mail of no more than thirty (30) minutes which will allow me to check for the accuracy and clarification of my notes after reviewing the transcripts of our first meeting. Email may also be used to contact you throughout the study, however, clarification of information, as follow-up, will be done by telephone, unless you have a private email account that you are willing to use for this purpose.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing from the study. If you agree to participate in this study, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and school will not appear in the study. Your stories will be referenced by a pseudo name. All transcripts will be kept on a CD-ROM in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator’s office.

If you decide you are interested in learning more about participating in this study, please respond to this email. I will follow up by mailing you a consent form to review. Thereafter, I will e-mail or telephone you to review the next steps and schedule a time for us to go over the consent document together. If you decide to participate, we will then proceed to the interview. I will also send you the interview questions in advance so you can be prepared to respond to them, should you decide to participate. If you have any questions, you may contact either me or Dr. Burt, as indicated above. Thank you for considering possible participation in this study.

Kelley A. Peatross
Appendix D

Initial Consent Document
African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity

You are invited to participate in a study examining “African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity.” This study is being conducted by Kelley Peatross, Director of Human Resources for East Lansing Public Schools and a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Western Michigan University, under the supervision of Dr. Walter L. Burt, her Doctoral Committee Chair. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification. The following information is being provided for you to determine if you wish to participate in this study. In addition, you are free to decide not to participate in this research or to withdraw at anytime without affecting your relationship with the researchers or Western Michigan University.

The primary purpose of this study will be to examine the under-represented A/A male teacher to learn more about their experiences, which may provide greater insight into why representation by this group is so low. This study will examine the under-represented A/A male teachers and their experiences and determine the extent to which those experiences impacted their decision to select K-12 education as a profession. It will examine how A/A males in the K-12 teaching profession view the need for A/A males to serve in this role. The study will also examine A/A males’ experiences as K-12 teachers and determine how those experiences either foster or detract from retaining them in the profession.

In this study, the research literature of Moran et al. (2001), Kimbrough & Salomone, (1993), Leong, (1995) and Milner & Howard, (2004) served as a guide for understanding why A/A males select teaching as a career or not. Because they identify specific elements that impact the career choice of A/A males, this study will serve as an emerging framework leading to an understanding of A/A males’ perceptions of their motivation to enter the teaching profession.

Those who are eligible to participate in this study are A/A males who are currently teachers in the K-12 public school system. The study will include one-on-one interviews with the researcher and will take place in the participant’s classroom setting to gather a better understanding as each participant shares his story.

If you decide to participate you will be asked to participate in an interview lasting up to 120 minutes with a possible follow-up interview via phone or e-mail if needed for clarification. These interviews will be audio recorded by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of the collected information and all interviews will be transcribed into
transcripts that you will be able to review and edit. You would be able to ask the interviewer to turn off the audio recording equipment at anytime during the interview.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before or during your participation. I will be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Ensuring the confidentiality of data is the norm in research. Your name or school name will not be used in the dissertation dissemination process; rather it will only be known to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used for participants (i.e. Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and so on) and general terms will be used in reporting results (i.e. “Five of the teachers commented…;” “Two teachers reported that…;” etc.).

Audio tapes and written transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Burt. Following the completion of the study, the transcripts will be transported directly by the researcher and stored on the campus of Western Michigan University for at least three years. The audio transcripts will be destroyed once the transcription process has been completed and a written record is produced and you are confident that the written transcript accurately reflects your comments during the interview. There are no other known risks/discomforts associated with participating in this study.

We know the teaching profession is losing some of the most talented and experienced African American male teachers to retirement with few college graduates entering the profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on African American men in K-12 education. Also, this study will contribute to this dialogue and offer strategies to African American males that will assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession.

There are no compensation or monetary costs associated with your participation in this study with the exception of your willingness to be interviewed. As a way for the researcher to say thank you, each participant will receive a $25 gift card for their time and participation at the conclusion of the study. It is the hope of the researcher that each participant will gain from contributing to the existing knowledge base and may gain some therapeutic benefit from narrating their stories (Frank, 1995).

Confidentiality will be maintained for all participants at all times. The only people who will have access to the responses will be the principal investigator and student investigator. The researcher will not share information from this study with anyone else and will keep all information confidential. The researcher will transcribe the audio recordings. The audio recordings of the interviews will be erased from the voice recorder after the transcripts are completed. After the study has been completed, the researcher will keep the interview transcripts in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator’s office.

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw
from this study. So you know, the investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact Kelley Peatross, the student investigator at (517) 256-6514 (cell) or via email at kelley.a.peatross@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, The Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269) 387-8293 or via email at hsirb@wmich.edu, or the Vice President for Research (269) 387-8298 if any questions or issues arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use by the researcher for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in the study if the stamped date is older than one year.

A signed copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant Name (Printed) __________________________ Date ____________

Participant Signature __________________________ Date ____________
Appendix E

Initial Interview Protocol
Project: African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity

Time of interview: _____________________________

Date of interview: _____________________________

Location: ____________________________________

Interviewer: _________________________________

Interviewee: _________________________________

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any point of the interview.

Questions that the subjects will be asked include:

1. Please state your professional title, where you are currently employed and how long you have been in this position.

2. What subjects/grade level do you teach?

3. Where and when did you obtain your degree(s)?

4. To what extent was your educational/preparation effective in preparing you to become a teacher?

5. How many African American male students were in your teacher preparation program?

6. In your K-12 education experience, did you have any African American male educators? If so, how many?

7. While in your teacher education program, did you have African American male professors? If so, how many? If not, do you have an opinion about not having been taught by any African American educators in your program?

8. Were you faced with any challenges and/or benefits in obtaining the skills and training needed to become a teacher? Please explain.

9. Why did you choose K-12 education as a profession and career?
10. Do you believe there is a need for African American male teachers in K-12 education? Why or why not?

11. Do you believe there is value in having African American male teachers teaching our youth? Why or why not?

12. Would you or have you encouraged African American males to enter the field of education as a profession/career? If not, why? If so, how?

13. What or who inspired you to become a teacher?

14. What reasons would you attribute to the current representation of African American male teachers in K-12 public education in general?

15. What type of impact, if any, do you think African American male educators have on students and the overall educational setting?

16. What do you think needs to be done, if anything, to increase the representation of African American male teachers in the field of education?

17. What can/should districts do to recruit/retain African American male teachers?

18. Do you believe you have a role in recruiting African American male teachers? If so, why and how? If not, why?

19. If you had it to do all over again, would you choose the same profession? If so, why? If not, why?

20. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix F

Focus Group E-mail Participation Letter
Dear ________________________:

Thank you for participating and allowing me to interview you one-on-one as a part of my study entitled “African American male teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity” in Michigan. As you know, this study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of a Ph.D. in Teaching, Learning and Leadership through Western Michigan University. I am the student investigator in this study (517-256-6514, kelley.peatross@wmich.edu or Peatross_ka@elps.k12.mi.us). My Doctoral Committee Chair, Principal Investigator and Supervising Professor is Dr. Walter L. Burt (269-387-1821, walter.burt@wmich.edu).

You were invited to volunteer as a participant because you are an African American male teacher in K-12 education in one of three career categories currently in your career (0-9 years, 10-19 years or 20 or more years) and within the county of Ingham in Michigan. If you choose to participate in this focus group, it will include a group meeting that should last approximately 60-120 minutes that will be conducted after school hours at my home. This conversation will be recorded by a tape recorder, and I will also be taking written notes.

Once the focus group meeting has been transcribed, a follow-up e-mail will be sent to you with the attached transcription from our meeting for your review so you may check it for the accuracy and provide any clarification needed.

Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing from the study altogether. If you agree to participate in this focus group, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and school will not appear in the study. Your stories will be referenced by a pseudo name. All transcripts will be kept on a CD-ROM in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator’s office.

If you decide you are interested in participating in this focus group, please respond to this email. I will follow up by e-mailing you the focus group consent form to review. Thereafter, I will e-mail all participants potential dates and times to meet to review the consent document and host the focus group meeting. I will also send you the focus group interview questions in advance so you can be prepared to respond to them.

If you have any questions, you may contact either me or Dr. Burt, as indicated above. Thank you for considering possible participation in the focus group.

Kelley A. Peatross
Appendix G

Focus Group Consent Document
As you know, you were invited to participate in a study examining “African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity.” This study is being conducted by Kelley Peatross, Director of Human Resources for East Lansing Public Schools and a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Western Michigan University, under the supervision of Dr. Walter L. Burt, her Doctoral Committee Chair. As identified in the initial consent document, this focus group consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification. The following information is being provided for you to determine if you wish to participate in the focus group. In addition, you are free to decide not to participate in the focus group or to withdraw at anytime without affecting your relationship with the researchers or Western Michigan University.

The primary purpose of this study will be to examine the under-represented A/A male teacher to learn more about their experiences, which may provide greater insight into why representation by this group is so low. This study will examine the under-represented A/A male teachers and their experiences and determine the extent to which those experiences impacted their decision to select K-12 education as a profession. It will examine how A/A males in the K-12 teaching profession views the need for A/A males to serve in this role. The study will also examine A/A males’ experiences as K-12 teachers and determine how those experiences either foster or detract from retaining them in the profession. Those who are eligible to participate in this study are A/A males who are currently teachers in the K-12 public school system.

In this study, the research literature of Moran et al. (2001), Kimbrough & Salomone, (1993), Leong, (1995) and Milner & Howard, (2004) served as a guide for understanding why A/A males select teaching as a career or not. Because they identify specific elements that impact the career choice of A/A males, this study will serve as an emerging framework leading to an understanding of A/A males’ perceptions of their motivation to enter the teaching profession.

The study will include a focus group meeting with the researcher and will take place in the researcher’s home to protect the confidentiality of each participant. The purpose of the focus group meeting will be to discuss themes and sub-themes that are discovered from the individual interviews that will have already been conducted.
If you decide to participate in the focus group, you will be asked to participate in a meeting that may last up to 120 minutes. This focus group meeting will be audio recorded by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of the collected information and transcribed into transcripts that you will be able to review and edit. You will be able to ask the interviewer to turn off the audio recording equipment at anytime during the meeting.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before or during your participation. I will be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Ensuring the confidentiality of data is the norm in research. Your name or school name will not be used in the dissertation dissemination process; rather it will only be known to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used for participants (i.e. Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and so on) and general terms will be used in reporting results (i.e. “Five of the teachers commented…;” “Two teachers reported that…;” etc.).

Audio tapes and written transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Burt. Following the completion of the study, the transcripts will be transported directly by the researcher and stored on the campus of Western Michigan University for at least three years. The audio transcripts will be destroyed once the transcription process has been completed and a written record is produced and you are confident that the written transcript accurately reflects your comments during the focus group meeting. There are no other known risks/discomforts associated with participating in this study.

We know the teaching profession is losing some of the most talented and experienced African American male teachers to retirement with few college graduates entering the profession. This study contributes to the body of literature on African American men in K-12 education. Also, this study will contribute to this dialogue and offer strategies to African American males that will assist in promoting K-12 teacher education as a profession.

There is no compensation or monetary costs associated with your participation in this study with the exception of your willingness to be interviewed. As a way for the researcher to say thank you, each participant will receive a $25 gift card for their time and participation at the conclusion of the study. It is the hope of the researcher that each participant will gain from contributing to the existing knowledge base and may gain some therapeutic benefit from narrating their stories (Frank, 1995).

Confidentiality will be maintained for all participants at all times. The only people who will have access to the responses will be the principal investigator and student investigator. The researcher will not share information from this study with anyone else and will keep all information confidential. The researcher will transcribe the audio recordings. The audio recordings of the focus group will be erased from the voice recorder after the transcripts are completed. After the study has been completed, the researcher will keep the focus group transcripts in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator’s office.
You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. So you know, the investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact Kelley Peatross, the student investigator at (517) 256-6514 (cell) or via email at kelley.a.peatross@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, The Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269) 387-8293 or via email at hsirb@wmich.edu, or the Vice President for Research (269) 387-8298 if any questions or issues arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use by the researcher for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in the study if the stamped date is older than one year.

A signed copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

_________________________________________  ____________
Participant Name (Printed)      Date

_________________________________________  ____________
Participant Signature       Date

All information discussed in the focus group is confidential. My signature below indicates that I agree not to discuss outside of this focus group any comments made by the other participants.

_________________________________________  ____________
Participant Signature       Date
Appendix H

Focus Group Interview Protocol
Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the focus group meeting so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any point of the focus group meeting.

Questions that the subjects will be asked include:

1. Many of you commented that your teacher education program provided the pedagogical knowledge but did not prepare you for the actual classroom experience working with students. What suggestions do you have to change this within the teacher education programs?

2. All of you indicated your professors were well educated, you learned a lot and that you didn’t have an opinion about not being taught by any A/A professors. However, many of you talked about A/A males are needed because they have a sense of culture and can relate to the students. Why is this so important?

3. Many of you indicated one of the reasons why representation of A/A male teachers in K-12 public education is so low is because A/A males either lack or don’t have the PATIENCE. What’s meant by this statement and how can it be explained or expounded upon?

4. Many of you commented on one of the reasons why A/A males don’t choose the teaching profession is because it is not VALUED and there is a lack of RESPECT shown. How can we create a paradigm shift in this area?

5. Many of you stated that influences that attributed to your going into and staying in the teaching profession were mentoring programs, family educators, coaches, former teachers, it chose me, always wanted to work with kids and a career assessment tool. How important are these influences and how can we bottle it up and sell it to increase the representation?
Appendix I

Coding System
## Coding System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Factors</th>
<th>Extrinsic (Influence)</th>
<th>Intrinsic (Beliefs)</th>
<th>Lived Experiences Values and Accomplishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College mentoring program</td>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>Role models</td>
<td>A/A male teachers offer a different view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given an opportunity to teach and lead</td>
<td>Parents/Family members</td>
<td>Parents/Family members</td>
<td>A/A male teachers offer a different view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love for kids</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>A/A male teachers offer a different perspective</td>
<td>A/A male teachers offer a different perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>Coaches</td>
<td>Positive role models</td>
<td>Positive role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the opportunity to influence youth</td>
<td>Visit Black Colleges</td>
<td>Offer trust</td>
<td>Offer trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Assessment Tool</td>
<td>Go south to recruit and step up recruiting</td>
<td>Can relate</td>
<td>Can relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to excel and be successful</td>
<td>Focus on family first</td>
<td>Know their plight</td>
<td>Know their plight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw it as a challenge and wanted to pursue it</td>
<td>Bring back importance of education</td>
<td>Look like them</td>
<td>Look like them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching the maturity and growth of students</td>
<td>Set up system in high school with students</td>
<td>Identify with their experiences</td>
<td>Identify with their experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to shape a student’s character</td>
<td>Universities need to do a better job to bring A/A males to their universities</td>
<td>Eliminate a fear</td>
<td>Eliminate a fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to make a difference in the lives of students</td>
<td>Establish mentoring programs in K-12 and college</td>
<td>Can be self and transparent (what you see is what you get)</td>
<td>Can be self and transparent (what you see is what you get)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Celebrate teachers</td>
<td>Sense of culture</td>
<td>Sense of culture</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Similar background experiences</td>
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<td>Builds relationships</td>
<td>Builds relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Break down barriers and stereotypes</td>
<td>Break down barriers and stereotypes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive influence</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Richer educational opportunity</td>
<td>Richer educational opportunity</td>
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Appendix J

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: March 23, 2010

To: Walter Burt, Principal Investigator
Kelley Peatross, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 10-02-39

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “African American Male Teachers in K-12 Education: A Limited Quantity” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: March 23, 2011