

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE  
EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE  
EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This phenomenological research study explored the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The study was guided by four research questions. The data was collected from 15 African-American male teachers at the elementary school level, middle school level, high school level, administrator level, and retired level from a school system in southeast Georgia. Data collection occurred through teacher/retired teacher interviews and administrator interviews. The findings of the study showed the reasons for African-American males being underrepresented in the teaching profession is due to (a) low starting salary, (b) lack of eligible candidates, (c) perceived dishonor of the profession, and (4) the lack of positive promotion of the profession. Through the findings, the research study was able to identify four emergent themes aimed at reversing the trend of African-American males being underrepresented in the teaching profession. The factors are: (a) provide monetary/financial incentives, (2) provide positive exposure to the profession, (c) promote the profession in a positive light, and (d) increase community support. The participants expressed a desire for the educational world to fully embrace African-American male teachers and utilize their unique skills and abilities to have a positive impact on the lives of students, especially African-American males. The research study was not without limitations and further research on the topic was recommended.

Descriptors: African-American males, motivation, phenomenological, recruitment, shortage, teaching profession

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family. Without their overwhelming support and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. First, I would like to thank my amazing wife, Tiffany, for the endless motivation, sacrificing of time, and being my number one cheerleader. You were able to provide a constant voice of peace and focus during a time of frustration and uncertainty. You were right by my side during my journey down this path and we were able to grow intellectually, personally, and spiritually. You pushed me and kept me from discouragement. You kept me in prayer and constantly reminded me I was an inspirational African-American male with unlimited potential to affect our culture positively. I love you. Second, I would like to thank my parents, Juanita and Gregory, for the foundation laid. As parents, you provided me with a sense of pride, purpose, and instilled in me a drive to succeed. You were able to stress the importance of education, goals, and hard work. You two were able to expose me to the different aspects of life, which helped me to develop into a well-rounded individual. I know you two made sacrifices and committed selfless acts I will never understand, but please know I am forever grateful. I love you both greatly. Third, I would like to thank my wonderful children, Kaitlyn and Solomon, for allowing me to work and spend time away in Virginia. I know it was difficult not having me around for extended periods, but you two were my inspiration. Hopefully, you two will be able to use my accomplishments as stepping stones as you ascend to unimaginable heights in the future. I love you both dearly. Last but not least, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The United States of America has faced a momentous shift in demographics and population over the past 20 years. During this time span, an average of close to one million immigrants per year have come to the United States with the majority coming from Asia, Africa, Central America, and South America (Shrestha, 2006). Currently, immigrants account for 12.5% (38.5 million people) of the total United States population (Batalova & Terrazas, 2010). The demographics of the United States are currently 75% White, 11% African-American, 10% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1% other (Shrestha, 2006). The public school system in America is facing the same dramatic change in the racial composition of the student population (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Over the past two decades, more African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and multi-race students have enrolled into public schools in the United States (Fry, 2006).

The current qualitative study focused on exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The investigation of the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants became a discovery of their motivation for entering the profession; thoughts on the shortage of African-American male teachers, the belief regarding African-American male teachers can have a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, and recruitment efforts. Chapter 1 contains the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. The chapter also contains the research

questions, terms/definitions, assumptions, limitations/delimitations of the study, nature of the study and an overall research plan.

## **Background**

The student population in the United States public school system is diverse and composed of numerous races, cultures, heritages, and nationalities. Male and female children are equally represented in the public schools, but this equality is not as prevalent for the adults of both genders (National Center for Education Information, 2005). The large and persistent achievement gaps separating minority and non-minority students are arguably the most important educational problem in the United States (Dee, 2005). Despite the belief regarding the American educational system is a melting pot, the teaching profession is quite homogenous; Caucasian females are the epitome of a classroom teacher being the largest percentage of gender and race in the profession (National Center for Education Information, 2005).

The shortage of African-Americans males in the education profession is attributed to several factors. These include personal educational experience, lack of education, low wages, and the perception of teaching not being a masculine profession (Mitchell, 2010). The effects of having a common face, background, and role model, as well as differentiated male teaching strategies, can be potentially invaluable to resurrecting the academic performance of African-American males (Irvine, 2002).

In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education released a report which highlighted the striking change in the student demographics of the American educational system

(National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Between 1993 and 2003, Hispanics accounted for 64% of the students added to public school enrollment, African-Americans accounted for 23% of the increase, and Asians 11%. Meanwhile during the same time frame, white enrollment declined by 1% (Fry, 2006). The report projected the number of minority student enrollment into public education will remain about the same percentage for the next 10 years after the findings (2004-2014) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

The teaching profession has not been able to make accommodations necessary to address changes in demographics. Contrasting this change in diversity in the student population, Caucasian females continue to dominate the teaching profession (Slater, 2008). Another trend within the teaching profession is the underrepresentation of males, especially African-American (Johnson, 2008).

In a lecture presentation on the *Under-Representation of Diverse Teachers and Males*, Campbell-Whatley (2008) cited five factors which might alter a male professional's decision to become a teacher. The issues males faced include low social status, low salary, scrutiny for working with kids, having very few peers, and the notion that teaching is women's work (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). Another point of interest concerning males in education is 50% teach and coach at the high school level, 30% at the middle school level, and 20% at the elementary level (Snyder, 2008). The disparities in the numbers are another area of concern. Many male teachers have aspirations of becoming administrators and the common belief is the fastest way for promotion is through the ranks is by working in the secondary setting. Eighty-one percent of administrators are males (Blanchard, 2005).

Campbell-Whatley (2008) further explained there was a time when teaching was a promising career for people of diverse ethnicities, but as fields like business and technology began to flourish; there was a reduction in the number of people entering the teaching profession. According to national averages, the median salary for a Public School Teacher is \$47,000-\$51,000 while a Computer Operations Manager and Business Office Manager in the same monetary category make \$95,500 and \$70,800, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). With student loan debt, personal expenses, families, and the current economic conditions, it is obvious teaching is not first preference.

Aside from relatively lower wages, the personal education experience of males from kindergarten through 12th grade and well into post-secondary instruction can be negative (Davis, 2003). Poor academic performance can result if black boys consider engaging in school a direct conflict with their identity; black boys view themselves as masculine and school as feminine (Noguera, 2003). Being black and male singles out individuals and indicates they are more susceptible to suspension, failure, expulsion, and violence (Ferguson, 2003; Polite & Davis, 1999). These adverse connotations can nullify the learning experience and lead a potential teacher elsewhere. A lack of education and harsh treatment in the academic environment add to the diminished presence of African-American males in teaching roles (Frankenberg, 2008).

The low academic performance of African-American male students inevitably leads to dropouts, which then lead to a life of poverty (Keeping Dropouts in School, 2004). In 2003, 30% of African-American male students dropped out of school. Statistics state indicated dropouts have a 57% greater chance of being unemployed as compared to high school graduates (Keeping Dropouts in School, 2004). High school dropouts are six

times more likely to receive public assistance than individuals who graduated. Studies show 68% of all prison inmates are high school dropouts (Keeping Dropouts in School, 2004). This statistic becomes more dynamic when presented with the fact 69% of the prisoners are minorities. Unemployment, public assistance, and imprisonment contribute to a life of penury. Only 8.2% of whites live in poverty while 25% of African-Americans live in poverty (Americans Live in Poverty, 2005).

An abundant number of quantitative research studies provide statistics on the correlation between the lack of African-American teachers at a school and the poor academic performance of African-American male students at the same school (Ascher, 1991; Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Fremon & Hamilton, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Corbett and Wilson (2002) concluded when African-American male students connect and build a relationship with African-American male teachers, they are more likely to improve academic performance and persistence. Hamre and Pianta (2001) found a positive teacher-student relationship with the same race and gender could influence the student's achievement up to eight years later. Ascher (1991) concluded when there is a limited presence of African-American male teachers, the African-American male students are more likely to be disinterested in school and more likely to be absent, which leads to decreased academic performance. Unlike African-American male teachers, Fremon and Hamilton (1997) suggested White teachers do not motivate and set high goals for African-American male students; hence, the students are aware the expectations of the teacher are low and they usually work up to expectations, resulting in low academic performance.

The race and gender of these students sets them dramatically apart from their

peers. The educational opportunities of African Americans are limited by the disproportionate rate of suspension, expulsion, and assignment to special education classes (U.S. Department of Education NCEES, 2000). However, these are not the only barriers existing for black males in the educational environment; the aforementioned are only cursory indications of the absence of these individuals as teachers (Campbell-Whatley, 2008).

### **Problem Statement**

The problem associated with the current research study is there continues to be a lack of African-American male teachers in the educational profession. Levister (2009) asserted consequences of this phenomenon are linkages to the poor academic performance, unequal disciplinary actions, and errant special education designation of African-American male students. Poverty, according to Levister, is another byproduct of the phenomenon in the African-American community. Research findings indicate having more African-American male teachers helps improve the scholastic achievement of African-American male students (Dogon, 2010). The issue of racial and cultural relevancy and teacher-student cultural synchronization is a main point to infuse more minorities into the teaching profession (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). A perception exists concerning the effects of the shortage of African-American male teachers extend far beyond the walls of the school and into the community, thereby becomes a generational problem (Keeping Dropouts in School, 2004).

The current qualitative research study allowed for African-American male teachers to explain in their own voice (a) the motivation for them to become teachers, (b) the reason for the scarcity of African-American male teachers, (c) if they feel African-

American male teachers can be effective in improving the academic performance of African-American male students, (d) and how the recruitment of African-American males into teaching can be strengthened. Conducting interviews to acquire the thoughts and interactions of African-American male teachers at the elementary school level, middle school level, high school level, administrator level, and retired allows the educational community to see the profession through the lens of an African-American male teacher.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the current qualitative study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in the educational profession. The qualitative method was appropriate because the research concentrated on non-statistical methods of inquiry and phenomenon analysis (McRoy, 1996). The research adds to the body of knowledge an understanding of the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession, factors related to shortage of African-American male teachers, identified the factors, which might cause African-American male students to bolster their academic performance with the assistance of African-American male teachers, and thoughts on minority recruiting efforts. The current research study utilized a phenomenological design to examine a specific group/phenomenon. The phenomenological design was appropriate to the study because it used detailed descriptions from the research subjects to examine their perceptions and lived experiences as African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in the educational profession.

The phenomenon was explored in the current qualitative study was an underrepresentation of African-American male teachers in the United States and the

study explored the phenomenon through the experience of the specific population. The research study occurred in southeast Georgia in a school district educating 20,000 students. The participants in the study encompassed African-American males, who were members from the elementary school, middle school, high school, administrator, and retired levels.

### **Significance of Study**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The findings from the study signaled professional, educational leadership, and academic significance. With discovering the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession, the reason for the shortage of African-American males in the profession, improved academic success of African-American male students, and recruiting more minorities, the educational leadership can implement plans and policy to hopefully increase and retain African-Americans in the field.

**Significance of study: Professional.** African-American male students account for 10% of the student population in the United States, but African-American male teachers compose only two percent of the teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Eighty-two percent of all public school teachers in the United States are female, leaving males to account for the remaining 18% of the teaching force (National Center for Education Information, 2005). The findings of the research study could lead to school systems making a concentrated effort to recruit and hire more African-American males and achieve a racial balance in the teaching force.

**Significance of study: Educational leadership.** Hiring more African-American males could aid in the area of educational leadership in terms of discipline and special education. African-American males receive a disproportionate amount of disciplinary actions due to stereotypes and prejudices held by white teachers (Foster, 1990). Over the past three decades, the number of African-American male teachers has decreased and the number of African-American male student suspensions has increased (Kinsler, 2009). Foster (1995) asserted receiving instruction from a person familiar with their culture would allow the students to face less disciplinary actions for behavior considered merely part of their lifestyle.

An educational leader could also utilize the material gleaned from the current study to observe and evaluate the special education practices in their respective schools and school systems to analyze the need to employ more minority teachers. African-American males are routinely placed in special education courses unjustly based on behavior and not intellectual ability (Slater, 2008). Constructing a diverse staff willing to work with the students and help them harness their energy, increases their knowledge and focus to make academic gains, and not be placed in special education could be a result of the study.

**Significance of study: Academic performance.** The findings from the current study can provide information to help improve the academic performance of African-American male students. African-American males are the worst performing group of students in terms of test scores, graduation rate, and grade point average, but research has revealed students achieve at a higher rate when taught by a teacher of the same race (Irvine, 2002). The entire educational system in America could show improvement and

demonstrate an upward trend in overall performance if African-American males improve their individual performance.

### **Research Questions**

The current qualitative phenomenological research study of African-American males in the educational profession helped to answer four research questions. The research questions guiding the study were:

- R1: What is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession?
- R2: Why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers?
- R3: How will having more African-American male teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students?
- R4: In what ways can the recruiting efforts of African-American males into the profession be strengthened?

### **Definitions/Terms**

Throughout the study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession, there were terms frequently used. Before presenting an in-depth analysis of the study, the following is a listing of terms used throughout the current study:

*Academic performance*- the level of performance a student displays in an educational setting including grade point average, standardized test scores, and honors received (Bonneville Power Administration, 2004).

*Achievement gap*- the disparity in academic performance between groups of students most often used to describe the performance gaps between African-American

male students, who are at the lower end of the performance scale, and their white peers. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates. It has become a focal point of education reform efforts (Education Week, 2004).

*African-American-* is a person of black African decent born in the United States of America (Merriam-Webster, 2010).

*Caucasian-* of or relating to a racial group having white skin, especially one of European origin; White (Farlex, 2010).

*Cultural relevancy-* a pedagogy empowering students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

*Disadvantaged student-* students whose families are, according to a federal standard, low income and eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced price lunch program and other public assistance and test scores are below the 40th percentile (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004).

*No Child Left Behind-* No Child Left Behind is the current incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which created the Title I federal aid program aimed at reducing achievement gaps between rich and poor and among the races (National Education Association, 2002). Periodically, the law has been changed and reauthorized; in 2011, the law received the name of No Child Left Behind. NCLB ties federal dollars to draconian penalties for any school, which cannot meet a series of one-size-fits-all standards. These penalties especially hurt schools, which take on the greatest educational challenges (National Education Association, 2002).

*Role model*- a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially younger people (Dictionary, 2010).

*Teacher-student cultural synchronization*- the connection a teacher and student share through similar backgrounds, cultural identities, and commonalities as well as usually used to build and foster relationships (Irvine, 2002).

### **Assumptions**

The current qualitative phenomenological research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession does include one assumption. For the purpose of the study, there was the assumption the subjects would be honest and truthful when answering the interview questions. The results and validity of the study depended on the subjects providing truthful answers during their interviews as this became a part of the data collection process as well as the foundation to help address the research questions. In the event a participant did not provide honest responses, there was the possibility of the data being skewed and not be useful.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

To decrease the possibility of problems that could affect the findings of the study, a list of weaknesses and limitations of the study were defined (Creswell, 2007). The current qualitative phenomenological study of African-American males in education included the following limitations:

1. The selection of 15 African-American educators from the classroom, administrator level, and retired level participated in the study.
2. All fifteen African-American educators worked in the same district in

Georgia.

3. The timeline for conducting the research study (gathering the data) was two to four weeks.

Qualitative researchers “conduct the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (Creswell, 2005, p. 39). The research study was susceptible to researcher bias due to the fact the researcher is an African-American male and the research study was about the underrepresentation of African-American males in education. To reduce the potential effect of researcher bias, the study utilized the process of bracketing. Bracketing is the act of suspending judgment about the natural world preceding phenomenological analysis (Husserl, 2001). Bracketing assisted in limiting the bias and preconceived notions of the researcher. A peer debriefing committee also assisted in removing researcher bias. A peer debriefing committee composed of three to four individuals, who earned a doctorate degree and were familiar with the type of research study conducted. The peer debriefing committee provided the researcher feedback and suggestions on actions, thoughts, and behaviors to help eliminate researcher bias.

The qualitative phenomenological study of African-American males in education included delimitations. The delimitations were made in the research study in an effort to define the boundaries of the study (Thesis Notes, 2009). The study only included African-American males, who are currently in the educational profession or have retired from the educational profession within the last five years. The African-American male teachers had to have a minimum of three years of experience. The three years of experience is a vital part of the study due because the state where the school system is located deems a teacher experienced and qualified after three years of successful teaching

(RESA Statewide Network, 2003). The timeframe for the research study was two to four weeks and included data collected through interviews.

### **Nature of Study**

The nature of the current research study included the appropriateness of the design method, how the goals would be accomplished, the site of the study, participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and trustworthiness procedures. The study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession utilized the qualitative phenomenological research design instead of a quantitative research method. Qualitative research was better suited than quantitative research for the purpose of the research study.

The tenet of quantitative research assumes the social environment constitutes a participant's reality and the information will be constant across time and setting (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Quantitative research uses controlled experiments to collect numerical data on observed behaviors of the participants and subject them to statistical analysis. A quantitative researcher creates a hypothesis and theory as it pertains to a specific phenomenon and uses numerical data to support or refute the claims (Gall et al., 2007). The findings are presented in an impersonal and objective report. The researcher knows in advance what to look for before conducting the research and does not account for contextual details and subjective interpretation of events and situations (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Qualitative research methods were appropriate for the study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their

underrepresentation in public schools. The qualitative research method allowed the results of the study to present a rich and detailed profile of the data attained (Byrne, 2001). Qualitative phenomenological research, according to Byrne, uses descriptive non-statistical research and data to answer questions about phenomena through the subject's lived experience. Qualitative phenomenological research enabled a holistic view of African-American males in the teaching profession by allowing them to depict the educational world through their own eyes as expressed in their own words (Byrne, 2001).

The goal of the current qualitative research study was to provide an understanding of the shortage of African-American male teachers and to examine the treatment of African-American male teachers through their own experiences. Achieving the goal occurred through the participants' interviews, which is a component of qualitative research. The data collected answered four research questions which helped to meet the goal of the research study. The presentation of the data was both detailed and descriptive to fully divulge the findings and explain the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research looks to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviors and the motives behind such behaviors and utilizing this approach would allow the researcher to permit the phenomena to explain and answer the questions directly (Byrne, 2001; Creswell, 2007).

The location of the target site for the current study was in southeast Georgia. The school system is home to 23 schools and about 19,000 students, who receive annual recognition and awards for academic excellence. The research study included 12 African-American male teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The research study also included two African-American male teachers on the

administrator level and one retired African-American teacher. Purposeful homogenous sampling was the means of identifying qualified participants based on their interest letters and years of experience.

The data collection and data analysis are the two most important components to the study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The data collection occurred through interviews; the interview narrowed the focus of the general themes. The interview allowed for deeper exploration into the lived experiences of the participants. Data collected from the interviews enabled the emerging of central life themes (Kvale, 1996).

### **Summary**

The educational system in the United States has faced a dramatic shift in student demographics over the past two decades (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005); yet the teaching force has remained stagnant with white females dominating the profession (National Center for Educational Information, 2005). African-American males encompass the smallest percent of the profession (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The current qualitative study explored the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers concerning the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession.

Several factors have been cited as reasons for the shortage of African-American male teachers including low social status, low salary, few peers, teaching being perceived as women's work, and personal educational experience (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). The study explored these factors and discovered (a) the motivation of African-American

males to enter the teaching profession, (b) the reason for the shortage, (c) the belief having more African-American male teachers would improve the academic performance of African-American male students, and (d) the strengthening of recruitment efforts as lived and experienced by the participants. The research study could have a significant effect on the education field in terms of the profession, educational leadership, and academic performance.

Chapter 1 contained an introduction and background to the exploration of the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. Chapter 2 contains the review of the literature and provides historical and current literature related to African-American males in the teaching profession. The chapter also contains a presentation of the theoretical framework, which is the foundation for the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in the educational profession. The research adds to the body of knowledge base an understanding of the motivations of African-American males to enter the teaching profession, factors related to shortage of African-American male teachers, identified the factors which could cause African-American male students to bolster their academic performance with the assistance of African-American male teachers, and thoughts on minority recruiting efforts. The significance of the study is the findings provide educational leaders information on how to recruit and retain more African-American males into the teaching profession.

The literature review explored factors related to the underrepresentation of African-American males as teachers in the classroom. Chapter 2 contains documentation on keywords of topics supporting the purpose of the study as well as a historical overview. The chapter also contains the following topics (a) teacher's motivation, (b) the retention of faculty, (c) significance of hiring African-American male teachers, (d) lack of African-American males in teaching, (e) exclusion by choice, (f) males in the classroom, (g) disciplinary actions on African-American students, (h) poor performance of African-American students, (i) the special education designation, and (j) teacher-student relationships. The chapter ends with literature addressing recruitment plans to increase the presence of males, especially African Americans, in classrooms as well as conclusions based on information presented in the chapter.

## **Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of the current qualitative study, three theories helped explain the interactions of African-American male teachers and the instructional environment: social cognitive, constructivist learning, and sociocultural theory. Social cognitive theory was advocated by Albert Bandura and entails learning from others through observation, imitation, and modeling (D. Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2003). Jerome Bruner's constructivism theory focuses on individuals making sense of the world on their own (Fritscher, 2008). Les Vygotsky's sociocultural theory suggests the presence of a "dynamic interaction between individuals and society" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 10). These theories helped explain the interactions of African-American males within the classroom and their respective environments. Each theory helped explain the early stages of life for youth and can help to ascertain the male dilemma.

**Social cognitive theory.** Albert Bandura introduced and publicized the social cognitive theory with the belief behavior and knowledge are based on environment, emotion, and cognitive ability (Cherry, 2010). Bandura believed human behavior was a result of environmental factors, emotional capabilities, and cognitive processing. Cherry noted an individual must have all three components working in unison to reach their full potential.

Pajares (2002) argued the social cognitive theory was similar to a triangle with each aspect dependent upon the other. Behavioral influences, according to Pajares, are at the top of the triangle with the base consisting of personal and environmental factors. Viewing the social cognitive theory from this perspective suggested all three areas are tremendously influenced by one another. According to Pajares (2002), if a child was

born an African-American male to a single mother (personal factor), who lived in a poverty stricken area with no positive role models (environmental), this could lead to negative behavior. Pajares believed harsh personal and environmental factors could be overcome through the display of good behavior; the appropriate behavior must be modeled and should be modeled by a familiar individual in order for the information to be received in a meaningful manner.

Parajes (2002) conducted a study focusing on the effects of the emotional and the behavioral modeling of African-American male teachers versus White teachers on African-American male students in the same classroom. Through observation, interview, mentoring, and casual conversation it was discovered the basis of the social cognitive theory, as described by Parajes, was relevant. While conducting interviews, Parajes asked African-American male students:

1. Do you feel that your behavior/performance is better in the classroom of African-American teachers?, and
2. Why do you behave/perform better with African-American teachers than White teachers? (p. 1)

The two themes emerging from the interviews were: (a) African-American male students' behavior and performance were better because they could relate to African-American teachers; and (b) the appropriate behavior modeled was by a person who looked like them (Parajes, 2002).

**Constructivist theory.** As one of the founding fathers, Jerome Bruner believed effective learning requires knowing the resemblances and disparities of situations (Cooper, 2009). In essence, an individual's past will influence their future. According to

Cooper, Bruner's idea of constructivism developed into four themes: tendency, structure, representation, and progression (pp. 15-21). First, students have a predisposition to learn because of the influence of cultural, personal, and motivational factors (p. 13). Second, to learn, material must have a simple, recognizable structure and include discernable patterns. Third, the instructor should use an illustrative approach to facilitate learning; pictures, symbols, and terminologies are the key modes of representation (Cooper, 2009).

Bruner's fourth and final theme focuses on sequencing (Cooper, 2009); depending on what stage of mental processing an individual can handle, people have to dictate information accordingly. The reasoning here is not every person learns the same. Each theme helps the development of cognitive abilities like "perception, conceptualization, learning, and decision making" (Cooper, 2009, p. 22). Bruner also recognized three stages of intellectual development: the inactive stage, iconic stage, and symbolic stage (McLeod, 2007, p. 1). These stages refer to what information becomes stored in a person's memory. McLeod explained, ". . . enactive is action-based, iconic is image-based, and symbolic involves the construction and adaptation of language" (p. 1).

Constructivist theory is defined as a process where "learners ultimately construct their own knowledge that then resides within them, so that each person's knowledge is as unique as they are" ("Asynchronous Learning Networks," 1997, para. 1). A person takes on the world on their own and other people are merely resources for inquiry and guidance. The desire and capability to learn plays a huge role in this type of learning. Individuals use their experiences and knowledge to analyze and synthesize situations.

**Sociocultural theory.** Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky was the main proponent of the three-pronged sociocultural theory (Cherry, 2010). The first part suggests learning is

dependent on having interaction with other people. By interacting and being exposed to various ideas and thoughts the learner would receive a full grasp of the information. The second part focuses on imitation learning, which wants the learner to duplicate the actions of another learner according to Cherry (2010). This is known as self-regulating, which calls for the individual to realize limitations, and collaborative learning where they must communicate and work with other students.

The third focus is on the zone of proximal development, which is the difference between what a learner can do with and without help (Cherry, 2010). Individual development is integrated with societal development. Through constant interactions, “society doesn't just impact people; people also impact their society” (Cherry, 2010, p. 4). This type of learning varies with each culture, especially because different ethnicities have different customs.

### **Historical Overview**

African-Americans in the United States traditionally viewed education as a passport to freedom, as noted by Malcolm X (Malcolm X.org, 2000). African Americans were forbidden from learning to read and write, though some people were able to emerge with very basic skills. In the days of slavery, men and women who had reading and writing skills were held as respected members of the slave community and these individuals assumed the task of educating others (Sambol-Tosco, 2004). However, they were still forced to be submissive, constantly reminded they were "less intelligent than Caucasians" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 1), and told they could not achieve on a high level. The mindset of people was focused on the African-American males having a violent nature and “the caste system provided constant reminders that they were considered a lesser

breed” (S. Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 40). The degradation of African Americans, especially males, continued well after the Thirteenth Amendment passed and slavery ended in 1865 (Becker, 1999).

In the 1900s, African Americans were kept at their inferior status because (a) poll taxes, prevented them from voting due to a lack of money; (b) literacy tests, hindered their ability to vote because of an inability to read; and (c) residency requirements, disqualified them to vote because of a lack of property (S. Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). During this period, African Americans had limited access to government provided education while the belief of their incompetence was disseminated to Caucasians through mass media (Lomotey, 2010). African Americans who wanted to maintain some form of dignity and pride quickly worked to build and establish schools and professional organizations within their own communities (Lomotey, 2010). While, the black schools afforded African Americans the chance to learn basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills, most did not advance and educated to the level of business or professional interaction.

Obtaining employment outside of their communities was nearly impossible and having a separate educational process hindered development (Lomotey, 2010). The schools for black students rarely had supplies, resources, or textbooks. A classroom would consist of small one-room buildings to accommodate all students (Lomotey, 2010). The educational process of having separate schools with unequal funding, staff, and materials lasted until 1951, when a landmark court case went before the United States Supreme Court.

Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education received recognition as the single most

important court ruling in the history of education (Alvarez & Brown, 2002; Blanchett, Brantlinger, & Shealey, 2005). In Topeka, Kansas in 1951, a group of 13 parents standing in proxy for their 20 children brought forth a lawsuit against the school board of education (Alvarez & Brown, 2002). The basis of the lawsuit was schools separating black and white children were not equal and the policy on reversing racial segregation was necessary. One of the key turning points in the case occurred when Kenneth Clark, a psychologist, conducted a psychological test with dolls, which resulted with African-American students associating good behavior with white dolls and bad behavior with the black dolls (K. Clark & Clark, 1947). Lawyers in the case argued the separate and unequal school conditions African-American students endured produced a sense of inferiority and lowered self-esteem (Blanchett et al., 2005). On May 17, 1954, the court's ruling was "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (National Archives and Records Administration, n.d., p. 1); the essence of this decision was segregation solely based on race deprives minority children of equal opportunities, even if various tangible factors appear to be equal.

In the early 1900s, there was much debate among the black community regarding black education. The two proponents at the forefront of this debate were W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington; "they sharply disagreed on strategies for black social and economic progress" (Public Broadcasting Station [PBS], p. 1). Washington "preached a philosophy of self-help, racial solidarity and accommodation" which had blacks disregard racial inequality and work on becoming a better person, in monetary and personal value (PBS, p. 2). Washington founded Tuskegee Institute and urged Industrial education. With patience and demonstration, blacks would win white approval (PBS, p. 2).

In contrast, W.E.B. Du Bois believed “Washington's strategy would serve only to perpetuate white oppression” and individual action was necessary (PBS, p. 3). Du Bois founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) because he believed in academic education and supported advancement in the arts and sciences. According to Du Bois, “social change could be accomplished by developing the small group of college-educated blacks he called [the Talented Tenth]” (PBS, p. 3). Through excellence and hard work, progress would be made. The philosophies of Washington and Du Bois separated people into the radical and conservative wings (PBS, p. 4). These great figures were very influential and they initiated conflict in the black community.

School integration was not an easy process during the 1950s and '60s. Very few people welcomed the idea of African-American students learning alongside Caucasians (Lomotey, 2010, p. 148). While "a number of school districts in the Southern and border states desegregated peacefully; elsewhere, white resistance to school desegregation resulted in open defiance and violent confrontations" (Library of Congress [LOC], 2010, p. 1). Riots, hate crimes, and racial epithets were very common throughout the nation. In the '50s and '60s, racial tension became an eminent factor within every part of life (Brunner & Haney, 2007).

In the black community, integration was not seamless. Similar to the Little Rock Nine, students who longed to have the opportunities Caucasians were afforded faced angry mobs and apprehensive parents (National Park Service, 2006). Strife and degradation followed African Americans wherever they went, but people continued to live life in attempts of normalcy. Students like Autherine Lucy, the first African

American accepted to University of Alabama; Dorothy Geraldine Counts, one of the first four African-American kids to attend Harding High, an all-white school, in NC; and Ruby Bridges, one of the first African-American children who integrated and completed the first grade alone, set examples in the African-American community (LOC, 2010). However, not every African-American child was as lucky or successful.

Even though desegregation and separate but equal began to be exercised, other approaches were put into place to segregate and differentiate between blacks and whites (Lomotey, 2010). Once integrated, a great deal of students suffered unjust treatment. They were labeled as special education, faced unfair discipline practices, received less qualified teachers, and had a far worse educational experience (Lomotey, 2010, p. 408). These tendencies allowed schools to totter on the fine line of accepting African-American students, but not having to deal with them.

Typically, placement into special education classes was prompted by the classroom teacher (Algozzine, Christenson & Ysseldyke, 1982). This allowed the teachers to tailor the class to their desires and remove the problem students. The effect of classifying students as special education, under false pretense, was ill-preparation for assimilation into society and deprivation of fair academic and social curriculum (Harry & Anderson 1994). The long-lasting repercussions did not end there.

The unfair treatment of African Americans was not a topic relinquished easily. The cause for change persisted because of individuals like Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King. These individuals sacrificed their reputations and lives for the advancement of African Americans then and now. In 1955, Mrs. Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on the way home from work (Brunner & Haney, 2007). This

led to the organization of boycotts and the introduction of Dr. Martin Luther King to the world (Brunner & Haney, 2007). Before his assassination in 1965, Malcolm X received acknowledgements for being an activist, minister, and an outspoken person (Brunner & Haney, 2007).

Malcolm X preached Black Nationalism and placed firm accusation on white America for racial indecencies against blacks (Teachers' Domain, n.d.). Malcolm X ultimately influenced many with his words and actions. Dr. King was the most peaceful and prominent activist of all. His demeanor was not accusatory, rather he sought to rectify the relationship between races and promoted unity (Salla, 1994). In his famous speech, "I Have A Dream," Dr. King exuded a peaceful demeanor, despite all the chaos around him, in mentioning "all men are created equal" (King, 1963, p. 17) and he wanted his children to "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (King, 1963, p. 33).

These activists continued fighting for the rights of blacks until the day they died, but racism still continued in the attempts of equality. In their efforts for peace, advocates were hosed down, spit upon, lynched, set afire, imprisoned, assassinated and "made an example of" (Wei, 2004, p. 2). Overcoming a past of insurrection was not easy. These historical challenges and triumphs influenced the African-American community today.

### **Contemporary Overview**

African-American male teachers are a scarcity in the educational world. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009), Black men accounted for only 2% of the 4.8 million teachers in our nation ("Black Male Teachers," 2009). The hesitation of African-American males in teaching is attributable to diminished salaries,

absence of coaching jobs at the elementary level, perceived social status of teaching, and the issue of physical contact being misconstrued (Callas, 2003; DeMonte, 2004; Diamond, 2003; Walzer, 2003; Williams, 2001).

From the third grade through the graduation of high school, African-American males are viewed as the weak link in the United States educational system (White, 2009). The preparation of these students for the workforce and long-term careers is inadequate. Without positive influence, the appropriate academic ranking, and financial assistance, African-American students find it difficult to climb the ladder to higher education and inevitably occupations requiring a degree. Therefore, the hindrance in the black community exists.

The socio-demographics of black males are not promising; this group of individuals experiences “high rates of death, incarceration, and unemployment, and relatively low levels of college graduation rates” (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006, p. 12). According to the Kaiser Family Foundation [KFF], “In 2004, there were 4.5 million African-American men between the ages of 15 and 29 living in the United States, about 14% of all men in this age group” (KFF, 2006, p. 2). In 2005, the KFF reported only 7.5% of African-American men graduated from college, 19.5% were unemployed, double that of other nationalities, more than 40% were imprisoned, 10% being between the ages of 18 and 29. Research has even concluded “young African American men die at a rate at least 1.5 times the rate of young White and Hispanic men; and the rate of death continues to rise between the ages of 25 and 29” (KFF, 2006, para. 8).

Historically, African-American males have been at a disadvantage. They have been subjected to slavery, denial of voting rights, terrorism and hate crimes, wrongful

imprisonment, eradication of property, and many other transgressions (Kornblum, 2008, p. 304-313). People of African-American descent have faced a long history of abuse, degradation, and suppression; from the days of slavery to Jim Crow laws, even in the present day, Caucasians have been viewed as superior or always right (Kornblum, 2008, p. 296). The historical confrontations of ancestors are unforgettable, but should not necessarily be unforgiveable. The tension which exists between African Americans and whites, while not widespread, appears even in today's society. Affecting both students and teachers, this carries over into educational facilities at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels (Kornblum, 2008, p. 324).

Young African-American males of all ages are suffering within academics and society because they lack the influence of positive male figures (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). Within urban communities, families are plagued by unemployment, poverty, incarceration, expulsion, and school drop-out (Jiminez, 2009). Though, this is only at the surface and there are far more reasons why African-American males represent the lowest common denominator in teaching. Although teaching is thought to be women's work or only for females, it has been shown homogeneity within the classroom can be of much disservice to certain students (Branch, 2006, p. 2).

### **A Teacher's Motivation**

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the National Education Association conducted studies in 1989, 1991, and 1993 on reasons why individuals want to become teachers. Several themes of motivation emerged from the studies: (a) the desire to work with young people, (b) value of teaching to society, (c) interest in subject matter, (d) influence of family, (e) long summer vacation, (f) job

security, and (g) self-growth and actualization. The study noted most of these motivation factors were personal in nature, and what was present was the concern for students (The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the National Education Association, 1993).

Kelly (2010) conducted a similar study as to reasons why an individual wants to become a teacher. Findings from the study suggest the motivation behind teaching is multifaceted and include: (a) student potential, (b) student success, (c) teaching a subject helps support learning, (d) daily humor, (e) affecting the future, (f) staying youthful, (g) autonomy in the classroom, (h) conducive to family life, (i) job security, and (j) having the summer months off. According to Kelly (2010), the list can be generalized across all nationalities. While some of these may apply within the African-American community, Kelly noted there tends to be more specifically influenced reasons especially for African-American males; giving back, positive mentorship, or making a difference can be of much importance for men from less privileged backgrounds.

Vernon Smith (2004) along with two other professors conducted a study to determine the level of interest in teaching at the high school level. The test subjects included numerous black male honor students and graduates of the school (Smith, Mack, & Akyea, 2004). The results determined problems exist in the school system and while the majority of students did not have an interest to pursue teaching as a career, they noted the value and need of teachers (Smith et al. 2004). Those interested in pursuing teaching recognized several incentives: (a) a former teacher influenced their life, (b) the opportunity to be a positive influence, (c) learning something new from students, and (d) lack of male figures in the classroom (Smith et al., 2004).

## **The Retention of Faculty**

The reasons for remaining a teacher are different for everyone. The impetus may be intrinsic, extrinsic, or aesthetic; although, those who remain in the educational profession have passion for what they do, feel connected to their students, and wish to make a difference in someone's life (Graziano, 2005). According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the scarcity of African-American males in the teaching field causes the group to be more desirable and competitively compensated (CNN, 2010). It is apparent the "recruitment of staff is one challenge for administrators, but retaining those staff members once they are hired can be an even greater challenge" (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 2002, p. 87). The approximate percentage of teachers leaving the profession are 14% after their first year, 24% after the second, 33% after the third, 40% after a fourth year, and 46% after only five years (Graziano, 2005).

Those exiting the profession are more likely to completely leave the profession rather than shift within the field (Graziano, 2005). In 2001, the highest percentage of teachers who changed jobs justified their leave due to a better opportunity or dissatisfaction with administration or environment (Graziano, 2005). According to Graziano, the people who left teaching entirely were retiring, pursuing another career, or obtaining better salaries and benefits.

Graziano (2005) asserted proper training will quell attrition. Results from 2000-01 depicted the reduction of attrition for those teachers with training compared to people without training according to Graziano. Teachers without training were 25-28% more likely to experience attrition versus trained individuals at approximately 12%.

Other factors are involved to retain high quality staff. Higher wages, better working conditions, increased support from administration, and mentoring can have considerable influence for teachers (Boyer, 2003). In a presentation of a California Action Plan, Boyer (2003) explained several retention strategies. Teacher retention can be enhanced by making defined class sizes, “providing equitable and adequate classroom facilities [and] appropriate materials, properly preparing district and school administrators, and providing meaningful professional development” (Boyer, 2003, p. 1.39-1.45).

### **Significance of Hiring African-American Male Teachers**

The educational landscape and student population in America is evolving. Forty-one percent of the students in the American public school system are minorities and the forecast predicts the trend of more minorities enrolling in public schools would continue (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). However, the teaching profession has not been able to adapt to meet the demands of the ever changing student population (Arends, Winitzky, & Tannenbaum, 2001, p. 21). Caucasians account for 90% of the teaching profession, African Americans account for seven percent, and the remaining three percent are individuals of Hispanic and Asian backgrounds (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). African-American male students account for roughly 10% of the total student population in America, but African-American male teachers account for only two percent of the teaching profession (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

Eighty-two percent of all public school teachers in the United States are female, leaving males to account for the remaining 18% of the teaching force (National Center

for Education Information, 2005). School systems should make a concentrated effort to recruit and hire more African-American males, as implied by Secretary Arne Duncan (CNN, 2010). Infusing new teachers with fresh ideas, strategies, and techniques can revitalize a school system (Congressional Record, 2001, p. 26154). Achieving a racial balance in the teaching force is paramount in an effort to increase academic performance, enhance communication, and facilitate equality (Henze et al., 2002, p. 86).

### **Lack of African-American Males in Teaching**

On January 31, 2011, Director Spike Lee joined Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at Morehouse College to ascertain why black males avoid teaching as a career (Rice-Boothe, 2011). The following were identified as shortfalls of the teaching profession: (a) other opportunities, (b) salary, (c) lack of esteem, (d) barriers to entry, (e) perceived femininity. The changes in the dynamics of education should be cause for concern (Rice-Boothe, 2011).

According to 1995 data, the distribution of teachers in the African-American race was only 6%; the White race was composed of 89% (Arends et al., 2001, p. 21). The lack of males in teaching stems from low status and pay, the perception teaching is women's work, and the fear of accusation of child abuse (Brown, 2008). Reg Weaver, the president of the National Education Association, acknowledges the existence of a lack of support, respect, and involvement for male teachers (Brown, 2008). It is unfortunate black educators are frequently excluded as they can provide real, inherited culture in the classroom, something not present in readings and text (Pang & Gibson, 2001). African-Americans can enrich the lives of many diverse students because they possess colorful stories of history filled with lessons on strength, oppression, success, and life experiences

(Milner, 2006).

In the summary of a college forum, the gentlemen of Morehouse provide facts on the “Current Plight of Black Men & Boys in America” (“Black Male Community Empowerment Forum [BMCE]”, 2008, p. 1-3). Based on the report, only 22% of African-American males enrolled in a four-year college system would graduate within six years. The National Assessment of Educational Progress noted an academic gap in literacy skills, whereby “69% of African-American children in American cannot read at grade level in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, compared with 29% among White children” (“BMCE,” 2008, p. 4).

In 2006, data collected from the National Urban League indicated African-American families only attained a net worth of \$6,100, while white families were worth \$67,000 (BMCE, 2008). In 2004, the Department of Justice provided four statistics affecting the African-American community (BMCE, 2008). Those statistics are: (a) one in 14 African-American children has a parent in jail or prison, (b) one in 20 African-American men are incarcerated, (c) one out of every 21 African-American men can expect to be murdered, and (d) for every three African-American men in college, four are in prison.

Serving time in prison became a common occurrence in the early 2000s for young, minority men with little education (Wester & Pettit, 2010). Wester and Pettit (2010) explain prison is an expectation in their lives and two-thirds of African-American dropouts will spend time in prison. Previously incarcerated individuals find difficulty in locating employment because of their criminal record (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2002). This lifestyle becomes ingrained in these individuals, they suffer economic and personal

hardships, and the mentality becomes hereditary (Wester & Pettit, 2010).

### **Exclusion by Choice**

A variety of factors are present prohibiting black males from entering the teaching profession. The areas of resistance include home life, afforded opportunities, personal interactions, and financial stability (White, 2009, p. 2). In a domestic setting, black males have a tendency to either live in the confines of a single family residence or an abusive home (Passley, Gerring, & Gerson, 2007, p. 2; Iannelli, 2010). These arrangements can be damaging to a child and cause negative trends in daily practices: difficulty in focusing, stifled development, and the tendency to fall behind in school (Berger, 1994).

Normally, single families are run by a maternal figure (aunt, mother, or grandmother) and lack a father figure (Women's Health USA, 2006). Black women as head of household accounted for 29.1% of all women, double that of all other nationalities (Women's Health USA, 2006). In these instances, the household usually operates below the poverty line and receives food stamps or public assistance (America's Families and Living Arrangements, 2010).

According to Connor and White (2011), a father's participation is important in a child's life and their absence creates problems. Without a male figure in the home, children do not have a male to model themselves after or learn from their experiences. Passley, Gerring, and Gerson (2007) noted the increased likelihood of boys using handguns and excessive violence when their home life lacked a patriarchal figure. Children living in abusive homes have the tendency to disconnect and live in fear (Cousineau, 2009). Dannerbeck (2005) explained children are more likely to exhibit destructive actions and behavior the more often their development is interrupted. With

these circumstances, children are unable to put forth full effort in school and advance to their full potential (Cousineau, 2009).

Other obstacles exist when the above are not the prevailing situation. Lack of higher education or poor preparation will prevent most educational success. African-American males tend to score low on standardized tests, be inappropriately appointed to special education, or experience suspension, expulsion, and drop out (Staples, 2010). Aside from classroom failures, black males must combat substance abuse, high unemployment, negative family situations, poverty, and incarceration (Anderson, 1999; Wilson, 1996). Statistically, black male students compared to others rank lowest in academic achievement (Ogbu, 2003), have the worst attendance record (Voelkle, 1999), are suspended and expelled the most often (Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Staples, 1982), and most often fail to graduate from high school or earn a GED (Pinkney, 2000; Roderick, 2003).

Black males tend to be immediately reprimanded without warning, cast out, and outright embarrassed by teachers; often, African-American males are mistreated in the public school system (Anthony, 2007). In a study of black middle school students at a mixed institution, Ferguson (2000) concluded racial bias currently exists and African-American males often received discipline for actions ignored in other students. This occurrence is not only limited to school, but carries over into society and the juvenile justice system (Ferguson, 2000). The problem arises from poor preparation and lack of knowledge on behalf of the teacher (Anthony, 2007).

Sometimes, teachers will not deal with black males for fear of aggression or other behavioral problems; white female teachers tend to see these students as a threat

(Kunjufu, 2002). The teachers allow their fears to govern how they respond to students. The responses often include ignoring the student, sending them to another classroom, or referring them to the office (Frankenberg, 2008). The actions of the teacher are detrimental to the learning of the student because they are not in class to receive the instruction and become resentful and rebellious towards the teacher.

The financial status of a teacher can also arise as an issue. Regarding practicality, professions such as law, engineering, and medicine are sought after for purposes of monetary profit. Teaching is not a job preferred for its paycheck. Typically, there is a personal agenda or incident of morality behind the pursuance of an education career.

Some African-American male students would prefer to pursue careers involving athletic talents. The two sports with the largest percentage of male African Americans are basketball and football (Powell, 2008). Unlike most sports, they have access to these sports and cost little to maintain. For those African-American males who live in poor urban neighborhoods or less affluent areas, sports requiring a participation fee may not be available (T. Eitle & Eitle, 2002). Compared to a white family, African Americans are seven times more likely to encourage participation in sports (Spence, 2000). Students use their athletic abilities to identify themselves (Griffith, 2007) and move towards increased social status. They look to professional sports for validation (Harrison, 2007).

In pursuit of this desire, there is a tendency to put less emphasis on academic work to excel at sports; “they don’t treat academics with the same intensity as they do basketball or football” (Powell, 2008, p. 73). The real problem arises when these youths begin to mimic the tendencies and destructive natures of their heroes (Harrison & Lampman, 2001). Improper academic preparation while pursuing these dreams hurts

rather than helps, especially for those who end up in a non-sport career.

The social cognitive and sociocultural theories factor into why African-American males fail to become teachers. Under the social cognitive ideology, an individual learns by watching (Cherry, 2010). The events taking place in history and on a daily basis can shape a person's views and serve as an influence. If a man comes from a home where drugs or abuses are prevalent, then a possibility exists he could model himself after the events of the environment; for children, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate what is good from bad (Cherry, 2010). If a child comes from a broken, dysfunctional home and not provided opportunities at school from a mentor, the child might know what is socially acceptable.

According to Ormrod (1999), the social learning theory applies to African-American males in the classroom for five reasons. First, students must believe they can accomplish tasks and behaviors. Second, modeling can be used as a new teaching behavior instead of shaping. Third, students learn by observing other students. Fourth, describing consequences can effectively increase desired behaviors; finally, the modeling of appropriate behavior must occur.

As far as the sociocultural ideology, a continual process exists. According to Cherry (2010), the environment affects both individuals and the whole community given their interactions with one another. The cycle is detrimental and remains the same, especially in impoverished neighborhoods, when the outcomes are not beneficial for either the individual or the community at-large unless there is some form of intervention.

### **Males in the Classroom**

The current and typical conditions in nationwide classrooms tend to be a diverse

array of students instructed by an Eastern European female or gentlemen. There is a lack of diversity within the teaching staff (Johnson, 2008). This deficiency can be partially attributed to the underperformance of students from minority backgrounds. The black student populace tends to fall behind in most aspects of school and suffers from the achievement gap (Gabriel, 2010). A belief is present suggesting same race teacher-student relationships are more effective because the student can relate to the teacher and vice versa (Johnson, 2008). Though, with a Caucasian individual at the head of the class, African-American students tend to have rough encounters; to fight racism and facilitate better relationships in the classroom, schools have introduced diversity in the teaching of individuals, events, and historical observances (Martin & Baxter, 2001, p. 382).

**Students' experience.** Achievement within the classroom is impacted by several socioeconomic elements such as household income, nutrition, and self-esteem (White, 2009). As a factor of African-American male teachers not being in the classroom, the following is what student's experience. Some students are classified as mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and learning disabled (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). For African-American boys, 20% have been labeled mentally retarded, 21% disturbed, and 12% disabled (National Center of Education Statistics, 2000).

The misplacement of students into special education classes occurs when teachers fear students acting out or feel incapable of handling unique individuals. Sometimes viewed as problem students, African-American children tend to be placed in segregated classrooms; the student is removed from class and the teacher is relinquished from exerting extra attention (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). Within this restrictive class setting, children are not prepared to assume their place in society as practical citizens, nor do they

have equivalent social climates or academics as their counterparts (Harry & Anderson, 1994). Scholarly research has shown employment for individuals categorized with a disability is significantly lower compared to students in the standard classroom (American Community Survey, 2006). Labeling ultimately hinders a student and can emotionally scar them for life. In addition, they are repressed from reaching full growth potential.

Due to cultural and socio-economic differences, white teachers and minority students may lack a bond or rapport. According to Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade (2008), many White teachers have a tendency of placing lower expectations on African-American students for two reasons. First, White teachers work from a “hegemonic, Western, epistemological framework” (p. 49); second, they lack respect for the students’ families and primary culture.

When a teacher doubts the ability of only specific students, there is a bias present and it can be very evident (Douglas et al., 2008). The student becomes a target and frustration is cast onto this individual. They are consistently put down, reprimanded, and their errors always made apparent; hence, the classroom environment becomes hostile according to Douglas et al. All of these occurrences alter the student’s experience and cast a negative outlook for their future.

**Academic performance.** African-American males are the lowest performing group of students. From the third grade through the graduation of high school, African-American males are viewed as the weak link in the United States educational system (White, 2009). The achievement gap between African-American males and other groups has continually been in the double digits. One factor, according to White, that could

improve the academic performance of African-American male students is hiring more African-American males. Previous studies revealed students achieve at a higher rate when taught by a teacher of the same race (Irvine, 2002).

Monroe and Obidah (2004) cited research concluding African-American males would perform better in the classroom of an African-American male due to teacher-student cultural synchronization. Based on the study's findings, African-American male teachers felt they were a factor in improving the academic performance of African-American male students and they could assist in increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the achievement gap. Monroe and Obidah noted the participants' beliefs suggesting the educational field should improve efforts in the hiring and retaining of African-American males to teach this population of students as well as positive effect the entire educational system of America.

### **Disciplinary Actions on African-American Male Students**

Researchers (e.g. Foster, 1990; Kinsler, 2009) conducted studies related to the effects a teacher's race on the discipline referrals of African-American male students. Foster (1990) concluded non-black educators maintained stereotypes of African-American male students received a disproportionate level of discipline referrals because (a) the teacher did not understand their culture; and (b) the teacher often misinterpreted actions. From 1972 through 2000, the number of suspended African-American male students increased by 120% while at the same time the amount of African-American male teachers drastically decreased (Kinsler, 2009).

African-American males also face harsher consequences than white students when disciplined. Educational leaders can hire more African-American male teachers

who understand the students, comprehend their plight, and serve as a model of appropriate behavior (Brown, 2004). By having a role model and a person to recognize their culture, Foster (1995) asserted the students are less likely to receive a referral for disciplinary actions for behavior, which is merely part of their lifestyle.

### **Poor Academic Performance of African-American Students**

Over the last three years in Georgia, only 43% of African-American male students graduate and on the national level it is only 47% (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010). An analysis of data indicates less than half of African-American males are receiving a full appropriate education. Discovering possible solutions to a problem in its infancy stage could reduce the opportunity for the problem to get large. Studying the effects of teacher race in the classroom could provide the educational community with information, which could help eliminate a serious phenomenon; this aligns with the purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study.

Within the education environment, African-American students are less likely to be pushed or challenged to succeed. A 2003 NCES survey expressed the “percentage of public school students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who had ever repeated a grade, been suspended, or expelled” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). An average of 17.1% of African-American students repeated a grade, while 19.6% underwent suspension and 5% were expelled. The figures for African-American male students were 22.6%, 24.2%, and 6.7% for repeating, suspending, and expelling; all considerably higher than their female counterparts (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007).

African-American students tend to perform at or below grade level when

undergoing standardized testing. The 2005 results of the NAEP Mathematics Assessment confirmed in the 4th, 8th and 12th grade levels the majority of students performed below basic or at basic. Across each of these grades, 40% (4th grade), 58% (8th grade), and 70% (12th grade) scored below basic while, 47% (4th grade), 33% (8th grade), and 25% (12th grade) measured at the basic level (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). When examining students who enrolled in challenging courses, African-Americans fall second to last with only 108,545 students taking Advanced Placement exams. A very bleak shortcoming opposed to the 949,986 White students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) found 44% of all African-American female householder, no husband present families with children lived in poverty in 2005; while 27% of African-American male householder, no wife present families with children and 10% of African-American married-couple families with children lived in poverty. This designation carries over into the classroom. According to the similar-to-me effect, teachers and professors are biased in their grading and provide those students who more closely resemble themselves higher grades (Suskie, 2009). Thus, the poor performance of poor or minority students could be attributable to this theory.

### **The Special Education Designation**

Within special education classes, there is an overrepresentation of African-American children (Salzman, 2005; United States Commission of Civil Rights [USCCR], 2009, p. 10). African-American males are 9% of the total student enrollment in the public school system of the United States yet they account for 20% of the mentally retarded students, 21% of the emotionally disturbed students, and 12% of the learning

disabled student (NCES, 2000). Research has shown many of the students are erroneously placed in special education due to lack of cultural understanding by white female teachers (Slater, 2008). Frankenberg (2008) argued white female teachers usually do not take the time to erase the differences between themselves and the African-American males. The teachers treated the students with a distance relationship and did not foster a loving environment (Frankenberg, 2008).

African-American male students are four times as likely to receive labeling as learning disabled than white students (Slater, 2008). This fact suggests there is a definite skewed relationship between the white female teacher and African-American male students. The teachers do not have common ground with the students and it is easier to build up a barrier, ignore them, treat them as special, or allow others to deal with them (Frankenberg, 2008).

Every student does not learn in the same manner and this does not make them learning disabled (USCCR, 2009). The special education practices at schools should be evaluated to analyze the need to employ more minority teachers. Minority teachers can bring new strategies and techniques to support students where others failed and minimize minority students placement into special education when not appropriate (Branch, 2006). Having a low number of special education students should be a goal because it demonstrates the willingness of the school to work with the students to help them achieve to the best of their abilities (USCCR, 2009).

### **Similar-to-me Effect**

African-American male teachers are thought to be more equipped to improve the academic performance of African-American male students than teachers of other races

and gender due to the similar-to-me effect. The similar-to-me effect is a type of rater effect in which an assessor or an evaluator judges more favorably those people seen as similar to himself/herself (Wheeler, Haertel, & Scriven 1992). The similar-to-me effect is relevant and impactful in the educational realm. In a similar-to-me relationship in the classroom, the teacher is more likely to help students similar to them because they can build a rapport easier. The connection is generally based off shared backgrounds and culture. The students are more willing to accept instruction, discipline, and criticism from an individual with whom they look like and perceive to have been through similar experiences (Wentzel, 1999).

The similar-to-me effect is present and viable in teacher-student relationships from preschool through high school (Wentzel, 1999). The similar-to-me effect fosters a positive relationship which benefits the students academically and socially (Ladd et al, 1999). Teachers and students having relationships built on the similar-to-me effect demonstrate high levels of support and low levels of conflict (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). The high levels of support and the low levels of conflict lead to students obtaining higher scores on measures of academics and behavioral adjustment than do students whose relationships with teachers are less positive.

### **Teacher-Student Relationship**

There are an abundant number of quantitative research studies, which provide statistics on the correlation between the lack of African-American teachers at a school and the poor academic performance of African-American male students at the same school (Ascherm 1994; Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Fremon & Hamilton, 1997; Hanbre & Pianta, 2001). Corbett and Wilson (2002) concluded when African-American male

students connect and build a relationship with African-American male teachers, they are more likely to improve academic performance and persistence. Hamre and Pianta (2001) found a positive teacher-student relationship with the same race and gender could influence the student's achievement up to eight years later. Ascher (1994) concluded when there is a limited presence of African-American male teachers, the African-American male students are more likely to be disinterested in school and more likely to be absent, which leads to decreased academic performance.

Unlike, African-American male teachers, Fremon and Hamilton (1997) suggested White teachers do not motivate and set high goals for African-American male students; hence, the students are aware the expectations of the teacher are low and they usually work up to expectations resulting in low academic performance. Milner (2006) stated the mentorship and role model aspects of a teacher instill in a student what they can look forward to in the future. A role model will be inspirational only to the degree a person is able to identify similarities with the role model (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004). Milner (2006) also determined African-American teachers are a necessity for academic achievement; they have the ability to animate lessons and provide examples, which could help students, remember and later refer back to the subject matter.

The lack of African-American teachers in the classroom hinders the growth and development of students because there is little incentive for minority students to strive for advancement in school (Martinez, 1991). In a school setting, being able to relate to the staff and administrative individuals is important; kids need to see people similar to them so they have a positive vision to emulate (Henze et al., 2002, p. 86). Because children have a poor perception of weighty issues, it would be difficult for them to analyze easily

misconstrued situations. If the janitorial and cafeteria staff were all black individuals, nonwhite students would correlate their identity to that of submission without understanding the situation and may go on to believe they are not fit for other, developed societal roles (Henze et al., 2002, p. 86).

To obtain positive outcomes in the classroom, teachers must hold and practice certain assumptions (Milner, 2006). Milner highlighted several ideas having led to success for Black teachers with Black students. According to Milner, several considerations teachers have include: (a) how to acquire and retain attention, (b) how to use shared culture to build a rapport, (c) how to set examples for successful development, (d) how to connect with parental figures, (e) how to hold students accountable, and (f) how to support their students. Each of Milner's ideas can lead to overall student development.

### **Recruitment for the Future**

To attract more males in the teaching field, recruitment efforts must be increased. Across the U.S. several efforts are in place to combat the apparent scarcity. The efforts created and pursued include programs such as Troops-to-Teacher, Call Me Mister, MenTeach, and Steps to Success and have been implemented throughout the U.S. (Nweke, Afolabi, Stewart, Stephens, & Toth, 2004). Several networks and scholarships are being made available to help usher in a new generation of African-American male teachers. Each has its focus on African-American males becoming an influential channel in the classroom.

Across the U.S., Troops-to-Teacher fulfills a dual role; former military personnel have a new employment opportunity and the children in the classroom obtain an

authoritative figure, typically of minority descent. Once licensed and certified, they are to assume teaching positions in the inner city (Troops-to-Teachers Program, 2010). There is a tendency for this type of community to be highly saturated by the African-American ethnic group. With this program, two major goals, acquisition of minority teachers and insertion of positive influence, are realized.

In the South, Call Me Mister is a South Carolina based scholarship within the education program seeking to “increase the pool of available teachers from a broader more diverse background particularly among the State's lowest performing elementary schools. Student participants are largely selected from among under-served, socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk communities” (Clemson University, 2010). These individuals are targeted because they can relate directly with students of their own nationality, as well as others, based on social class and cultural experiences.

Based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota MenTeach is a non-profit organization in the business of information exchange, consultation, and research concerning male teachers (MenTeach, 2007). This project was “started because founder, Bryan G. Nelson, understood the importance of teaching and wondered, ‘If teaching is so important, then where are all the men?’” (MenTeach, 2007). With a definitive mission and many goals, the ultimate objective is to increase the amount of male teachers throughout the education environment to socially and academically influence children.

In the North, Steps to Success is centered on the African-American males of grades two through four (Steps to Success, 2008). Created in 2007 in Harlem NY, the organization not only services the community, but attempts to understand the dilemmas

facing black youth as well. The setup of the program includes:

1. Life Coach, an adult Black male who serves as a mentor, he will assess and try to clarify difficulties African-American males may have while growing up and help plan life goals
2. Saturday Academy, provides activities to enrich cultural and historical knowledge of African-Americans
3. Academic support, twice a week staff members individually tutor students
4. Volunteer, Black males – our Everyday Heroes – obtain volunteers for our cause and depict positive role models for our members (Children’s Aid Society, 2008)

This program not only supports an individual’s education; rather the efforts applied to facilitate self-development as a full-functioning individual.

Mizzou Men for Excellence in Elementary Teaching (MMEET) is an effort at the educator level (Johnson, 2008). With monthly seminars, male teachers are given the opportunity to voice concerns, make networking contacts, and participate together. Eligibility requirements entail teacher certification or being on the teaching track working toward certification. Mentorship for young teachers by knowledgeable professors is one of the most beneficial aspects for the MMEET (Johnson, 2008).

Several Georgia-specific initiatives exist aimed at preparing Black males for higher education opportunities (Nweke et al., 2004). The programs are present at several major universities including University of Georgia, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia Southern University.

University of Georgia’s Gentlemen on the Move is a fifteen-year-old every Saturday volunteer effort in the Athens-Clarke community “aimed at developing and

nurturing academic and social excellence in young African-American males” (University of Georgia, 2006). This program serves many males who come from single-family homes and lack male role models. One purpose of the program is that of trying “to fill a void left by the schools, which have very few African-American men as teachers” (UGA, 2006). Deryl Bailey, founder of this and several other initiatives, said "students who have a positive relationship with teachers do well academically," and "for black male students, this often doesn't exist" (UGA, 2006). For this group, attempts are made to impact children in their developmental stage.

Georgia Institute of Technology tries to make a difference at the higher education level. The twenty-year-old FOCUS program is held in January and used as a hands-on Graduate introduction, recruitment tool, and a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King. Professors and businesspeople are brought together with teens and college students to provide local and national awareness as to how “minority students can use a graduate degree in science or technology to open the door to a life-changing career in academia, industry, or government” (Georgia Institute of Technology, 2010). With FOCUS, academic achievement at an early time is necessary and can lead to future opportunities. Here, the spotlight is mostly on older and more mature people.

At Georgia Southern University, the focus is also on secondary and continuing education. TRIO is a multi-component plan created to “[touch] lives by helping realize potential, plan for success, prepare for the future, and build great character” (Educational Opportunities Program [EOP], n.d., para. 1). TRIO dates back to 1964 and was eventually part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The components include America Reads, Talent Search, Upward Bound, and the McNair Program. America Reads was

designed as a challenge to help every child across the country learn to read.

For the program to succeed, involvement from all stakeholders was required, whether businesses, politicians, students, parents, or volunteers (EOP, n.d.). Next, the Educational Talent Search “identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education by providing academic, career, and financial counseling and encouraging them to graduate from high school and attend a postsecondary school” (EOP, para. 10). Then, Upward Bound’s main objective was to “provide greater educational opportunities for low income and potential-first generation college students” (EOP, para. 10). It is high school focused and advocates academic achievement as well as completion of college. Finally, the McNair program assists those from “disadvantaged backgrounds that have demonstrated strong academic potential and prepares participants for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities” (EOP, para. 15). Within the entire state, TRIO has the broadest focus, but each program facilitates the needs of those requiring assistance.

A lesser known University System school, Coastal Georgia Community College, holds a Minority Outreach Program for at risk youth lasting one month during the summer. The selections are based on identification by school counselors and sessions run the same as a typical school week. Prior to enrolling, Jason Vaughn “never thought about pursuing a college degree” and it became his “first time ever seeing an African-American college student” (Capek, 2010). The program involves more than just busy work, “the boys also learn life skills such as how to knot a tie, proper table manners and how to set a table. They also go on field trips to places like Geechee Kunta in Riceboro, a place

[which] preserves important elements of African culture” (Capek, 2010). Programs like Minority Outreach provide opportunities to underserved areas and can lead to some of the best and brightest scholars.

While these initiatives are in place and provide a temporary resolution, more efforts need to be initiated, especially at younger stages of life. As Steve Peha, the president of an education consulting company stated, “To be effective, recruiting must begin while men are still in school...We won't see more male teachers if we don't see more young men pursuing teaching degrees” (Brown, 2008). For men to cultivate the desire to become educators, it starts with a comparable role model in the classroom.

### **Summary**

The literature review presented above discussed the distinct disadvantages African-American males experience due to educational flaws. The inferiority experienced by blacks dates back to slavery when reading, writing, and learning were censured (Lomotey, 2010). An experience as such contributes to the negative stereotypes and prominent issues in existence today. A body of African-American influencers is necessary to socially and culturally relate to diverse students, introduce new worlds, and further connect those students to bigger and better possibilities (Fenwick, 2010). Long-term consequences are inevitable if the conditions of teaching remain at the current state.

The apparent forewarning is increased imprisonment, higher dropout rates, and a substandard mindset would result if nothing is changed (Jiminez, 2009; KFF, 2006). The relationship of African-American teachers affecting African-American students examined here should add to existing research. This presentation of information should either confirm or deny the existence of race affecting classroom production. The mentality and

cultural advancement within schools is not the sole responsibility of the school system. Parents and students alike are responsible for questioning practices, which downplay a student's talents, wanting to achieve, and actively participating in programs [which] promote progress rather than hindrance. Brown (2004) asserted, "Instead of becoming a dismal statistic, disadvantaged from birth to death, young Black males generally could become what, against all odds, so many individual Black males already are—constructive and creative forces in a society that would be diminished without them" (p. 13).

Male educators have the potential to be a catalyst for change; they can serve to boost motivation and elicit participation (MenTeach, 2010). This is a necessary undertaking as studies show males are needed for role modeling and cultural contributions in the classroom (Brown, 2004). Educational leadership can be positively impacted by hiring more African-American males; in doing so, the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions and special education referrals of African-American male students can be reduced (Corbett & Wilson, 2002). Educational leaders should strive to obtain racial balance in the faculty (Henze et al., 2002). Educational leaders can bring much needed diversity to their schools and communities. Employing African-American males can have a positive impact on African-American male students in terms of academic improvements.

Chapter 2 contained information presenting the history and background which support the research study and provided an overview of literature maintaining the notion African-American males are underrepresented in the classroom. Chapter 3 contains the methodology of the qualitative research study. In chapter 3 provides information related to the selected method, the design of the study, process for selecting participants, the

researcher's role, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The study aimed to identify the motivation for African-American males to enter the teaching profession, what factors influence them to remain, why there is a tremendous shortage of African-American males in the teaching profession, if African-American males can be assets to African-American male students, and their thoughts on the recruitment efforts of African-American males into the profession. The demographics of the public school system are constantly changing, but the teaching profession has failed to keep pace; African-American males remain underrepresented in the teaching profession (Campbell-Whatley, 2008; Irvine, 2002; Johnson, 2008; Mitchell, 2010; Snyder, 2008).

The current qualitative phenomenological research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession has potential professional, educational leadership, and academic significance. The findings of the study could lead to school systems making a concentrated effort to recruit and hire more African-American males and achieve a racial balance in the teaching force. The findings could lead to the hiring of more African-American males which could aid in the area of educational leadership in terms of discipline and special education. The findings could also bolster the academic performance of African-American male students.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the research study design, overview

of the school system used as the research site, the selection methods of the participants, procedures, data collection, data analysis methods, trustworthiness, and ethical issues. The chapter also provides an explanation concerning the role of the researcher and the influence on the research study. The sampling procedures are explained as it relates to the current study. A summary highlights the key points of the described in the chapter.

### **Research Questions**

The current qualitative phenomenological research study was guided by four research questions. The data collection and data analysis strived to provide concise answers to the questions with vivid and rich detail.

- R1: What is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession?
- R2: Why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers?
- R3: How will having more African-American male teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students?
- R4: In what ways can the recruiting efforts of African-American males into the profession be strengthened?

### **Design**

**Qualitative research.** Qualitative research is concerned with nonstatistical methods of inquiry and analysis of social phenomena (McRoy, 1996). The participants are intentionally and purposively selected (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Qualitative research uses detailed descriptions from the perspective of the research participants themselves as a means of examining specific issues and problems under study (McRoy, 1996). Qualitative studies in educational research have advantages over quantitative

studies because it produces more in-depth/comprehensive information, offers a holistic (the complete phenomenon) understanding of the entire situation, observes the participants in their natural settings, and data is collected over an extended period of time which allows for longitudinal analysis of processes (Key, 1997).

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret some human phenomenon in the words of selected individuals to grasp a holistic perspective of a situation by utilizing observations in natural settings (Heath, 1997). Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated qualitative methods help to understand any phenomenon about which there is limited information. The research method enables researchers to gain new perspectives on things already known, or to gain more in-depth information difficult to convey quantitatively.

Qualitative research is also emergent in design, meaning that it does not have predetermined outcomes, which affords the researcher the opportunity to focus on the process as well as the result (Hoepfl, 1997). The emergent design is a beneficial aspect of qualitative research because it is nonstatic and offers flexibility to burrow further into the topic to excavate the most information possible to explain the rich details of the phenomenon.

**Phenomenological research.** A phenomenological study is designed to explain a phenomenon through human lived experiences (Byrne, 2001). The tenets of phenomenological research support the belief in which knowledge and understanding are embedded in our everyday world (Byrne, 2001). The phenomenon of African-American males in education has been discussed and there have been numerous theories describing the shortage of African-American males in education. While the plight of African-

American males in education can be highlighted in demographic statistics, charts and percentages, a phenomenological research approach is required to understand the beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and perceptions of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation in the profession. The research is occupied with the participants to allow for their lived experiences to be explained through their individual voice. The data was collected from the participants about the phenomenon, which in this case is the underrepresentation of African-American males in education.

A major component of a phenomenological research is bracketing. Bracketing is the act of suspending judgment about the natural world preceding phenomenological analysis (Husserl, 2001). Husserl explained how the perceived state and what is thought to be true of a phenomenon has to be stripped away until the study is conducted; the data is examined and analyzed in a pure form. There have been assumptions and generalizations made about African-American males in education that must be cast aside in an effort to create the most accurate study. In the current qualitative phenomenological study, the focal point was on collecting data, analyzing the data, and allowing the educational world to see itself through the eyes of an African-American male teacher.

### **Participants**

The participants were selected through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the process of selecting participants that are likely to be information rich in terms of the purpose of the study (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In purposeful sampling, the criterion for inclusion has to be predetermined before drawing the sample. Purposeful sampling is not intended to attain population validity. Purposeful sampling is used with the intent of

achieving a thorough and in-depth understanding of selected individuals (Gall et al., 2007).

The current study employed homogenous purposeful sampling. Homogenous purposeful sampling entails intentionally selecting participants that are the same or similar in nature and uniform throughout (Patton, 1990). Homogenous purposeful sampling is used when conducting a study on a specific phenomenon to gain an understanding of the collective (Patton, 1990). The qualitative phenomenological study purposefully sampled participants, who are African-American males in the teaching profession (homogenous).

Fifteen teachers participated in the current research study. When selecting the appropriate number of participants for a qualitative study, it is more important to identify, seek, and include the participation of the people, who would be the most informative and helpful than to try to include a large population (Doyle, 2006). The participants of a qualitative study should be a small and purposive group utilized to acquire an in-depth understanding (Sorensen, 2007).

The point of saturation plays a significant role in selecting the appropriate number of participants in a qualitative study. Saturation is the point of the data collection process where the information becomes redundant (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 69). In a series of experiments including 60 subjects to test appropriate number of participants and saturation occurrence, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) discovered saturation usually occurs within the first 12 participants. After 12 interviews, the answers to the questions become redundant and no new data is offered (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

The qualitative research study included 15 participants to maximize the data

collected from the participants. Involving 15 participants in the research study ensured that data saturation occurred and that no new data will be presented. The appropriate number of participants is determined by the subjective judgment of the researcher (Doyle, 2006). The researcher sets the number of participants at a level where they feel they are able to obtain a complete understanding of the topic of the study (Doyle, 2006).

The purposeful selection of the current study's participants was dependent on volunteers with the criteria of race, gender, and years of experience. With the permission of the targeted school system (see Appendix A), the researcher sent each African-American male teacher in the targeted school system a letter of interest to participate in the study. The researcher was able to obtain the gender, race, and contact information for the potential participants through the school system's faculty directory. Once the researcher received the letters of interest back from the volunteers, the numbers were reduced based on years of teaching experience. The researcher eliminated teachers with less than three years of teaching experience from the selection process for the study.

The three-year mark is important to the study because it demonstrates the participant has a level of commitment to the profession and there are factors are keeping them retained in the profession (Croasman, Hampton, & Herrmann, 1997). Three years of teaching is a critical point in the state of Georgia. For the first three years of teaching, a teacher must have at least three classroom evaluations from an administrator because they are considered to be in the process of honing their craft and mastering the content. After three successful years of teaching, the State of Georgia deems a teacher "effective" and "highly qualified" and they only have to receive one classroom evaluation from an administrator (RESA Statewide Network, 2003).

Upon identifying the eligible participants for the study, 15 subjects were randomly chosen. The research study included 12 African-American male teachers in which four came from each of the following levels: elementary, middle, and high schools. The research study also included two active African-American male teachers on the administrator level and one African-American teacher who retired between the years of 2005-2010. In the targeted school system, retired teachers volunteer in the elementary and middle school setting to help with student monitoring, student transition, and sports. All African-American male teachers participated in completing an individual interview to collect data to answer the four research questions. By including African-American male teachers at all levels of education, the study was able to present a total picture of the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of African-Americans in education.

**Informed consent and confidentiality.** The participants were provided with a consent form before they agreed to be included in the research study that detailed all expectations as a subject in the research study (see Appendix B). The completed consent forms remain secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access to protect the identity of the participants. The participants also received a copy of their rights as a research study participant. The individual participants had the right to review any data collected from them during the study as well as the results of the findings. At any time during the study, the participants were free to dismiss themselves without any penalty.

The confidentiality of all participants was secured for the entirety of the research study, especially during the data collection process. The identity and demographics of the participants was concealed by using assigned abbreviations for their names. The

participants were referred to as African-American Male Teacher (AAMT) and a number (1-15) depending on when they were interviewed (Appendix C).

### **Site**

The location of the school system used in the research study is in southeast Georgia. The school system educates 19,000 students distributed throughout 23 schools. The system contains 23 schools: 13 elementary, 5 middle, 3 high, one theme, and one alternative school. The school system has perpetually been a high-performing system. Last school year, 17 out of the 23 schools meet Georgia standards and requirements qualifying them to earn AYP status (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

The ethnic diversity of the school system is fairly even with regards to the student population. Fifty percent of the students are African-American, 40% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, 4% multiracial, and 1% Asian composes the ethnic diversity of the targeted school system (The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2009). The school system also has subgroups of students that extend the diversity of the system. Twelve percent of the students have disabilities, 3% have limited English proficiency, and 56% are economically disadvantaged and receive free and reduced lunch (The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2009).

The school system was ideal for the research because there are a large number of African-American teachers in the school system; this allowed the researcher to identify teachers to participate in the research. About 35% of the teachers in the school system are African-American which is five times the amount of the national average (Snyder, 1999). The researcher was able to gather data from African-American male teachers from the elementary, middle, high school, administrative, and retired levels of education.

The fact that the school system lies on the outskirts of a large metropolitan city offered both urban and rural behaviors and beliefs.

### **Instrumentation**

In a qualitative research study, the human (researcher) serves as the primary data collection instrument (Key, 1997). The human instrument uses a variety of data collection methods which places the responsibility of gathering accurate and valid data upon itself. The human instrument has to remove all assumptions, biases, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to detach himself or herself from the research study and focus on data collection methods (Key, 1997). In the qualitative phenomenological study of African-American males in the educational profession, the human instrument utilized individual interviews to expose the core thoughts and perceptions of African-American male teachers.

**Interview.** The qualitative phenomenological study concerning the underrepresentation of African-American males in the educational profession involved the implementation of key informant interviews to expose the core thoughts and perceptions that African-American teachers have concerning their place in the profession. The key informant interview is used to collect data from individuals that have specific knowledge or perceptions not otherwise available to the researcher (Gall, et al., 2007). The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and find meanings of central themes in the life and world of the subjects (Kvale, 1996). An interview is particularly useful in obtaining in-depth information about a topic from a participant's personal experience (McNamara, 1999). Interviews also allow for adaptability, enabling trust and a rapport created to acquire information the respondent would not normally reveal by any other

data collection method (Gall et al., 2007).

**Interview questions construction.** The interview questions used in the research study were standardized open-ended interview questions. There was a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions asked to each respondent (Gall et al., 2007). The interview questions were concise and designed to measure a specific topic. The interview questions were written with a bias because it could jeopardize the results or purpose of the study (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2005). The construct of the questions reflected the purpose of the current study with the intention supporting the exploration of the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession.

The qualitative research study utilized two sets of interview questions. The first set was the teacher/retired teacher interview questions. The second set was the administrator interview questions. The teacher/retired teacher interview consisted of 14 questions (see Appendix D). The administrator interview consisted of 18 questions (see Appendix E).

The interview was standardized and open-ended. In a standardized and open-ended interview, each participant responded to the same pre-constructed question. A standardized and open-ended interview is the most structured and efficient of the qualitative interviewing techniques and is useful for reducing bias (Sewell, 1999). The interviewee does not have any flexibility in the wording or order of the questions (Sewell, 1999). This approach increases the consistency of the interview and eliminates the opportunity of differences in the interview process. The participants are not restricted to answer choices provided by the interviewer (Sewell, 1999). The participants had the

freedom to answer the questions with their personal words (open-ended) (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2005).

The teacher/retired teacher interview and administrator interview questions were divided into six sections. The administrator interview included the same 14 questions as the teacher/retired, but contained one additional question in correlation to the four research questions. The first section of both the teacher/retired teacher interview and administrator interview was the one initial question, used to gauge the overall feelings of African-American males' role in education.

The second section of the teacher/retired teacher interview included three questions geared toward identifying the motivation of African-American males to enter the educational profession. The second section of the administrator interview included the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview, but contained one additional question aimed at the motivation to not only enter the teaching profession but to become an educational leader.

The third section of the teacher/retired teacher interview consisted of three questions aimed to discover the factors causing a shortage of African-American males in education. The third section of the administrator interview consisted of the same three questions from the teacher/retired teacher interview, as well as one additional question geared toward discovering the actions the participant has taken as an educational leader towards reversing the shortage of African-American male teachers.

The fourth section of the teacher/retired teacher interview contained three questions on the issue of connecting African-American male teachers with African-American male students in an attempt to improve their academic achievement. The

fourth section of the administrator interview included the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview. The administrator interview consisted of one additional question to find out the level of performance of African-American male students in the classroom of African-American teachers from the observation of an educational leader.

The fifth section of the teacher/retired teacher interview contained three questions focusing on the recruitment procedures of African-American males into the teaching profession. The fifth section of the administrator interview had the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview, as well as a question directed to discover what actions the participant has taken as educational leader to recruit more African-American males into teaching. The sixth section of both the teacher/retired teacher interview and administrator interview included one question that allowed the subject to express any closing remarks, additional comments, or any statements pertinent to the research study.

**Interview pilot study.** The validity of the interview questions and procedures was provided through a pilot study. A pilot is small-scale testing of the procedures that the researcher plans to use in the main study (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A pilot study is considered soft research and allows for a preliminary analysis of the procedures to be conducted before committing to the actual study. The testing of the logistics of the procedures includes the effectiveness of the directions, the clarity of the questions, and reliability of the results (National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction of Animals in Research, 2006). The procedures are revised based on what the testing reveals. A pilot study determines the merit of the procedures and correct obvious flaws (Gall et al., 2007).

Upon the completion of the initial interview questions, the researcher presented

the questions to the peer debriefing committee. The peer debriefing committee reviewed, critiqued, and offered feedback on the interview questions. The researcher did not have to alter the questions based on the recommendations of the peer debriefing committee.

Two African-American male teachers having been in the profession for three years and two African-American male administrators were not selected to be included in the main research study, yet participated in the pilot study. This allowed the researcher to test the teacher/retired teacher interview questions, administrator interview questions, and protocol. According to Gall et al. (2007), two or three participants are sufficient for a pilot study in a qualitative research study. The information to contact the participants was available through the participant letter of interest that had been returned earlier in the study. The four individuals had individual interviews with the researcher using the pre-constructed and approved questions to guarantee the interview is a reliable process used to collect data for the study (see Appendixes F and G).

**Interview protocol.** The interviews were conducted by the researcher throughout the entire process; this helped to ensure the consistency of the interview. The transferability, which is the extent the findings and results of a study can be applied to other contexts or groups (Social Research Methods, 2006) also increased given the fact that the same individual conducted each interview. The researcher conducted a professionally structured interview with preconceived questions directed toward exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession.

The interviews were performed using a pre-constructed set of instructions and prompts that were followed with each participant. An appropriate time with the

participant to conduct the interview was scheduled. The researcher arrived at the designated location 10 minutes before the agreed upon time in to check in with the main office of the school and locate the classroom/office of the participant. The interviews took place in the classroom/office of each participant.

The entire interview was audio recorded and also used Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition. Dragon Naturally speaking 11 Home Edition is a computer program that converts speech to text, which allowed for the interview to be conducted orally and transcribed simultaneously (Nuance, 2011). The program is 99% accurate in transferring speech to text according to Nuance (2011).

Once the interview underwent conversion from speech to text, the researcher reviewed the transcript for any errors by listening to the audio version of the interview to compare it to the text version. The researcher allowed for the participant to review the transcription to verify all of the information was correct. This method is known as a member check. A member check allows the subject to agree or disagree with the information that was stated about them (Ratcliff, 1995). Once the interview underwent transcription and a member check completed, the audio tapes were stored; this safeguarded the interview and participants. The transcribed interviews and audio tape were stored in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for future data analysis used in the findings of the study.

**Pilot interview protocol.** The pilot interview is pivotal in helping to establish the interview as a valid source of data collection for the research study. The pilot interview helped to redesign the questions and to eliminate any flaws in the interview protocol (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The pilot interview utilized the exact protocol as the research

interview including scheduling the interview, arriving 10 minutes early for the interview, location (classroom/office of participant) of the interview, prompts, wordings, audio recording, transcription through Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition, and member checks. This process allowed the researcher to practice the process before officially conducting the research and documenting data for analysis. As with the individuals participating in the research interview, the confidentiality of the pilot interview participants was kept at all times. The data and information from the pilot interview were secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access.

### **Researcher's Role**

The researcher is an African-American male middle school technology teacher who is currently in his seventh year of education. The researcher is charged with educating sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students on the foundations of technology. He is the lead middle school technology teacher for the school system where he works. In this role, he is responsible for creating a middle school technology curriculum, common vocabulary list, pacing guide, common lesson plans, and common syllabi for all of the middle school technology classes in accordance with the state standards. The researcher is employed in the same school system where the study was conducted, but only used two African-American male teachers from his school as participants.

The researcher conducted the interviews throughout the study. The researcher made every effort to not include any participants with whom the researcher shared a previous relationship. Two participants were included in the study, which had a previous relationship with the researcher, but the researcher did not allow for it to interfere with

the process or to create bias. This was accomplished through bracketing. Bracketing in a research study is used to create a non-judgmental mentality and a disregarding of any prior information, perceptions, or beliefs about the participants (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). The researcher wants to help the educational world understand the need for African-American male teachers and display the potential positive actions occurring from employing minority teachers.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection is an important component of the research process. The data is the information used to explain the findings of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The data of a qualitative study is the focal point because the information would ultimately be analyzed to answer the research questions (Chenail, 1995). Establishing a strong foundation and using multiple sources to collect data for a qualitative research study is vital because it can help facilitate deeper understanding (Crabtree, 2006). The qualitative phenomenological research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession utilized teacher/retired teacher interviews and administrator interviews as data collection sources.

The teacher/retired teacher interviews and administrative interviews were the sources of data. The interviews can take general themes and narrow the focus to dive deeper to mine data. The interviews allow for the subjects as a whole to be generalized and used to gauge the thoughts and perceptions of the phenomenon group (Woods, 2006). During the interview, the researcher also observed the participants and documented actions, tendencies, and behaviors. The demographics of the participants used as a part of

the data collection. The data collected was used for the purpose of answering the research questions. The interviews focused on the research questions.

The first research question was what is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession? The teacher/retired teacher interview included two questions geared toward identifying the motivation. The interview contained a question that required the subject to directly state their personal motivation. The administrator interview included the same two questions geared toward identifying the motivation and the same one question directed toward their personal motivation to enter the profession as the teacher/retired teacher interview. The administrator interview also included one question aimed at discovering the personal motivation to become an educational leader.

The second research question was why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers? The teacher/retired teacher interview asked the participants two questions designed to pinpoint the factors contributing to the shortage of African-American male teachers. The interviewer directly asked the participants their thoughts and ideas on the topic. The administrator interview included the same two questions designed to pinpoint the factors contributing to the shortage of African-American male teachers and the one question directly asking the participants their beliefs on the topic as the teacher/retired teacher interview. The administrator interview included one additional question aimed at discovering the actions taken by the participant as an educational leader to reverse the shortage of African-American male teachers.

The third research question was how will employing more African-American male teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students? The teacher/retired teacher interview asked two questions that

invoked answers to the research question. The interviewer was able to ask the participants one question, which called them to detail their perceptions on this commonly cited belief and explain whether more African-American males would promote better academics by African-American male students. The administrator interview asked the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview. It included one additional question intended to discover what evidence of African-American male students performing better in the class of an African-American male teacher they have observed as an educational leader.

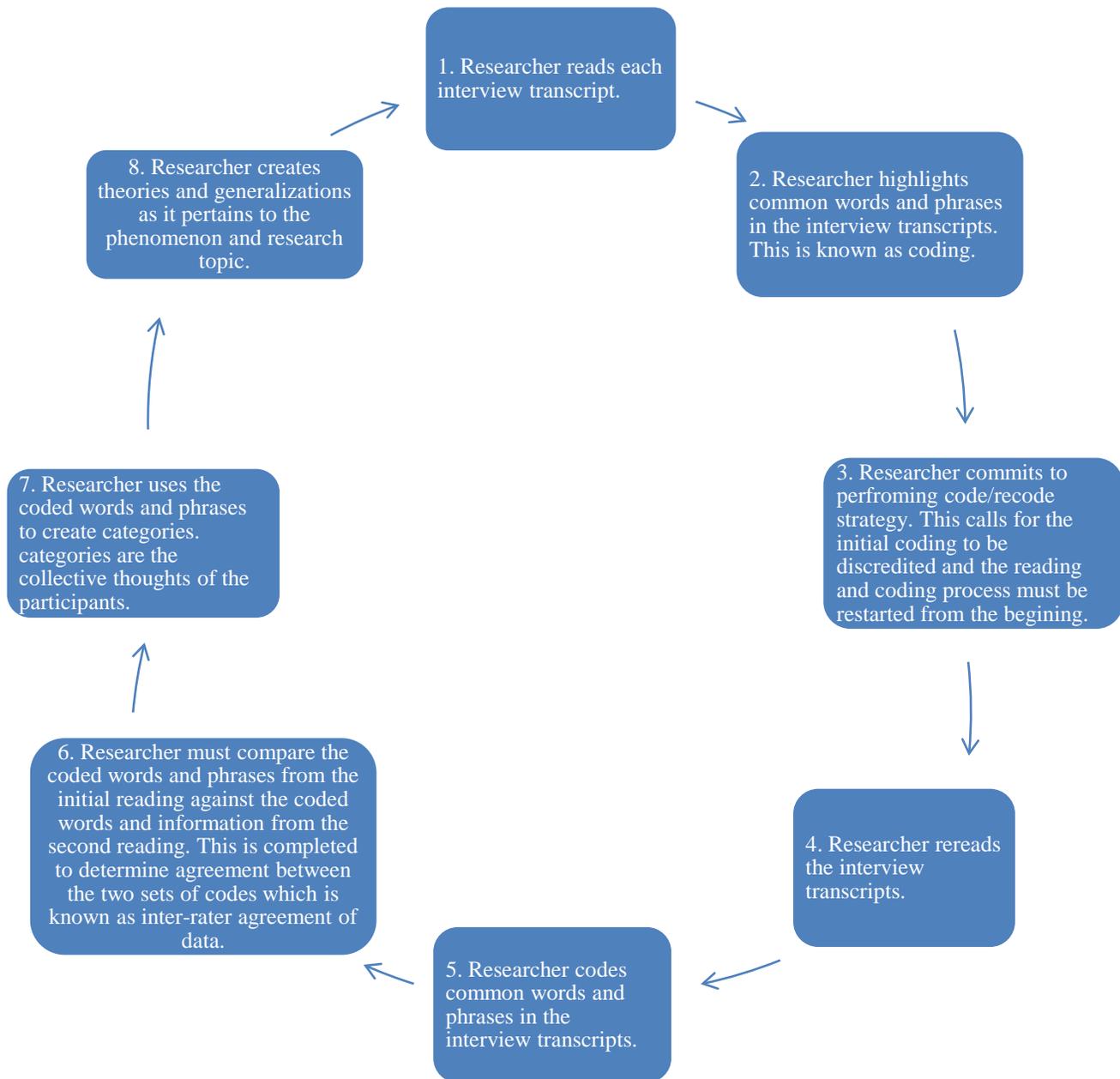
The fourth research question was in what ways can recruiting efforts of African-American males into the profession be strengthened? The teacher/retired teacher interview contained two questions providing the participants the opportunity to directly answer the question in their own words. The interview questions looked for the participants to describe the steps that should be taken to obtain a larger number of African-American male teachers. The administrator interview consisted of the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview. The participants were asked one more question in which they had to detail the measures they have taken as an educational leader to recruit more African-American males into the profession.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is the process of inspecting, organizing, and transferring collected data into a form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the studied phenomenon (Learning Qualitative Data Analysis, 2010). The qualitative data analysis portion of a study is vital because the information explained the findings of the study. Not analyzing the data correctly could discredit the findings of the study based on

erroneous information.

The use of the grounded theory constant comparative method helps to analyze the data from the qualitative phenomenological study of African-American males in education. The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method implementing a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The grounded theory constant comparative method is an eight step process illustrated in Figure 1 (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The grounded theory constant comparative method is a method of analyzing the data by coding the key points of the text; the codes are later categorized according to commonalities, and the categories are used to create a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).



*Figure 1. 8 Steps of the Data Analysis Procedure*

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The researcher started the process by reading each interview transcript. The documents must be read thoroughly to focus on common words and phrases to be coded. The coded words and phrases have the potential to become categories. Once the initial coding was completed, the researcher was committed to performing the code-recode strategy. In this strategy, the initial coding must be discredited and the coding process must be performed again in its entirety. The process of coding-recoding allows the researcher to discover if the same words and phrases need coding.

The agreement and concurrence between the two sets of codes is known as the inter-rater agreement of data (MedCalc, 2010). Utilizing the inter-rater agreement raises the level of dependability of the study. This strategy offers reliability and confidence that the categories formed from the codes are trustworthy. The categories support the composition of theories and generalizations about the phenomenon.

The data analysis approach of grounded theory involves an intake of a large amount of data and later reduced into categories or themes to support answering the research questions (Maxwell, 1996). Data reduction organizes the data through analysis serves as a mechanism to clarify the data to permit final conclusions to be drawn and verified (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher coded the data and then created and named categories based off the information in the interview transcripts for each of the four research questions.

The intent of the research questions enabled the exploration of African-American males in the educational profession. By reading and rereading the interview transcripts, the researcher was able to identify consistencies and differences in the data on African-American males in the educational profession and coded the data. The coding is

highlighting and noting of key words, phrases, or concepts that appear repeatedly by different participants (Rhine, 2005). This provides the initial insight into the thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, and ideas of the participants.

The consistencies between the codes, which are statements and answers, have similar meaning or basic idea, revealed categories. The categories came from the themes, words, and ideas mentioned frequently by the participants (Dick, 2005). The categories become the collective thought pattern of the participants. The ongoing creation of categories continues until saturation occurs, which is the point where the data does not yield any new codes or categories (Dick, 2005).

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of a research study is vital to acceptance into the academic world and to conduct further research on the topic. The goal of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are worth considering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher in a qualitative study is charged with conducting a study where the methods and steps are able to be replicated and are consistent. The researcher must also provide evidence the procedures employed were appropriate for the study and documented. Issues of trustworthiness in a qualitative study cannot be avoided and must be confronted (Gibbs, 2002). Based on Lincoln and Guba's research, trustworthiness involves establishing four main criteria:

1. Credibility- confidence in the "truth" of the findings;
2. Transferability- the ability to show the findings have applicability in other contexts;
3. Dependability- the research shows the findings are consistent and could be

replicated; and

4. Conformability- the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not biased by the researcher's motivation or interest. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006)

The qualitative research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation followed a plan of action/strategies to establish the trustworthiness in the four main areas of criteria (see Table 1). In addition to the four main criteria, the qualitative research study employed an audit trail (see Appendix G) and a peer-debriefing committee to help establish trustworthiness.

Table 1

*Plan to Establish Trustworthiness in the Current Qualitative Study*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Action/Strategy</b>
Credibility	A pilot interview study was conducted. The pilot interview study included two African-American male teachers and two African-American administrators not selected for the main research study. This allowed for the researcher to test the interview questions and protocol on teachers and administrators. The participants were able to offer suggestions, feedback, and any information which can be used to redesign the questions and protocol.
Transferability	The transferability, which is the extent the findings and results of a study can be applied to other contexts or groups, will also increase given the fact the same individual conducted each interview. In the qualitative research study, purposeful homogenous sampling was the method used to select the sample population.
Dependability	To maintain consistency, each teacher/retired teacher participant was asked the same 14 questions from the interview protocol. Each administrator participant was asked the same 18 questions from the interview protocol. The researcher used the same method for arriving for the interview, conducting the interview, and recording the interview for each participant.
Conformability	The qualitative research study employed teacher/retired teacher interviews and administrative interviews. This method is known as data triangulation. Data triangulation is defined as the convergence of multiple data sources to cross validate the data. Triangulation for the research study involved the careful reviewing of data collected through diverse methods to achieve a more accurate and valid account of qualitative results.

**Audit trail.** The current qualitative research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession used an audit trail to enhance trustworthiness. An audit trail is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). An audit trail is a record kept regarding what was done in an investigation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The audit trail contains a copy of the interview questions and prompts used in the data collection process. A timeline and detailed account of each step taken in the research study was included.

**Peer debriefing.** Peer debriefing is as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical sessions and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry which might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba, there are four purposes for peer debriefing in qualitative research; those purposes are:

1. Encourage the researcher to investigate bias and in-depth understanding;
2. Supports the testing of emerging hypotheses in a risk-free environment;
3. Offers researchers the opportunity to develop and assess upcoming steps in the research design; and
4. Researchers are able to articulate frustration, concerns, and obtain support and encouragement from a peer.

Peer debriefing was a continual approach used during the current research study. This helped the researcher to make modifications to the study by eliminating personal biases and preferences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A group of three colleagues in the

educational profession, who earned their doctoral degree and are familiar with the process associated with the peer debriefing committee. The peer debriefing committee discussed and critiqued any developing ideas or interpretations with the researcher to offer advice and recommendations. The peer debriefing method was a vital part of producing a research study accepted as credible and trustworthy. According to Spall (1998), peer debriefing is necessary to produce a high quality dissertation.

### **Ethical Issues**

No risks or ethical dilemmas are present with being in the qualitative phenomenological study of African-American males in education. The participants were not required to engage in any unethical or dangerous actions. The identity of the participants was concealed by using assigned abbreviations for their names. The participants who interviewed received pseudonyms as African-American Male Teacher 1 (AAMT1)-African-American Male Teacher 15 (AAMT15). This form of identification occurred with all 15 participants. The school and school system in which the participants work remained confidential and referred to as the target school and the target school system. The confidentiality of all participants remained secured for the entirety of the study.

The data collected was secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access until it is analyzed. Upon completion of the data analysis, the data, all related files, audio tapes, and documents were placed under security in a locked storage file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years and then destroyed. The destruction of the paper files and documents will occur through the process of shredding and then

placed into a trash receptacle. The audio tapes will be broken, the ribbon cut, and then placed in a trash receptacle.

### **Summary**

The current research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation utilized the qualitative method and phenomenological design. A qualitative phenomenological research study allows for exploration of the topic through the lived experiences of the participants (Byrne, 2001). The participants of the study were 15 African-American male teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching experience. The selection of 15 participants occurred through purposeful homogenous sampling. Purposeful homogenous sampling is intentionally selecting participants who are similar and have an abundant amount of information as it relates to the study (Patton, 1990). The participants were from the elementary school level, middle school level, high school level, administrator level, and retired.

The data collection happened through teacher/retired teacher interviews and administrator interviews. A pilot study using two African-American male teachers in the profession for a minimum of three years and two African-American administrators was conducted to validate the interview process. The data analysis occurred using the grounded theory constant comparative method, which codes the data, categorizes the data into common themes, and then describes the data in detail (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The trustworthiness of the study was solidified through an audit trail and peer review methods. The interview process and pilot interview adhered to a strict protocol. The protocol maintained the consistency of the process (Social Research Methods, 2006).

No ethical issues or risks were connected to the research study. The participants received and signed a letter of informed consent as well as received a pseudonym to protect and maintain their confidentiality.

Chapter 4 contains information related to the results of the data analysis. The data was coded and organized into categories as identified from the findings of the data analysis. The data helped explain the beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and perceptions of African-American male teachers towards their role in the education profession as well as the phenomenon under study.

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. Utilizing individual interviews with active and recently retired African-American male teachers and African-American male administrators, data was collected, analyzed, and coded using the grounded theory constant comparative method. Employing African-American male teachers at three levels of the profession (retired, classroom teacher, and administration) was essential in capturing the attitudes, perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and ideas as it pertains to the underrepresentation of African-American males in education. The data collected through the interviews helped in answering the four research questions geared toward understanding the underrepresentation of African-American males in education. The organization of the data was into categories and themes, which captured the general ideas and consistencies the participants' expressed throughout the interviews.

Chapter 4 contains an overview of the participants involved in the study. Chapter 4 also includes a detailed analysis using the information collected from the 14 standard interview questions for the active/retired teacher (see Appendix D) and the 18 standard interview questions for the administrators (see Appendix E) used in the study. The chapter contains the answers each participant provided for the corresponding interview question. Chapter 4 contains discussions on the emerging themes as well as a summary of information presented.

## **Participants**

The qualitative phenomenological study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession used homogenous purposeful sampling to select the participants. Homogenous purposeful sampling is intentionally selecting participants of the same or similar in nature and uniform throughout (Patton, 1990). Homogenous purposeful sampling is used when conducting a study on a specific phenomenon to gain an understanding of the collective (Patton, 1990). African-American male teachers in the target school system were purposefully sampled for the study.

A total of 52 participant consent forms were sent to the African-American male teachers in the target school system. A total of 37 consent forms were returned from African-American male teachers willing to participate in the study. A requirement to be included in the study was the participant had to be in the profession for a minimum of 3 years. Out of the 37 potential participants, 5 were eliminated from the opportunity to be included in the study because they had been in the profession for less than 3 years.

A total of 32 African-American male teachers in the target school system were eligible to be included in the research study. The study called for 15 participants. The study required four participants teach at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Two administrators and one recently retired teacher were used. To accommodate the necessary participant rubric, the participants were separated by grade level taught and position. This method is known as stratified sampling. In stratified sampling, the entire population is separated into different subgroups and then the final participants are

selected.

The elementary teachers were grouped together, the middle school teachers were grouped together, the administrators were grouped together, and the retired teachers were placed together. There were a total of six elementary teachers, 11 middle school teachers, nine high school teachers, five administrators, and two retired teachers. From this grouping, the final participants were selected. Four elementary teachers were randomly selected, four middle school teachers, four high school teachers, two administrators, and one recently retired teacher (see table 2).

Table 2

*Total Participants*

Profession/Grade Level	Number of Participants
Elementary School	4
Middle School	4
High School	4
Administration	2
Retired	1
Total	15

Table 3 contains the educational levels of the selected participants.

Table 3

*Personal Education*

Educational Level	Number of Participants
Bachelor's Degree	4
Master's Degree	6
Specialist Degree	3
Doctoral Degree	2

Table 4 presents the numbers of years within the education profession for each participant.

Table 4

*Years in Education*

Number of Years	Number of Participants
3-7 years	5
8-12 years	4
13-17 years	2

18-22 years	2
23 plus years	2

Table 5 contains information related to the content area specialty for each participant.

Table 5

*Subject Area*

Subject Area	Number of Participants
Math	2
Science	2
History/Social Studies	2
Language Arts/English	3
Special Education	3
Connections/Exploratory/Electives	3

Table 6 contains information related to the age ranges of the participants.

Table 6

*Participants' Ages*

Age	Number of Participants
21 years-30 years old	4
31 years-40 years old	4
41 years-50 years old	3
51 years-60 years old	3
61 years-70 years old	1

### **Question Data Analysis**

The 15 interviews were all conducted utilizing standardized and open-ended questions. The participants were all asked the same preconstructed set of questions. The peer debriefing committee reviewed the interview questions, prompts, and protocols and concluded there were not any adjustments to be made prior to the pilot study. The pilot study revealed the questions, prompts, and protocols did not need altering based on the comments of the pilot study participants.

The teacher/retired teacher interview and administrator interview questions were divided into six sections. The administrator interview included the same 14 questions as the teacher/retired but incorporated one additional question per section in correlation to the four research questions. The first section of both the teacher/retired teacher interview

and administrator interview was the one initial question.

The second section of the teacher/retired teacher interview included three questions geared toward identifying the motivation of African-American males to enter in the educational profession. The second section of the administrator interview included the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview but integrated one additional question aimed at the motivation to not only enter the teaching profession but to become an educational leader.

The third section of the teacher/retired teacher interview consisted of three questions aimed to discover the factors which have caused a shortage of African-American males in education. The third section of the administrator interview was composed of the same three questions from the teacher/retired teacher interview, but one additional question geared toward discovering the actions the participant has taken as an educational leader towards reversing the shortage of African-American male teachers was included.

The fourth section of the teacher/retired teacher interview contained three questions addressing the issue of connecting African-American male teachers with African-American male students in an attempt to improve their academic achievement. The fourth section of the administrator interview included the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview. The administrator interview included one additional question to find out the level of performance of African-American male students in the classroom of African-American teachers from the observation of an educational leader.

The fifth section of the teacher/retired teacher interview contained three questions focused on the recruitment procedures of African-American males into the teaching

profession. The fifth section of the administrator interview had the same three questions as the teacher/retired teacher interview as well as a question directed to discover what actions the participant has taken as an educational leader to recruit more African-American males into teaching.

The sixth section of both the teacher/retired teacher interview and administrator interview included one question which allowed the subject to express any closing remarks, additional comments, or any statements pertinent to the research study. This section provides the participants the opportunity to speak freely on the topic. The statements do not have to be addressed towards a question.

### **Interview Results**

#### **Warm-up (Question 1)**

**(Question 1) Good day. What are your thoughts on the current state of educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male?**

AAMT1: There is still a huge shortage of black males in the profession and most of it is due to the starting pay of a beginning teacher. However, not trying to sound sanguine, I do believe most states are doing a better job of recruiting black males.

AAMT2: I believe in this female dominated profession all of our qualities are not being utilized.

AAMT3: I think the current state of educational profession is wide open as it pertains to the African-American male; however, the profession is not appealing in most cases because of the typical African-American male has had negative experiences within the education system.

- AAMT4: Not enough African-American males are involved in the core curriculum classes and leadership positions.
- AAMT5: It appears many African-Americans do not pursue teaching as a result of the pay scale.
- AAMT6: I believe there is a deficit of qualified Black males in the educational profession. Specifically, there is a growing belief black males are not good at nurturing. This may be evident by the number of male teachers and administrators on the elementary and middle school levels.
- AAMT7: My thoughts on the current state of the educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male are very complex. The profession does not reach out to the African-American male to become teachers and society does not promote or support the idea the profession is appropriate for African-American males.
- AAMT8: African American males are changing the scope of education to downplay the stereotypes society has placed upon their shoulders. I feel more black males are taking the leadership roles by becoming coaches, mentors, advocates, liaisons in the communities as well as overall educators.
- AAMT9: If the parents, the fathers to be more specific, who are ultimately responsible for these young males don't change their paradigm, these students will continue to matriculate through our jails/prisons versus our most prestigious universities.
- AAMT10: Disappointing, there is a sincere need for more.
- AAMT11: The current state of the education profession as it pertains to the African-

American male is alarming because of lack of recruitment, lower pay, and a loss of respect for the profession, many African-American males are choosing other professions.

AAMT12: In my opinion the current state of the educational profession is one that seems to be in need of more African-American males.

AAMT13: I think the current state of the educational profession is under-appreciative for African-American males and anyone else in the profession. I think the profession is under attack due to economic strains as well as the lack of support across the board.

AAMT14: Deteriorating faster than the profession as a whole. The profession is not recruiting, retaining, and developing black professionals who can relate, motivate, and mentor our black males efficiently and effectively.

AAMT15: In the current state of African-American male involvement within the educational profession it is unfortunate to note there is a substantial shortage in the country. Culturally speaking, teaching is seen as more of a black female profession in the black community. African-American males are made aware of this fact and it is reinforced because they are raised by single parent families, which is usually the mother. Socially speaking, it is seen as both a primarily female profession and substandard income.

Question one was the warm up question and the purpose was to settle the participants into the interview. The question was constructed to obtain the general thoughts of the participants on the state of African-American male teachers. The responses provided for question one revealed African-American male teachers perceived

the state of the African-American male teachers as one of despair. Fifteen or 100% of the participants accredited the current state of African-American male teachers to the lack of monetary advantages and interest in the profession.

The participants perceived the shortage of African-American male teachers will continue to be present unless major changes occur. Seven or 46% of the participants shared their feelings of the profession being full of opportunities to enter and advance if only African-American males entertained the idea of entering the profession. Eight or 53% of the participants do not like the way education is going and they believe the system is failing African-American male students. The participants stated they are not being utilized to their fullest potential and given the chance to impact the educational world in a positive manner. Overall, each of the 15 participants agreed the profession is in dire need for more African-American male teachers to overhaul the current state of academics for African-American male students. Furthermore, the responses collected displayed a sense of frustration as it pertains to the treatment of African-American male teachers and a sense of not being fully accepted in the educational world.

#### **Identifying Motivation to Enter Teaching Profession (Questions 2-4)**

Questions two through four of the interview looked to discover the motivation for African-American males to enter and remain in the educational profession. This set of questions is instrumental in discovering what steps need to be taken to get more African-American males to enter the profession. Getting more African-American males into the profession could potentially be the first step in redirecting the downward trajectory of the African-American male student (Irvine, 2002). Fifteen of 100% of the participants were able to relay the fact motivation to enter the teaching profession has to come from within.

Intrinsic factors will lead to extrinsic factors in terms of motivation to become a teacher. Based on the current qualitative phenomenological study's findings, understanding African-American males' motivations could improve practices of recruiting them into the profession. The participants' responses to questions 2-4 provided information concerning motivation being a powerful dynamic for African-American males to teach or enter another profession.

**(Question 2) What was your personal motivation to enter the teaching profession?**

AAMT1: When I went to college I did not choose to go into teaching. I was good at math and had intentions on becoming an electrical engineer. I cannot recall having any personal motivation to enter the profession. One day after substituting to make some extra money to pay for school, I had such a wonderful experience of helping others I decided to teach.

AAMT2: I was motivated by a coach to do well in school and I wanted to give back in a supportive manner.

AAMT3: I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of the youth in my community.

AAMT4: I have a passion for educating others as well as learning.

AAMT5: To be in the position to influence lives.

AAMT6: I actually wanted to make a difference in the lives of children, especially children who grew up in poor neighborhoods like mine. In addition, it was Black male teachers who help motivate me in terms of career choices.

AAMT7: My personal motivation for entering the educational profession was I felt a calling to the profession and thought I could make a difference.

- AAMT8: My personal motivation on entering the education arena was to give back the same expertise, knowledge and skills were instilled in me. I have always had a desire to provide the younger generation with resources and life experiences would be beneficial to their success in life. I am grateful for having several educators still remain an influential part in my life today.
- AAMT9: I wanted to hopefully be a positive role model to the other African-American males I would encounter. I wanted them to have what I lacked by not having a father in the home.
- AAMT10: The sincere desire to provide quality education to students, black males in particular.
- AAMT11: I entered the teaching profession at a time when teachers were respected in the community. As a result, teachers dedicated themselves to the students who they taught.
- AAMT12: My personal motivation to enter the teaching profession was the ability to impact the lives of children and foster their educational and intellectual growth allowing them to be successful in the real world.
- AAMT13: I started teaching mainly because I wanted a stable yet somewhat spontaneous career. Because you are dealing with kids, the environment and dynamics surrounding them is always changing. I also believe my background and story could be useful at giving kids another example of what is out there in the world if they choose to work for it.
- AAMT14: I am a strong black man who understands my purpose in life and want to

be a leader, role model, and teacher to all children in general and black males in particular.

AAMT15: My personal motivation to enter the teaching profession initially was out of necessity. Truthfully speaking, I needed a job and through my educational credentials and the personal connections I had I was fortunate to attain several teaching positions, first as a substitute teacher for Clayton and DeKalb counties and then as a special education teacher for severe and profound mentally handicapped students in Newton County. The longer I stayed in teaching the more I began to value and appreciate the honor and nobility of the profession as a whole.

The participant responses provided for question two revealed the desire to help others, especially young African-American males, was the ultimate motivation factor. The responses demonstrated an obligation to give back to the community and to help others who may face many of the same obstacles in life. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants agreed one has to have a strong desire to help others, be self-motivated, and have a personal mission to serve as a teacher. Six or 40% of the 15 participants wanted their life to serve as an example for the younger generation; these participants believed it is their responsibility to help educate the youth and help to improve the academic standing of African-American male students. For them, being a role model is important and a major motivating factor to become a teacher. The overwhelming answer among each of the 15 or 100% of the participants was the belief personal motivation came from within and a desire to serve others was important.

**(Question 3) Do you believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination of both? Why?**

AAMT1: I think the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be a combination. If you truly plan to be in the profession for an extended amount of time, the motivation to work with kids, more importantly, the parents of the kids. One would have to be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically to sustain their career.

AAMT2: It has to be intrinsic because the only reason an African-American male would want to teach is to motivate and help others.

AAMT3: I believe it is an intrinsic factor because the teaching profession has not gotten the positive attention needed to draw African-American males into the profession. To become a teacher is not something glamorized, so therefore the motivation to become a teacher has to come from inside.

AAMT4: A combination because most African-American males are drawn to other professions and then choose education because of circumstances or a backup.

AAMT5: Both. Individuals want to make a decent living as well as have influence on students.

AAMT6: I believe it is a combination. Realistically, the educational profession has been “safe” in terms of job security, even in bad economic times. Yet, it is my belief black males must be intrinsically motivated to be successful in education.

- AAMT7: I believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be both extrinsic and intrinsic because one has to really have a desire to make a difference and he must also have the belief he can be effective. Extrinsic motivation might include, but is not limited to, job security and benefits.
- AAMT8: Intrinsic. Teaching is a profession one must want to pursue and do. Outside factors will only take you so far before you are either miserable or content internally.
- AAMT9: Probably intrinsic because the majority of other professions would pay us substantially more money. You chose this profession in order to try to make a real difference in the world.
- AAMT10: A combination. It has to start intrinsically so individuals work hard and are committed. Extrinsic rewards validate their hard work and reinforce their commitment.
- AAMT11: I believe the motivation of an African-American to enter the teaching profession has to be both intrinsic and extrinsic. There has to be an inside desire to teach followed by outside rewards.
- AAMT12: I believe the motivation of an African-American male can be both extrinsic and intrinsic as they could personally want to affect the lives of others or see an opportunity.
- AAMT13: I believe the main factor in an African American male teacher to enter and remain in this profession has to be intrinsic. Teaching is a good start up job. The pay is not great but ok for a young person coming out of college.

But for a male starting a family, there has to be some intrinsic motivation to stay in teaching for the long haul. If you see this as only a job, I don't think it will be enough to stay if another opportunity came up.

AAMT14: Well, I will say it is simple. Both, because one affects the other, meaning the intrinsic motivation has to be there to teach and then the extrinsic motivation such as receiving recognition comes into play.

AAMT15: I believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be both extrinsic and intrinsic. He has to acknowledge himself as being an important tool of society which contributes to bringing forth the potential for greatness in young people if not greatness in one self. Those are the extrinsic factors. Intrinsically, he has to be able to become the student and put himself in the place of the child and understand children need to have a place in society and the world.

Question three revealed the motivation for African-American males to teach has to be a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Ten or 67% of the 15 participants stated in order for an African-American male to enter the teaching profession, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors have to be present. Intrinsic motivation was cited because the participants felt one must have an internal desire to teach, impact the community in a positive manner and to help others. The participants believed teaching is a personal calling and not a profession someone can be forced to enter. The extrinsic factors would be issues such as job security and benefits. The respondents perceived the extrinsic factors as something developed once in the profession because the extrinsic factors alone are not enough to lure African-American males into the profession. The participants

believed intrinsic factors will initially lure an African-American male into the teaching profession and the extrinsic factors would be accountable for them remaining.

**(Question 4) In your opinion, what will it take to motivate more young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession?**

AAMT1: I think it would take helping these individuals understand school age African-American males are really in need of male role models. I would help them understand the high number of young black males incarcerated, are high school drop-outs, are in alternative public schools, etc. is a direct correlation of the lack of African-American male role models. Thus helping them to understand by entering the profession they would have an immediate impact on saving several communities and changing the plight of a culture of people, should be motivation enough for young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession.

AAMT2: When you use the traditional gender roles of a family and then tell a man he has to take care of his family, you have to give him more money to do so.

AAMT3: Active engagement in the educational process would help and replacement of the negative educational experiences with the positive ones. Also increase in the financial benefits of teaching. Most cases the profession isn't seen as a profession at all, but more like a job because of how tedious it can become at times.

AAMT4: Much like any other person or profession better pay and leadership opportunities.

- AAMT5: Increase in pay and benefits.
- AAMT6: I believe if Black males were influenced in the middle and high school stages of their education, their level of motivation for entering the education profession will be affected.
- AAMT7: In order to motivate young African-Americans to enter the teaching profession, the African-American community must be reeducated. They must be taught education is an honorable profession for African-American males. The value and necessity of having African-American males in the classroom must be stressed early in the lives of African-American boys.
- AAMT8: I am sure it will take an increase in pay as well as state and local government officials to understand the demands placed on teachers. Men play an active role and provide structure for some individuals to follow by serving in various capacities.
- AAMT9: Greater pay and flexibility.
- AAMT10: Improved extrinsic rewards so one knows they can have a comfortable life if he pursues a teaching career.
- AAMT11: It will have to be financially rewarding for younger African-American males to enter the teaching profession.
- AAMT12: I believe it will take more programs such as Teach Georgia that will let the individuals see the rewards of teaching but geared towards qualified male African-Americans to be developed and implemented.
- AAMT13: I think first the profession has to be marketed as a career with opportunities for advancement to top college students. The pay would

have to increase and the profession has to place a value on having African American males teach. You have to recruit what you need, be willing to go out and get them, and not sit back waiting on good candidates to find you.

AAMT14: Effective role models in the system. More than you and I realize. If there are individuals you can talk to and use as support system then more African-American males will turn to teaching as a profession.

AAMT15: I feel more needs to be done in the way of the media promotion and positive recruitment around the country to motivate more young African-American males toward the teaching profession. The military has a strong recruitment campaign. The strategy should be done with the recruitment of African-American males in the teaching field. Promote the honor and nobility and the ways in which teaching is generally a way to serve the country.

The statements offered for question four alluded to the fact higher salaries and education as a whole being cast in a positive light would be needed to recruit and retain African-American males into teaching. Nine or 60% of 15 participants stated money is a great motivator and a major deciding factor when selecting a career to enter. More money is needed to provide a stable life for a family and many young African-Americans feel the current level of pay is not sufficient (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). A man is thought to be the “breadwinner” of the family and they must be able to earn wages will hold this belief true.

Education leaders will have to highlight the positives while reversing the

stigmatism of the teaching profession to get the attention of prospective young African-American males. According to eight or 53% of the participants, education has to be able to compete with other professions for the brightest African-American male minds. The media paints a portrait of teachers being introverted individuals which are not capable of sustaining careers in other professions. The phrase “those who can’t teach and those who can do” is routinely stated and summarizes society’s thoughts of teaching. This type of devaluing of the profession will have to change to raise education to the level of other professions.

### **Factors of Shortage of African-American Male Teachers (Questions 5-7)**

Questions five through seven were constructed to gain insight on the cause for the shortage of African-American males in education from the perception of African-American males. Helping to understand the cause of the problem will aid in creating a solution. The educational system has faced a drastic decrease in African-American male teachers due to various factors. Those factors were identified as low pay, the devaluing of education, lack of community support, the lack of respect for a male teacher in society, negative educational experiences, and the lack of qualified candidates (Campbell-Whatley, 2008; Davis, 2003). The educational system in America is suffering because of the lack of African-American male teachers (Davis, 2003). Findings from the three questions could provide information to educational leaders on how to achieve racial balance in the teaching profession.

### **(Question 5) Why is there an underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession?**

AAMT1: I believe it is mainly because of the starting pay of teachers which makes

it impossible for men to take care of their families. Additionally, some do not want to contend with the students who have no interest in being in school, coupled with negative attitudes of students. It makes selling the job impossible. Thus education is being derogated and marginalized by these two developments.

AAMT2: It is not enough money and the profession is still not viewed as being a “man’s” line of work.

AAMT3: I believe the underrepresentation is due to the lack of extrinsic factors to inspire internal motivation to become a teacher. Also the system as a whole doesn’t advertise the possibilities of education being a career choice. Typically education is seen as the second option when other career choices are exhausted.

AAMT4: Because there is an underrepresentation of African-American males in college and completing college.

AAMT5: Other professions offer the potential of higher pay and faster advancement.

AAMT6: Black males are underrepresented in education probably because they are not encouraged to do so while in middle and high schools. Males were once thought of as the breadwinners. Today, education is not seen as a lucrative profession. It is not the profession of a future breadwinner.

AAMT7: The black community does not view teaching as a manly profession for African-American males. Society also sees the profession as an underpaid profession. This does not provide an image of being successful. These two

factors weigh heavily in the underrepresentation of African-American males in the classroom.

AAMT8: I believe the pay scale is somewhat less in education as opposed to various other careers. Men are presented as the “breadwinners” as it relates to having a family.

AAMT9: Probably because men can make more money working in most other professions and they may not see the long term benefits of being a teacher role model.

AAMT10: The extrinsic rewards are not sufficient.

AAMT11: It is hard for African-American males to support a family on a teacher’s salary.

AAMT12: I think the profession has not been really marketed towards the specific group to attract an adequate number of participants.

AAMT13: I think there is an underrepresentation of African-American males in all professions. African-American males are not going to college at high enough rates, which affects the overall number of qualified candidates for the job. The ones who go on to college many times choose more lucrative professions.

AAMT14: In some counties and states, the district leadership seems to focus on hindering the black teachers and not putting support systems in place to help them. So the select few which go into teaching usually leave after two or three years in the profession because they feel they do not get the assistance they need to be successful. As a black administrator, I try to

provide the black male teachers with more professional learning opportunities and support to keep them in the profession.

AAMT15: There is a lack of interest in teaching among African-American males because they feel it is a mostly female oriented profession, African-American or otherwise, and it is perceived as a substandard income field.

The responses provided for question five offered the participants' reasons for the shortage of African-American male teachers. Four or 26% of 15 participants cited the lack of males enrolling and completing college and the low starting salary are the two main factors for the shortage of African-American male teachers. African-American males were the lowest population of high school students who graduate, thus reducing the number of students who can apply and enroll into a post secondary school. If an individual does not have the credentials to become a teacher, then they cannot enter the profession. More African-American males need to graduate high school and college to assist with reversing the shortage. With the small number of eligible candidates (African-American males graduate from a post-secondary institution) it is inevitable they will be divided throughout all professions, with teaching receiving the least consideration.

According to eight or 53% of the 15 participants, the starting salary of a teacher was not attractive to African-American males because they do not feel they can live the lifestyle they desire. The starting salaries of teachers are not competitive with other fields. When exiting school with student loans and new responsibilities, an individual will opt for the career/job with the highest income possibility. While it is true an individual can increase their salary in the profession through years of experience and earn advanced degrees, the majority of individuals do not have the time or desire to enroll in

graduate school or do not want to wait to earn a decent salary. Eight or 53% of the participants strongly believe by increasing the salary of teachers there will be more African-American males willing to become an educator.

**(Question 6) Do you believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened intentionally or unintentionally? Why?**

AAMT1: I believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened unintentionally. Our nation's commerce drives the economy and we as a people are always looking for the most lucrative financially job. So as the "technology revolution" galvanized the country, it gave minorities an opportunity to experience financial security faster and easier, thus making a profession in education less attractive.

AAMT2: Unintentionally. There is a shortage of African-American males in every profession.

AAMT3: I believe it is an unintentional effect of the African-American view of education. Like I said before, the current system has lead to many of the negative experiences African-American males have faced. Education failed to engage and discipline them unlike sports and other alternatives. These negative experiences in education would drive them away from education as a career choice.

AAMT4: Neither. I believe the difficult circumstances we face in society today do not allow for us to prepare ourselves for a positive future.

AAMT5: Unintentionally. Many of the males entering college have higher expectations for their lifestyle.

- AAMT6: The shortage may have come about as a coincidence. Many black males are not going to college. Many Black males are incarcerated. Many Black males fail to receive proper training to get higher paying jobs. In other words, our American society, as well as American history, has been a direct influence on the lack of Black male teachers.
- AAMT7: I believe the shortage of African-American males is intentional because there has not been an outpouring of efforts to recruit African-American males into the profession.
- AAMT8: Unintentionally, there is no reason why a direct entity, organization and/or company would intentionally make it hard for male teachers to enter the teaching profession
- AAMT9: Unintentionally because African American males did not and still do not understand how much we are needed.
- AAMT10: Unintentionally because African-American males who have the credentials to teach choose other fields they feel offer more money and incentives. Black males who go to college and put forth an effort to complete their degree want to be rewarded with a lifestyle worthy of their hard work.
- AAMT11: I do not know if the shortage of African-American males is intentional or unintentional, but I do believe the field has to become more attractive in order to recruit them to the profession and to overcome the shortage.
- AAMT12: I would say unintentionally being the education profession has not been the most sought after career field for the African-American male.

AAMT13: I think the shortage is both intentional and unintentional. Teaching has always for me been viewed as a female career. I don't know if it's because 90% of my teachers were women or if it is just the cultural identification with the profession. I also do not think African-American males have been sought after by those in education. I never saw a recruiter at college looking for African-American male teachers at my university.

AAMT14: Systematically in most cases meaning the black community is filled with negativity such as gangs and drugs. Young African-American males get caught up in the legal system and they do not have the opportunity to complete their studies and then feel they have to turn to illegal means to make a living. The problems the black community face has a direct impact on black males not being able to expand their horizons and perform well in school.

AAMT15: I believe the shortage of African-American male teachers was intentional. Primarily many were encouraged to excel in sports because it is more socially common and attainable through scholarships and other incentives. Otherwise, if intellectually gifted, the fields of law and medicine are encouraged by parents and friends.

Question six revealed eight or 53% of the 15 participants believed the shortage of African-American male teachers happened unintentionally. The collective thought was African-American males are underrepresented in every profession and the fact African-American males are not completing school and are the highest incarcerated group impacts

the number of African-American male teachers. The shortage happened as a result of community issues such as poverty, single parent homes (usually female), the devaluing of education in the African-American community, and the cycle of imprisonment.

The educational system has not intentionally withheld employing African-American males. The lack of candidates inevitably led to the current 2% of African-American male teachers in America (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The educational world in terms of African-American males cannot be fixed until the African-American community changes for the betterment of the race. Families need to stay committed as a unit, education needs to be stressed in the home, and African-American males must stay out of the prison system. The underrepresentation of African-American male teachers happened systematically through the actions and behaviors of society, especially the African-American community according to seven or 46% of the 15 participants.

**(Question 7) Does background and life experience factor into African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession? Why or why not?**

AAMT1: I do not believe necessarily background and life experiences factor into African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession. I believe the background and life experience helps a great deal depending on what population of students one serves. It is my opinion this is a profession one has to be called to do!

AAMT2: Yes. For example my mother told me to go into computers or something so I could make money but I went against her wishes because I wanted to help young fatherless men and coach football. So if I would have listened

to my mother I never would have entered the teaching profession.

AAMT3: Yes it does. Based on what I said before, the negative experiences have shaped a viewpoint for most African-American males. In some cases however; if the home situation (parents' occupation, single mother, etc.) lends itself to foster positive educational experiences then one might choose education as a profession.

AAMT4: Of course. For some African-American males going to college and getting a degree is a tradition and with others it is not. So if you are expected to do something positive you will and if you come from a place of poverty, negativity, and low expectations then more than likely it is what you will accomplish.

AAMT5: No. Again I think it relates back to a lifestyle or the way they want to live.

AAMT6: Yes. Many black males are incarcerated and dropping out of high school. If you do not have a foundation to build upon it will be very difficult to do anything positive and constructive in life. The majorities of African-American males grow up in fatherless homes and do not have a positive outlook on education or life. They are simply trying to survive. Surviving usually entails selling drugs or other illegal activities. So yes background and life experiences play a huge role in deciding to further ones education and becoming a teacher.

AAMT7: Both background and life experiences factor into African-American males' decision not to enter the teaching profession. Since teaching is not seen as a manly occupation, it is not stressed in the community. Also

African-American male children do not see many African-American men in the classrooms so they do not see African-American males as role models and this reinforces the notion teaching is not a manly profession and should not be pursued by African-American males.

AAMT8: In some cases, I've had a personal experience with another educator who spoke of growing up with a learning disability. The individual stated teachers had always spoken down on his ability levels. This same individual excelled in his studies despite what his teachers said and became their boss as head principal at the same school. I think individuals make choices based on personal goals/and motivation.

AAMT9: Not really---actually the backgrounds and life experiences of AA males would make them even more appealing to the AA students they would encounter.

AAMT10: African-American males are raised in a society and culture which does not place a value on education and the teaching profession. In the black community a premium is placed on professions such as entertainment, sports, and glamorized professions. The next wave of professions the black community values are doctors and lawyers and the ones who do make it to college are encouraged to pursue these professions. Being a teacher is very rarely addressed.

AAMT11: Speaking from personal experience I fully believe life experiences and background impact the decision to enter teaching. I grew up in a not so ideal environment and I wanted to be able to help other people in similar

situations progress and succeed in life.

AAMT12: I definitely think background and life experience factors into the African-American male's decision to enter the teaching profession. If education is enforced and pushed in their supportive environment growing up then the males may gain interest into pursuing a teaching career. If not, the chances will not be as great.

AAMT13: I think the background and life experience has a lot to do with an African American male going into this profession. Most African American male teachers have a sports background and coaching a sport drew them into teaching. Others may have had a very influential teacher growing up caused them to consider the profession. Then there are the ones who choose the profession as a 2<sup>nd</sup> career after leaving the corporate world.

AAMT14: Of course. Because black males tend to follow paths they have been exposed to and they respect and in most cases this is usually sports figures, entertainers, or drug dealers.

AAMT15: Background and life experience factors in African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession. This is true because most major decisions in life stem from our past. For instance a young African-American male teacher probably came from a background of parents who were teachers and pushed education. They were middle class living adequately but not quite rich. Another young man on the other hand who grows up in affluence enjoying the material riches of life never wanting for anything will probably not go into teaching because he will not be able

to keep purchasing the high end material things they are accustomed to due to the salary of a teacher.

Question seven yielded answers described how both background and life experiences influence the decision of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants believed background and life experiences influence the decision of an individual to enter the teaching profession. The participants believed having a background where education is valued will assist in luring African-American males into the teaching profession. The participants acknowledged understanding the importance of education from an early age and developing in an educational supportive community is conducive to learning and will shape your future thoughts of education. Background plays an important role in life decisions and actions. If you are expected to perform well academically and attend postsecondary school then it will be reinforced and you will strive to obtain those goals. If there is not any expectation to perform well and to continue your education then chances are you will simply go through the motions. Too often in the African-American community goals and positive expectations are not placed on students and they do not work up to their potential.

Six or 40% of the 15 participants believed going through negative experiences in education such as underfunded schools, suspension, and uncaring teachers, makes it increasingly difficult for African-American males to detach their background and personal history and have a desire to become a teacher. Many African-American males are taught by a white female and they may not have the tools necessary to interact and foster a supportive learning environment (Foster, 1990). African-American males must learn to elevate over negative experiences and use those situations as motivation to propel

forward and achieve greatness. In too many instances, African-American males give up on education after one negative experience (Fremon & Hamilton, 1997). African-American males cannot have their spirit and zest for education broken. African-American males must take negative situations and turn them into positive outcomes.

### **African-American Male Teachers and African-American Male Students (Questions 8-10)**

The construction of questions 8-10 enabled the participants to address the notion of African-American male teachers being better suited to provide instruction to African-American male students. The educational community has researched and debated this notion and previous research has a positive teacher-student relationship with the same race and gender could influence the student's achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). As African-American male teachers, the participants have firsthand experience with the issue either personally having African-American male teacher when they matriculate through school, currently teaching African-American male students, or both.

The fact remains individuals respond to others who resemble them and which they share similar life experiences (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The correlation between African-American male teachers and African-American male students could be the missing link required to get better academic performance from this population of students. Nine or 60% of the participants believed cultural synchronization plays a large role in getting African-American male students to achieve with the help of African-American male teachers. The respondents believed having a role model and a person who looks like them in a positive position will motivate the students to do better. The participants displayed strong feelings towards this topic because they want African-

American males to be successful and perform well academically.

**(Question 8) There have been wide ranging debates about the belief of African-American male teachers having a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, what are your thoughts on this theory?**

AAMT1: I believe this is only true if the teacher is an effective instructor which can build a relationship with the student and the student has to trust the teacher and be receptive.

AAMT2: I believe this is true because students use familiarity for learning, then they can learn from a familiar face.

AAMT3: I believe this theory is correct but I also believe any teacher who is willing to put their lives into educating students will have a positive impact.

AAMT4: I believe African-American male teachers encourage African-American students to be more active learners and to participate in class.

AAMT5: I would agree because there are so many single parents raising both girls and boys. It becomes a role model effect.

AAMT6: My theory is the lack of male influence in education and in the home has negatively influenced male students' academic standings throughout the country. Although mothers have been carrying the load in many black homes, the lack of the father has been devastating. Black male teachers could fill the void and provide commentary to students on what it takes to be a stand up male.

AAMT7: I think African-American males in the classroom have a major impact on

the African-American child. It sends a strong message to the African-American male child a man can be a teacher and still be masculine. Seeing African-American men in the classroom sends the message all African-American males are not gang-bangers and thugs. It also suggests to African-American male children they can also become teachers.

AAMT8: My goals are to increase student knowledge and level of understanding as it relates to GPS and encourage growth and development to build on previous knowledge. Students are given opportunities outside of the classroom to aide in comprehending material presented in class as well as present methods/strategies to improve learning. Students collaborate together in the least restrictive environment to support their growth and various learning styles.

AAMT9: I believe this could be true because people in general perform better when they are comfortable with the person in charge. Race is a vital component when it comes to academic performance. School districts should make the effort to match student needs and race with teacher race as to balance out the schools.

AAMT10: I feel since they have shared experiences, the African-American teacher has a clearer understanding of the unique challenges faced by their younger students.

AAMT11: Speaking from experience, I looked up to African-American male teachers in the classroom. It is only natural for black males to be impacted by teachers they look like.

- AAMT12: I think this theory is true, but only to a certain extent. If the African-American male teacher is effectively instructing lessons and displaying desirable social behavior, then those teachers can easily be viewed as a role model for the black students. The students definitely emulate or at least try things or people they look like and look up to.
- AAMT13: I think many African-American kids need to see more positive models of what an African-American male should look like. They need to see as many examples of African-American males working in various professions to give them a visual. Many of our kids, especially the ones from lower economic environments, look up to the images they see every day. So they tend to model what they see. If you know a lawyer, know a teacher, know a doctor, etc., then you are more inclined to look up to how they walk, talk and live. They need visuals and interaction to help them see it can be done because someone like me has done it. Many of my youth coaches were as big an influence on me as my parents and uncles. They gave me an example of what I can accomplish and this helped give me the confidence to do it.
- AAMT14: You can listen to all the debates you want, but these debates should include all the black males who are, have been, and will be, effected by education and the major topics. Check the percentages of successful black male students in the classes of African-American male teachers and the success rate of black male students in the classes of other teachers which is usually a white women because they dominate the profession.

AAMT15: I find African-American males who teach promote a positive image and increase the performance level academically of students. It says to young men they are not only capable of learning with young girls and people of other races but they can excel. It also demonstrates as future African-American men they too can help make a difference as a teacher.

The construction of question eight provided the foundation to investigate the link between African-American teachers and African-American male students in regards to academic performance. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants believed the connection between the academic achievement and engagement of African-American male students is increased in the presence of African-American male teachers. Ten or 67% of the 15 participants contributed this connection to the fact of shared culture, backgrounds, and familiar appearance. The participant's perception was it is easier to relate to someone you outwardly resemble and you are more receptive to the information they possess.

The fact many African-American male students long for a positive male figure in their life makes the connection of African-American teacher and student easier to embrace (Irvine, 2002). Four or 26% of the participants did express the need for the African-American male teacher to be qualified and have a mastery of the content. Simply being an African-American male will not cure all ills. The teacher will have to have a passion for the job and be well versed in their craft.

**(Question 9) During your personal experience in school did you ever have an African-American male teacher and what was their impact on your academic performance? If you did not have the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher, what type of impact do you think**

**it would have had on your school experience?**

- AAMT1: I had two black male teachers between K-12 grades; both ironically were high school math teachers. Only one really stayed on me to do better so I guess I would have to say they had a moderate impact on my academic performance.
- AAMT2: I never had an African-American male teacher. Growing up in rural South Carolina, seeing a black male teacher was not common. I believe I would have understood more of the academic struggles of African-Americans and he would have been able to translate the idea for me.
- AAMT3: I did and I believe it was the interaction which helped me become a teacher today. Their ability to relate to me helped me a great deal. In some cases they were harder on me than some of my other teachers.
- AAMT4: I did not have the pleasure of having a black male teacher during my academic career. I believe an African-American would have influenced more of my peers to pursue post-secondary education.
- AAMT5: I did not have one in high school but in elementary. Having one in high school maybe he would have been able to provide the importance of academics at the high school level and I would have had someone to relate to.
- AAMT6: While in school, athletics were critical to my survival. My male coaches were more influential than the administrators. This was due to the relationship we had established through my participation in sports. I tended to gravitate towards the sports coached by Black males because

they reminded me of my father who lived with his second wife and family. I got the type of discipline from them which resembled the discipline I got at home.

AAMT7: Yes I had African-American male teachers. This had a tremendous effect upon my life. One of these teachers is the main person who pushed me to apply for college. It made me realize I could become a teacher as well.

AAMT8: Personally, I know I have a positive impact on a diverse group of students. They are able to speak with me on a personal level as it relates to achieving goals and becoming successful individuals. My overall student achievement goal is to mentor students in class, sponsoring SECME and through sponsoring the step team to promote higher learning and have students to pursue attainable goals with being part of a team as a different outlet from traditional extracurricular activities.

AAMT9: I did not have an African-American male teacher during my entire K-12 career. Sad to say coming from a single parent home without a father, this would have been wonderful for me to experience.

AAMT10: Yes, the committed teachers who were African-American served as role models and made me feel school were not a totally alien place where I did not belong.

AAMT11: I started school under segregation. It was the norm not the exception to have African-American male teachers in the classroom. They were also part of our communities. It was not uncommon to live next door to your teacher. African-American male teachers impacted my academic

performance positively.

AAMT12: During my school years I did have the opportunity to be taught by a few African-American male teachers. I feel those teachers did easily command my focus as I looked and learned from individuals with things and interest in common with me.

AAMT13: I had a couple of African American male teachers influence my academic performance. Most of them were my coaches. They put a value on education and they worked with my father who demanded academic success in order to play. So they stayed on me and showed me the difference between getting by and really competing to do my best athletically as well as academically. They also believed in me even when others didn't. The strong support caused me to trust them and let them guide me in the right direction.

AAMT14: No, it would have been nice and it would have given me a visual of a successful black male to emulate. It would have been someone to identify with and bring my problems to and seek advice.

AAMT15: I did not have an African-American male teacher until I entered the postsecondary level. The teacher was an English Literature professor at Kentucky State University. By this time I was simply glad to know there were African-American men teaching and teaching at such a high level. I think even though my own father was a bilingual educator, having more African-American male teachers early in my life would have given me a greater reason for excelling in my studies.

Question nine required the participants to detail how their educational experience was impacted by an African-American male teacher or how it could have been shaped if given the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher. The perceptions of nine or 60% of the 15 participants who had the chance to have an African-American male teacher were the teacher had a significant positive effect on their life and ideas about education. They were able to relate to them and it helped them perform better academically. The participants explained how they viewed the teacher as a role model and they felt the teacher focused on them and pushed them to perform well. The African-American male teacher had high expectations for them and they worked to meet those expectations. Three or 20% of the 15 participants indicated they became teachers in large part because of the African-American male teachers they encountered while they were in school.

Six or 40% of the 15 participants did not get the chance to be instructed by an African-American male teacher but believed it would have been beneficial to have a person to view in a positive manner and they could use as a resource. The same six participants indicated an African-American male teacher would have been able to relay the struggles of being an African-American male in America and the challenges they faced. The participants believed they would have been able to create a connection to the teacher and use the teacher as a mentor. Having a role model and an individual you can lean upon in tough times is important during the adolescent years especially for an African-American male when many do not have a relationship with their father or have a positive male in their life (Corbett & Wilson, 2002). They perceived having an African-American male teacher would have been a meaningful and impactful experience.

**(Question 10) Can the achievement gap close and African-American male students demonstrate the ability to be top performing students with the assistance of African-American male teachers? Why or why not?**

AAMT1: Yes. I believe this is only true if they are an effective practitioner who can motivate students beyond their predetermined point.

AAMT2: Yes they can help close the achievement gap. Students now want to be motivated by someone of their own likeness and they can relate to.

AAMT3: I think with quality instruction the achievement gap could be closed. A good teacher could do help close the gap. I also think African-American male teachers bring other intangibles to the classroom and build relationships to foster the educational process.

AAMT4: I would like to think the achievement gap would close so there will be more African-American male students succeeding in school, graduating from college, and become teachers themselves.

AAMT5: Not necessarily because the home environment also plays a significant role in achievement.

AAMT6: Partly, yes. For some students, a Black male teacher can be the critical variable which helps a student take their academic achievement to the next level. This is dependent upon the type of relationship established.

AAMT7: Yes. African-American male teachers can be influential in helping to close the achievement gap and can help African-American male students to become top performing students by serving as positive role models, by mentoring African-American males, and by pushing these students to

perform at their optimum level.

AAMT8: Yes but it will have to be with a highly qualified instructor. There will also have to be support from the home because structure and reinforcement from the home environment will have to be present.

AAMT9: I believe by infusing African-American male teachers into the educational equation, African-American male students will begin to gain better self worth which can lead to significant academic gains.

AAMT10: Yes. African-American male students have the capability to perform as well if not better than their counterparts. It is incumbent upon African-American teachers to act as advocates and be leaders in meeting this goal. Research has shown when properly motivated, African-American male students are academically competitive with their counterparts.

AAMT11: I believe this can happen if the African-American male teacher is dedicated to the craft and has a genuine concern for the students.

AAMT12: I believe this question can honestly go either way. The achievement gap can be closed I feel if there is also a commitment given from the end of the student's living environment to accommodate the African-American male teachers efforts. Otherwise, if the living environment is not conducive to the learning atmosphere with the African-American teachers then it will continue to be a huge challenge.

AAMT13: I think African American male teachers can help close the achievement gap. But I do not think the gap will close until the resources at home and at school are equal and the motivation from home is greater. Academics

have to be made the number one priority at home by parents and the expectations have to be set there. Parents and kids have to learn how to push each other and how to trust teachers enough to build a relationship with them. But kids, especially African American males, have to see these life examples of individuals of top performers when they were in school.

AAMT14: Yes, because we hold the key, but the present system is not a level playing field for us to use the knowledge and skills we possess.

AAMT15: I think the achievement gap can close with the assistance of African-American male teachers helping African-American male students become top performers academically by accentuating the necessity to succeed and focus on particular goals of their course of study. They can also stress the long range goals of African-American males and the goals of their individual futures.

Question 10 enabled the participants to explain why or why not the achievement gap will be able to close with the assistance of African-American male teachers. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants believed the achievement gap can close with more African-American male teachers. The participants feel African-American male teachers can command the attention of African-American male students and place them on a path to success. However; this belief was predicated on two factors. Those factors were a qualified and effective instructor and a commitment from the home.

Five or 33% of the 15 participants stated to be effective; an African-American male teacher must master his content area and use effective teaching strategies to help close the achievement gap. The teacher must have a love of education, a drive to help

others, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to see the success of a student. The African-American male teacher must be able to (a) use different instruction techniques to reach the numerous types of learners, (b) try new strategies and to accept constructive criticism to improve in areas of weakness, and (c) teach to the standards and get the students to perform on standardized test since this is now a large part of the success of a teacher. The participants recognized simply having an African-American teacher would not be sufficient to close the achievement gap; the African-American male teacher would have to understand pedagogy and have a dedication to the profession.

The home environment has to place an emphasis on learning (Codjoe, 2007). Four or 27 % of the 15 participants discussed how students must have an expectation of academic success from home to help close the achievement gap along with having an African-American male teacher. The support system at home has to be an extension of the learning at school. The parent(s) must be involved in the educational process. The parent(s) must stay in communication with the teacher to understand expectations, classroom work, and to keep a track of the academic performance of the student. The home environment must be conducive to learning which allows the student ample space and limit distractions to complete assignments and study. Education has to be made priority number one and not achieving academic success cannot be tolerated.

### **Recruiting African-American Male Teachers (Questions 11-13)**

Questions 11 through 13 focused on the recruitment efforts of African-American males into the teaching profession. This set of questions is important in shaping the future teaching force and raising the bar for African-American male students. By discussing the historical aspect of recruiting African-American male teachers and

identifying what techniques and strategies would work best for the future recruitment of African-American males, the educational system will understand which steps to take.

Recruiting the sharpest and most creative minds is what sets education apart from corporate jobs. Corporate America is willing to go to postsecondary institutions and recruit not only graduating students but underclassmen if they believe the individual will help their company (Evans, 2010). They provide bonuses and incentives for choosing these careers/jobs and put them on the fast track with getting hired by the company (Orion International, 2011). The educational system in America must take the same approach if it hopes to compete for the brightest young minds. This is especially true for African-American males. The educational system has to seek these individuals and market the educational profession.

**(Question 11) The recruitment efforts of the educational system to get more African-American males into the profession has been criticized, do you think the criticism is justified? Why or why not?**

AAMT1: I really do not know. I think there has been a struggle. According to research data kept by Georgia's Professional Standards Commission from 2006-2008, it has almost been impossible to get minority teachers period to consider teaching as a profession. Therefore, in all instances it is not justified but in some cases an argument can be made.

AAMT2: There criticism is unjust because you cannot force someone into teaching if they do not have any desire. No one can be forced to do anything they do not want to do.

AAMT3: Not justified. I do not think it has been enough. The system isn't

structured to appeal to this demographic of teachers. Visual images of teachers do not include us. Until the view is changed it will be hard to recruit African-American males into teaching.

AAMT4: No because positive black role models are needed as a whole. Many African-Americans believe African-American males are targeted in a negative light, so they choose to not enter teaching because of their personal educational experiences.

AAMT5: Yes. If the system made the incentives more enticing and competitive to other professions, then more African-American males will become teachers. The system can increase their efforts.

AAMT6: No the criticism is not justified. I believe the effort is being made to recruit black males. However, our society, for some reason or another, has not adequately prepared black males to not only teach but be productive citizens.

AAMT7: The criticism against the recruitment efforts to get more African-American males into the teaching profession is not justified because there is a need to get more African-American males into the teaching profession and any effort put forward should be commended because some effort is better than no effort. I do believe more can be done and there has not been enough done to recruit more African-American males into teaching.

AAMT8: I do not think the effort can be criticized because the number of eligible candidates is small. I think the effort should be in educating black males and preparing them for real world life. The candidates have to be in place

before recruitment efforts can be put forward.

AAMT9: The criticism is not needed. I believe the system should purposefully recruit more African-American males or at least give them the opportunity to have a legitimate interview. We shouldn't just give someone a job because of their race; however, we should strongly consider the needs of the students in the district and meet them accordingly.

AAMT10: Yes it is justified. The recruitment efforts are not sufficient and they should start in high school.

AAMT11: I do not think it is justified. People will always make a life decision based on what is best for them. Even with recruitment efforts, the number of black males in the classroom will remain low because of the high dropout rate and the low college graduation rate so the amount of potential teachers continues to dwindle.

AAMT12: I think the criticism is not justified. When there is a lack of anything whether it is racial or gender one must look at the amount of potential candidates. If the possible candidates are not there, much cannot be done

AAMT13: Yes, I think it is justified. You have to go out and fight for the number one resource a school system has, and it is its teachers. The school and its students will be as effective as the leadership and the teachers are. But you have to be willing to work to find the individuals. Create incentives for teachers to come in and work. Every competing industry competes for talent and yet the educational system sits back and waits for the leftovers. If having a well diverse teacher population is important to you, then you

will make it a priority to go out and seek the best talent you can find.

Education should be competitive.

AAMT14: I can tell you if you include culture, history, and the right people to recruit then you have a strong argument to critique for the effort. African-American males are not thoroughly prepared for life by society and schools.

AAMT15: If the recruitment efforts of the educational system have been criticized it should be for lack of adequate promotion. I think it is justified because not enough effort has been made to promote the profession. Facts such as honor, nobility, serving one's country, being a public servant, and directly impacting the future should be promoted. Also the fact teachers are no longer held back by low incomes. It is true the starting salary can be low to support a family, but with additional education and a few years in the profession, a teacher can easily make \$65,000 a year, which is enough to support a family especially if the spouse is working and earning about the same salary, the family will live a very nice middle/upper middle class lifestyle. The salary is also on par with many corporate jobs in this day and time including lawyers. This needs to be advertised because the media portrays teachers as being poor and unable to enjoy life such as traveling and going out to eat. This is not true and the stereotypes have to change in order to lure more eligible African-American males.

Question 11 asked the participants to explain their feelings in terms of the criticism the educational system receives for its recruitment of African-American males

(NBC, 2009). Nine or 60% the 15 participants believed the criticism was not justified on three accounts. The participants cited the educational system could not be criticized due to the lack of eligible candidates. The low number of African-American males graduating from college make it extremely difficult to target and market to a certain portion of the population. By the accounts of the participants, African-American males are underrepresented in every profession, so if education must be criticized then every other profession must be as well.

The second reason the participants perceived the criticism against the educational system was an individual can be forced into a situation/profession they do not want to enter. If a person has no interest in the teaching profession then they cannot be forced or coerced into the career. The third reason the participants believe the educational system should not be criticized is the educational system is putting forth an effort. The effort may not be to the satisfaction of some people, but an effort is being provided. The participants concur the effort can be increased but they argue some effort is better than no effort.

**(Question 12) Were you recruited into the profession and if yes how were you recruited?**

AAMT1: Yes. My recruitment into the profession was threefold. I am a minority, a male, and I taught mathematics which was and still is a high needs subject area for most school systems. This made me very sought after by school systems across the region.

AAMT2: No. I have always wanted to be a teacher.

AAMT3: No. I wanted to be a teacher. I chose to go into the chemistry profession

first because I made more money starting as a chemist than a first year teacher. By about \$15,000.

AAMT4: No I was not recruited into the profession. I played football in college and I knew I wanted to coach and being a teacher was part of my plan of one day coaching on a collegiate level.

AAMT5: No. I entered teaching as a second career after I retired/decided to leave sales and marketing when the industry begun to suffer, companies folded, and hundreds of thousands in the industry were laid off.

AAMT6: No, I chose the profession. I always felt a call to teach and make a positive impact on the lives of young black men. No one ever sat me down and discussed the idea or possibility of being a teacher.

AAMT7: I was not recruited into the profession. When I began teaching 30 plus years ago, teaching was an important and respected profession. Teachers were revered in the community and viewed as a pillar in the community. I was a strong black male who felt the duty to lead my people and community to do great things and accomplish goals in their life. As I matured in the profession, the views and thoughts about teaching, especially in the African-American community, changed drastically. It is now not a valued profession but one which is degraded and put down because of the monetary value society places on a livelihood.

AAMT8: No, it was my desire and passion to teach. I knew I wanted to teach leaving college, but I resisted the urge because the profession was looked down upon. I opted for jobs I felt were more conducive to my perceived

lifestyle and the money I wanted to make. After spending time in corporate America as a retail manager and a mortgage broker, I realized I was unhappy and I truly wanted to teach.

- AAMT9: No. I was called to this profession by God Almighty and I decided to answer the call.
- AAMT10: No. I decided to become a teacher on my own merit.
- AAMT11: No I was not recruited in the teaching profession. I worked as a group home worker/counselor working with individuals and I realized I had a thirst to teach, so I took the steps to become a teacher and have been teaching for the past 27 years.
- AAMT12: I was recruited into the profession by an individual who was already in the field. He is a black male and he always seemed passionate and excited when discussing his job. He helped me to get into a teaching program and helped navigate me through the different tests and prerequisites in place to become a teacher.
- AAMT13: I was recruited to a certain extent. The principal who brought me in had been asking me to become a teacher for a couple years. I was in the corporate industry and decided I wanted a change. I took her up on an offer and have been teaching ever since.
- AAMT14: No and yes. No, in the sense no one ever asked me to consider teaching as a profession or tried to lure me to the profession. Yes because I was naturally recruited for over twenty years because I am considered a strong black leader of young men in my community and I wanted to help solve

the problems in the black community. I came into this field by recruiting myself to accept the challenge of aiding young brothers to find their self and become strong black men capable of accomplishing anything they put their minds to.

AAMT15: I was recruited by a teacher. She taught middle school English and she knew I had a degree in English and was looking for a job. She helped me to navigate through the certification procedure. She let me know the school she was at was in need of an English teacher and she felt I would be perfect as a black male because the students in the school had no positive role models. She made it possible for me to meet with the principal and for him to set up an interview and coordinate with the central office human resources. Without her I probably would have not gotten into the profession. So to her I am forever grateful.

Question 12 asked the participants to recall if they were recruited into the teaching profession. If they were recruited into the teaching profession they were asked to explain exactly how they were recruited. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants were not recruited into the profession. Only 3 or 20% of the 15 participants were recruited into the profession. Those three were not recruited by a school or school system but by another teacher who felt they would be good teachers.

The consensus of the participants was teaching is not necessarily a profession you can be recruited into as much as it is a profession you are called to enter. Fifteen or 100% of the participants made the conscious decision to become teachers because it was a profession they had always wanted to enter. The participants all wanted to make a

positive impact and help others and a recruitment process was not necessary to get them to want to become a teacher.

**(Question 13) In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more African-American males into teaching?**

AAMT1: I think it would take helping these individuals understand school age African-American males are really in need of male role models. This can be accomplished through internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing. Exposing the students to what a teacher does on a day-to-day basis and how a teacher impacts lives and the power they possess to shape the community. I would help them understand the high number of young black males incarcerated, are high school dropouts, are in alternative schools, etc., is a direct correlation of the lack of African-American male role models/teachers. So helping them understand by entering the profession they would have an immediate impact on saving our community.

AAMT2: Increase the money paid to teachers and society needs to give teachers the respect they so rightfully deserve. Increase the promotion of the profession with advertisements and information. Go to schools and make the profession intriguing by highlighting the good points. Have commercials and marketing tools such as brochures and videos. Have websites and different literature African-American males can read to entice potential teachers. Right now, the marketing campaign is weak and stale. It needs to be revamped to reach male minorities.

AAMT3: Increase the financial benefit and make them comparable to other professions. This will make qualified individuals truly consider the profession. Also the honor has to be placed back into teaching. The profession does not receive any recognition for the good it provides. The educational system has to be able to market itself just like the military, colleges, and other careers. I especially associated education with the military because they are both governmental agencies. The same marketing dollars placed on military promotion should be placed on education. Go to high schools and colleges and have recruitment centers like the military. Have commercials on television and the radio like the military. Put the teaching profession in the forefront and this will attract more African-American male teachers. This approach has worked for the military because it has more African-American males in the military than are teachers.

AAMT4: Three ways I can think of is student loan forgiveness, higher pay, and job security. With student loan forgiveness, the school system or government should pay back the student loans of an African-American male teacher. The teacher would be required to serve as a teacher in a particular school system for a minimum number of years in order for the loan to be forgiven. This will draw in highly qualified candidates because repaying student loans can be a burden to many individuals coming out of college. Higher pay would make the profession more credible and competitive to other professions. Job security is having the school system give black male

teachers three to five year contracts. The teacher will know they are secure and have the time to hone their craft.

AAMT5: Offering competitive pay and benefits equal to other professions. Money is the number one incentive to most people because they want to live a good life.

AAMT6: To recruit black males I think it is important to thoroughly explain to them the long range benefits of teaching. This can be done by stripping the negative connotations associated with the teaching profession. Teachers are often viewed as people who could not cut it in the “real world” so they must instruct others on how to succeed. The educational world has to allow people to see teaching for what it really is and this is the business of helping others and helping to improve the world. Teachers are just as important as any other profession including doctors and lawyers. The educational world needs to promote and market the fact without teachers there would not be other professions.

AAMT7: Strategies and techniques to get more African-American males into the teaching profession must begin in the early elementary years. There should be programs geared toward offering African-American males in high school and college some incentives to enter the profession. Such incentives might include scholarships, paid internships, loan forgiveness programs, and other financial assistance programs.

AAMT8: Exposure. By exposing males to a classroom setting they will be able to understand the dynamics of education and why African-American males

are sorely needed in education.

- AAMT9: Signing bonuses and financial incentives. Being paired with effective administrators which understand the need for African-American males to work in the profession will help African-American males remain in the profession.
- AAMT10: Mobilize plans in the community. Efforts should be community based and start by reaching out to youths in the black community and educating them on the profession and exposing them to the educational profession.
- AAMT11: The best strategy is for school systems to help pay to educate promising young teachers through scholarships or loan repayment. There should also be programs in place like there are in other professions to allow for potential members of the profession to spend a day in the shoes of a teacher or to job shadow a teacher for a couple of days. This will provide the student with a behind the scenes view of teaching.
- AAMT12: I think the strategies and techniques which should be used are ones that market the field of education and the numerous opportunities. If you examine the whole educational setting there are positions you can find within the profession you can find in the corporate world. For example school systems have accountants, IT support, and lawyers which are jobs in the corporate world. By exposing individuals to this fact more African-American males may be drawn to the profession.
- AAMT13: I think you have to identify where an African American male can aid your school system and get them involved in an overall program. You can't

just look at teaching, but think about it from a career aspect. Identify the possible opportunities in the overall educational field and how their talents and backgrounds can be an asset to the system. Then show them how they can advance just like any other career if they put in the work. People don't just want jobs, but careers. Many men are looking for ways to advance and make more money to provide for themselves and families. Show them the possibilities in education both in the classroom and outside of it.

AAMT14: I can say one thing at this time; fix the system by putting people in the most powerful positions, which really care about our children. The people in power right now are all puppets and only care about the bottom line, which is usually financial. The powers that be are not in tune to the community and what is truly going on in the schools. The lawmakers and system leaders have not set foot in a classroom in years, so how could you expect them to know how to solve the problem and help African-American male students.

AAMT15: In my opinion I believe television, newspapers, websites, and the media as a whole can and should play a significant role in the recruitment of African-American male teachers. These outlets should be enforced and promoted by African-American male teachers themselves. There should be black colleges and universities spearheading campaigns such as campus visits to high schools and other colleges, print and television advertisements, and conventions/lectures promoting the need for black

teachers and the prestige the profession has. There should be programs to mentor and nurture individuals who would like to become a teacher. There should be grants, scholarships, loan forgiveness, bonuses, and other monetary incentives. The same amount of money the government puts into military recruitment it should put the same in for recruiting minority teachers. Both groups are equally important to the country.

Question 13 asked the participants to explain strategies and techniques which could be successful in attracting more African-American males to the teaching profession. The answers provided are vital in helping the educational system understand what actions need to be taken to recruit more African-American males into the professions. Fifteen or 100% of the participants believed two recruitment tools should be exposing African-American males to the profession and financial incentive.

Ten or 67% of the 15 participants perceived exposing the students to the teaching profession in middle and high school will pique the interest of potential teachers. Educating the students in middle school and providing them with internship and job shadowing like in other professions will allow the students to view teaching as a career of substance. The participants were not aware if a program such as this exist but would be willing to help facilitate the endeavor.

Ten or 67% of the 15 participants argued education needs to prop itself up to be cast in a good light and highlight the positives of the profession through promotion. The promotion has to be aggressive and relevant to the target audience. Commercials, print advertisements, and recruiting tours were recited as being potentially viable recruitment tools. If the educational system does not reverse the negative images of the profession

portrayed by the media it will continue to be difficult to get African-American males to enter the profession.

Eleven or 73% of the 15 participants believed what would attract more African-American males is financial incentives. When the participants discussed financial incentives, it was more than the usual plea for more money. These participants suggested financial incentives such as (a) full scholarships for African-American males to get their teaching degree, (b) loan forgiveness/repayment for an African-American male teacher working for a school system or state for a certain period of time, and (c) signing bonuses. Other professions usually provide sought after candidates with many of the aforementioned incentives and the educational system has to provide some of the same enticements to compete for the individuals. While the participants cited a higher pay scale especially for starting teachers, they agree the other incentives the educational system could offer would be sufficient for recruiting more African-American males into teaching.

#### **Comments of African-American Male Teachers (Question 14)**

Question 14 provided the participants with an open forum for them to share any thoughts on the education world as it pertains to African-American male teachers, African-American male students, and the educational system as a whole. The participants took this opportunity to express their desires for the educational world to advance and include more teachers of color and detail what is need out of the African-American community in order for the African-American male students to perform better. The participants also expressed the fact African-American male teachers can only be a catalyst for change because the African-American male students have to want to succeed

and achieve academically.

**(Question 14) Do you have any final comments on African-American males in teaching?**

AAMT1: Though it is important to have African-American males in teaching, it is more important to have individuals teaching kids who have a passion for helping children and a person who understands this is a calling, something you do just for the mere passion of helping a child be better, an individual who genuinely wants to contribute to mankind. Though I try to be a catalyst for transforming the profession, I can do a better job on ensuring every child has a role model which looks like them. I believe discourse concerning minorities in schools, particularly black males, is very polarizing and a genuine effort by all to improve this problem is needed.

AAMT2: Black males are very badly needed in the schools. Our young brothers are losing and falling behind in every aspect of life. We cannot sit back and wait on someone else to solve our problem. We must be proactive and not reactive. We must come together as a community and get our black males back on track before it is too late.

AAMT3: I strive hard every day to encourage the black male students I encounter. I try to instill a sense of pride and respect in them. I hope that they will carry this throughout their life. I know every single student will not respond in the manner I may like, but as long as I am impacting a few I feel I am doing my part in helping to close the achievement gap in both education and society. I am constantly recruiting young black males to

enter the profession and helping them to understand making a good living in education is possible. You have to continue your education, obtain different certification, and then there are leadership roles. You can make just as much in education as in the corporate world.

AAMT4: Education as a whole will benefit from having an influx of minority educators. Teachers who can deliver new methods and strategies to the younger generation are badly needed. Not only are black males falling behind but students as a whole seem to not care about their education as much as the previous generations. Black males can lead by example in the classroom from the vantage point of teacher and student. The decision has to be made.

AAMT5: The only comment I have is African-American male students have to want more for themselves. Even though you might be from a less than ideal situation, this should not define you as a person and sentence you to a life of poverty and destitution. African-American males need to look at their self in the mirror and realize the old saying “each one, teach one” which simply means give back, support the younger generation, and help the black males realize their potential. They are not dumb or inferior to any other group and African-American males are charged with helping the youth understand this concept.

AAMT6: Something has to be done to prepare and recruit positive black males in the elementary, middle and high schools. The playing field has to be leveled so the African-American male students have the chance to

succeed.

AAMT7: We definitely need more African-American males in the profession. This cannot be emphasized enough.

AAMT8: Black males can help to light the fire under African-American male students but the students have to want it for their self. No one can make you want to strive and achieve goals and dreams if the motivation and desire is not there. African-American male teachers can only do so much before the individual must accept responsibility.

AAMT9: My hope is African-American males will see they are needed in education and the future of African-American male students may be greatly connected to their decision to enter the profession or not.

AAMT10: Now is the time to make a change and help to affect the community in a positive manner. The corporate world is not as glamorous as it seems and companies are closing and laying employees off daily. Therefore, I say that to say this, money comes and goes in terms of a job. You can always earn more money but to effectively implement change and shape a society is powerful.

AAMT11: Hopefully education can get back to the days of yesteryear and African-American males are eager to join the ranks. Teaching is an honest profession and African-American males have the opportunity to advance and earn good salaries if they are willing to put in the work. This is not a fabulous profession but one of substances.

AAMT12: I am glad I entered the teaching profession. I have seen the impact I have

had on students. I had the opportunity to enter other professions but this decision was probably one of the most important I will ever make. I know there is still a huge need for more black male teachers and I try my best to educate the public on the plight and epidemic of the shortage of black male teachers. African-American male students have to take ownership and responsibility for their education. Too often I see black males throwing their life away by not being serious about education. Black males have to stop following trends such as getting tattoos especially on their neck and face and think about their future. This correction starts at home and in the community. If society stops excepting certain behaviors as norms and chastising irregular behavior then we have a chance.

AAMT13: I think it is important to have teachers which look like you do and from similar backgrounds as you. It helps students identify and communicate as well as teachers sympathize with kids. We can identify with similar backgrounds of the kids. Not all kids live in ideal situations. Not all adults are from ideal situations either. But many adults come from negative situations to become positive contributors to society. It may seem like a small thing but many kids only see what they are around. Their world becomes a small 10 mile radius from their home. The people they meet and the relationships they build goes along way. You see a young African-American male teacher with a nice car, speaks well, and dresses nice yet still can relate to a student and you have to ask what will be the lasting impression of the teacher on the student. It could be enough

for the kid to ask the important question, can this be me one day? It could also be the example the kid needed to help destroy the negative image they may have had of all African-American males.

AAMT14: Older African-American males have to take the initiative to try to help the epidemic of our failing young black males. Young black males have their backs against the wall and they are steadily falling behind their counterparts. There are plenty of black males which would make great teachers but are afraid to take the step because they have heard the negatives about teaching. We need more stand up individuals willing to walk the walk but talk the talk in terms of helping. You are doing the right thing and heading in the right direction with your research to start repairing this profession

AAMT15: I admire African-American males in the teaching profession. I encourage more of them to enter the field or at least try it through volunteering, mentoring, substituting, or becoming a paraprofessional to see if the profession is something they would consider. It may be one of the most misrepresented, underrated, and an underpaid profession in the country, but it is at the heart of the country. Without teachers there would not be any other professions because teachers instruct students on how to complete tasks in professions and to reach for their goals. Without teachers some kids would go hungry, sleep deprived, abused, and neglected. Teachers make a difference every single day whether it is a big or subtle difference. I think having an African-American male teacher is a

blessing. Having an African-American male at the head of the class knowing his roots and backgrounds, his ancestors would be proud of how far he has come as a man and African-Americans as a people who once were brought, sold, beaten, killed, and forbidden from being educators. African-American male teachers can motivate and bolster the confidence of African-American male students to help them be an asset to their community and to assist the uplifting of the African-American race.

Fifteen or 100% of the 15 participants expressed the need to infuse more African-American males into teaching. Five or 33% of 15 participants stressed the importance of returning the status of being an African-American male teacher of being honorable and respectable. The participants would like to see more school systems embrace the concept of hiring more minority teachers and balancing the racial makeup of the profession. African-American male teachers can help in changing the landscape of the American educational system.

Ten or 67% of the 15 participants emphasized the importance of community involvement with encouraging African-American males to perform well in school and becoming educators. According to these participants, the African-American community has accepted the poor performance of African-American male students and has devalued the importance of education. Within the African-American community, there needs to be reversal of this trend with an emphasis to raise the standards for African-American males and help them understand the importance of education.

Six or 40% of the 15 participants wanted to stress the fact African-American male teachers cannot perform for the students; they can only provide motivation. According to

these participants, the African-American male students have to want to succeed on their own merit and want to be a productive member of society. African-American males are not the total solution to the problem but they are an important ingredient. African-American male students have to accept the challenge and make the decision to take education seriously and secure a positive future.

### **Administrator Specific Questions (Questions 15-18)**

Questions 15-18 were questions directed at the administrators in the research study. Administrators are in positions of authority with the ability to directly impact the underrepresentation of African-American males in education. The questions were geared at discovering their motivations and intentions to become an administrator. Also the question aimed to learn what steps have they personally taken to eliminated the shortage of African-American males in education, what observations have they made in relation to the African-American male teacher and the African-American male student connection in academics, and what they have personally done to recruit more African-American male teachers. The administrator-specific questions generated responses reflected the actions of African-American administrators towards answering the research questions and solving the problem of the underrepresentation of African-American males in education.

**(Question 15) In entering the teaching profession, did you always have aspirations of becoming an educational leader and what was your motivation to ascend to a position of educational leadership?**

AAMT1: I had no intention or motivation to become an administrator. I just wanted my master's degree to increase my pay and to make me more attractive on the job market. After several meetings with other administrators and

county officials it was clear they wanted to groom me for administration. I had a military background so I think this fact weighed heavily on their decision. Plus I was a black male in a county with few black male teachers and hardly any black male administrators at the time.

AAMT14: Well if you have seen what I have seen, then you would know why I wanted to become an administrator. After years of working for administrators who seemed to only care about the title and not the kids, I decided to become an administrator and try to implement change from the top. It is hard to have a major impact, when all you do is teach and are confined to the classroom. And our black males need people who can make a major impact on their lives while they are being educated in our schools throughout this country.

Question 15 sought to discover the motivation of the participants to become an administrator. An administrator in a school has the influence of the entire faculty and student population. Administration positions come with added pressure, responsibility, and expectations. The two administrators in the research study all made the decisions to take the appropriate steps to become an administrator for their own reasons; the participants did not share a common promotion path into administration. One participant received mentoring by his administrators and one decided to pursue a career in administration after working for administrators he perceived did not care about the students. While the participants took different paths to their current position, they are African-American males looking to implement change from the top.

**(Question 16) As an educational leader, what actions have you personally taken to**

**help reverse the shortage of African-American male teachers?**

AAMT1: As an educational leader, I have not personally led any charge to help reverse the shortage of African-American male teachers but I have encouraged most eligible black males I meet, if I see they have a gift for working with kids, to consider working in the education profession.

AAMT14: I do two things, especially if there is a high concentration of black males in the area. The first approach is to put teachers in positions that can help educate and motivate our black males the most effective. Identify teachers with good relationship with the students and have high achieving students and put them in teacher leadership roles to help the students. The second approach is to work with those teachers who are doing the opposite by getting them culture training courses, pedagogy courses, and overall getting them training to help them to become better instructors.

Question 16 required the participants to elaborate on what actions they have personally taken as an administrator to help bring an end to the shortage of African-American male teachers. This question is important in the fact it sheds light of the activities of the people in power and their plan and process to infuse more minorities into teaching. The participants vary in the actions they have personally taken. The actions vary from simply encouraging eligible African-American males they encounter and pairing successful African-American male teachers with other teachers.

**(Question 17) As an educational leader you are privy to test schools, classroom observations, and interactions of a school. What evidence have you seen that will support the idea of African-American male teachers**

**making a positive impact on African-American male students?**

AAMT1: In some instances I have seen it by their mere presence. This is very noticeable involving students who come from single parent households with the one parent being female.

AAMT14: As an educational leader, I can see this interaction when I do my observations and evaluations. I know when teachers of other races have trouble with a black male student, they usually send them to a black male teacher and the teacher is able to get through to the student. I have also seen how black male students respect black male teachers and do not supply them with the same attitude as they do other teachers. I think the black male presence can be intimidating to some students and that forces them to get on the right track.

Question 17 asked the two administrator participants to detail the evidence of African-American male teacher and African-American male student connection in terms of academic performance. The administrators have access to test scores and student grades so they will be able to identify and verify if the belief African-American male students perform better with African-American male teachers. The participants both have seen evidence of African-American male teachers having a positive impact on African-American male students' academic performance. The participants acknowledged observing the mere presence and interactive hands-on activities are both effective in connecting African-American male teachers with African-American male students. The participants agreed there is evidence to support the educational world needs to employ more African-American male teachers to help raise the academic success of the worst

performing population of students: the African-American male.

**(Question 18) As an educational leader with the ability to recommend individuals for employment, what measures have you personally taken to recruit more African-American males into teaching, to your school system, or to your school?**

AAMT1: I have not taken specific measure to recruit more African-American males into teaching. My focus when recruiting teachers first and foremost is finding someone who can inspire a student beyond his/her reach and someone who is sound in their practice.

AAMT14: I recruit African-American males who I have taught by letting them know the profession and the race need them. I also recruit people who I have seen work with youth in the community.

Question 18 asked the two administrator participants to discuss the measures they have personally taken to recruit more African-American males into teaching. As an administrator, the participants have the duty of recruiting, interviewing, and hiring teachers. With this power, the administrators can help to erase the problem of African-American males being underrepresented in the educational profession. The actions of the participants focused on recruiting African-American teachers. The techniques and strategies utilized to recruit African-American males differ but the methods are aiming for the same goal. The participants recruit teachers who can inspire, motivate students, and discuss the profession of teaching with students they have taught.

## **Emergent Themes**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in public schools. Throughout the course of the data analysis four emerging themes were identified. The emerging themes were (a) promotion of the profession, (b) monetary/financial incentives, (c) desire to help others, and (d) community support. These four concepts were identified as emerging themes because there were consistently and continually discussed by the participants of the study. At some point during their interview, each participant referenced the idea of promotion of the profession, monetary/financial incentive, desire to help others, and community support. The participants were able to express their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the underrepresentation of African-American males in education through these four emerging themes.

### **Promotion of the Profession**

The 15 participants of the study commonly alluded to the notion they believed the teaching profession needed to be promoted to potential African-American males teachers to increase interest. At one point in their interview, 10 or 67% of the 15 participants suggested the need to promote the positives of the teaching profession to eliminate the negative stereotypes often associated with the profession. The participants provided different forms of promotion including job shadowing and internships, aggressive marketing with television commercials and print advertisements, visits to high school and college/university campuses, and dialogue such as lectures and conferences on the benefits of the profession.

The promotion has to be aggressive. The promotion has to be geared toward placing the teaching profession in the ranks along with professions such as doctors, lawyers, and engineers. Over the past two decades, the teaching profession has been displayed in a bad light, degraded as being a second class profession, and seen as a profession for slackers/underachievers/ and people not able to succeed in the corporate world (Norton, 2009). All of the labels have been unjustly placed and undeservingly attached to the teaching profession. The educational world has to restore the honor, nobility, and prestige back to the profession. The participants articulated the best way to accomplish this goal is through positive promotion of the profession. The conclusion is supported by the responses from the participants provided below.

AAMT1: I think it would take helping these individuals understand school age African-American males are really in need of male role models. I would help them understand the high number of young black males incarcerated, are high school drop-outs, are in alternative public schools, etc. is a direct correlation of the lack of African-American male role models. Thus helping them to understand by entering the profession they would have an immediate impact on saving several communities and changing the plight of a culture of people, should be motivation enough for young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession.

AAMT2: Increase the money paid to teachers and society needs to give teachers the respect they so rightfully deserve. Increase the promotion of the profession with advertisements and information. Go to schools and make the profession intriguing by highlighting the good points. Have commercials

and marketing tools such as brochures and videos. Have websites and different literature American-American males can read to entice potential teachers. Right now, the marketing campaign is weak and stale. It needs to be revamped to reach male minorities.

AAMT3: Increase the financial benefit and make them comparable to other professions. This will make qualified individuals truly consider the profession. Also the honor has to be placed back into teaching. The profession does not receive any recognition for the good it provides. The educational system has to be able to market itself just like the military, colleges, and other careers. I especially associated education with the military because they are both governmental agencies. The same marketing dollars placed on military promotion should be placed on education. Go to high schools and colleges and have recruitment centers like the military. Have commercials on television and the radio like the military. Put the teaching profession in the forefront and this will attach more African-American male teachers. This approach has worked for the military because it has more African-American males in the military than are teachers.

AAMT6: To recruit black males I think it is important to thoroughly explain to them the long-range benefits of teaching. This can be done by stripping the negative connotations associated with the teaching profession. Teachers are often viewed as people who could not cut it in the “real world” so they must instruct others on how to succeed. The educational world has to

allow people to see teaching for what it really is and this is the business of helping others and helping to improve the world. Teachers are just as important as any other profession including doctors and lawyers. The educational world needs to promote and market the fact without teachers there would not be other professions.

AAMT7: Strategies and techniques to get more African-American males into the teaching profession must begin in the early elementary years. There should be programs geared toward offering African-American males in high school and college some incentives to enter the profession. Such incentives might include scholarships, paid internships, loan forgiveness programs, and other financial assistance programs.

AAMT8: Exposure. By exposing males to a classroom setting, they will be able to understand the dynamics of education and why African-American males are sorely needed in education.

AAMT10: Mobilize plans in the community. Efforts should be community based and start by reaching out to youths in the black community and educating them on the profession and exposing them to the educational profession.

AAMT11: The best strategy is for school systems to help pay to educate promising young teachers through scholarships or loan repayment. There should also be programs in place like there are in other professions to allow for potential members of the profession to spend a day in the shoes of a teacher or to job shadow a teacher for a couple of days. This will provide the student with a behind the scenes view of teaching.

AAMT13: I think first the profession has to be marketed as a career with opportunities for advancement to top college students. The pay would have to increase and the profession has to place a value on having African American males teach. You have to recruit what you need, be willing to go out and get them, and not sit back waiting on good candidates to find you.

AAMT15: I feel more needs to be done in the way of the media promotion and positive recruitment around the country to motivate more young African-American males toward the teaching profession. The military has a strong recruitment campaign. The strategy should be done with the recruitment of African-American males in the teaching field. Promote the honor and nobility and the ways in which teaching is generally a way to serve the country.

The promotion of the teaching profession has not increased in recent years. As educational leaders seek ways to achieve racial balance and have an influx of African-American males into the teaching profession this source of promotion has not been exploited. Eight or 53% of the 15 participants already promoted the profession through conversation with other African-American males, emphasized the importance of the profession, and how they are needed to make a difference on society. Education needs to communicate its accomplishments and not allow for negative stories, blogs, and rumors to cloud the judgment of the public when it comes to the effectiveness of teachers (Norton, 2009). The participants' responses discovered in this study do suggest a significant degree of eagerness by African-American male teachers to see their profession

marketed and promoted. This finding affirms the need for schools, school systems, and the educational system as a whole to consider ways to develop positive promotion and marketing of the teaching profession to erase the negative perceptions.

Based on the findings from the current qualitative phenomenological study, the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions from the African-American male teachers toward the need for the positive promotion of the teaching profession is clear. To restore the respect for the teaching profession, there must be an elimination of factors such as negative stereotypes and general public negative beliefs about teachers. The building and uplifting of the profession can take place through aggressive media campaigns, campus visits/informational sessions, and exposure to the profession. This overriding theme identified throughout the interviews is important to consider when deciding how to recruit and retain more African-American males into the teaching profession.

### **Monetary/Financial Incentive**

While analyzing the data from the current study, the concept of monetary/financial incentives was routinely coded because it was discussed by every participant. The participants strongly believed with increased monetary/financial incentives, there would be an influx of African-American males entering the teaching profession; low pay was the number one reason for eligible candidates not entering the teaching profession. The participants conveyed the belief the male is responsible for being the primary caretaker of a family and must earn a salary aligned with this belief. The thought process was it is difficult to provide for a family on a starting teachers' salary and if an individual has earned a degree, he wanted a job with a salary which will allow for a comfortable lifestyle. Over the past 60 years, the salary for teachers has fallen

when compared to the salary of other workers with a degree (Buzzle, 2011). Eleven or 73% of the 15 participants agreed to gain more African-American male teachers, the educational world has to offer more money and financial packages.

The participants indicated the starting pay should be higher as well as the overall salary. The African-American male teachers whole-heartedly believed to attract talented individuals into the profession; the salary has to be competitive to other professions. The participants discussed how the low salary could be a point of ridicule from a societal standpoint and will keep a person from the profession.

The starting salaries for teachers are about \$15,000 less than the starting salaries of professions with similar years of education and training (Buzzle, 2011). The participants stated a person wants to feel financially rewarded for their hard work and effort. The participants not only viewed monetary/financial incentives as strictly salary but other areas to alleviate financial burden. The African-American male teachers felt there should be fully paid scholarships as well as loan forgiveness programs for minority males who are planning to enter the teaching profession. This approach will eliminate the weight of having to pay for school or make loan payments once graduated. The topic of signing bonuses was also discussed. The participants' perception was by offering a lump sum of money upfront this would draw in many African-American male teachers. The signing bonus could help the individual obtain a residence, vehicle, pay bills, or put money into savings. Provided below are the responses from the participants which support this conclusion.

AAMT1:       There is still a huge shortage of black males in the profession and most of it is due to the starting pay of a beginning teacher. However, not trying to

sound sanguine, I do believe most states are doing a better job of recruiting black males.

AAMT2: It is not enough money and the profession is still not viewed as being a “man’s” line of work.

AAMT4: Three ways I can think of is student loan forgiveness, higher pay, and job security. With student loan forgiveness, the school system or government should pay back the student loans of an African-American male teacher. The teacher would be required to serve as a teacher in a particular school system for a minimum number of years in order for the loan to be forgiven. This will draw in highly qualified candidates because repaying student loans can be a burden to many individuals coming out of college. Higher pay would make the profession more credible and competitive to other professions. Job security is having the school system give black male teachers three to five year contracts. The teacher will know they are secure and have the time to hone their craft.

AAMT5: It appears many African-Americans do not pursue teaching as the result of the pay scale.

AAMT6: Black males are underrepresented in education probably because they are not encouraged to do so while in middle and high schools. Males were once thought of as the breadwinners. Today, education is not seen as a lucrative profession. It is not the profession of a future breadwinner.

AAMT7: Strategies and techniques to get more African-American males into the teaching profession must begin in the early elementary years. There

should be programs geared toward offering African-American males in high school and college some incentives to enter the profession. Such incentives might include scholarships, paid internships, loan forgiveness programs, and other financial assistance programs.

AAMT8: I believe the pay scale is somewhat less in education as opposed to various other careers. Men are presented as the “breadwinners” as it relates to having a family.

AAMT9: Probably intrinsic because the majority of other professions would pay us substantially more money. You chose this profession in order to try to make a real difference in the world.

AAMT11: It is hard for African-American males to support a family on a teacher’s salary.

AAMT13: I think there is an underrepresentation of African American males in all professions. African American males are not going to college at a high enough rate which affects the overall number of qualified candidates for the job. The ones who go on to college many times choose more lucrative professions.

The educational world has made an effort over the past decade to increase teachers’ salaries (District Administration, 2009). States and local governments provided annual raises to the salaries of teachers. While the raises are a step in the right direction, they are simply not enough to keep up with the current economic climate; the rate of inflation has grown faster than the increases in teachers’ salaries each year. Since 2010, inflation increased 3.1%, while teachers’ salaries increased by only 2.3% (Buzzle, 2011).

Recently, the federal government began to offer monetary compensation for teachers who have high-achieving students; this concept is motivating and rewarding for individuals already in the profession, but it does not provide any incentive to attract someone to enter the field (Rebarber & Madigan, 2008). To attract minority males, the educational system needs to target monetary benefits directly to the population of candidates.

The responses of the participants revealed a degree of disappointment with the current pay scale and benefits packages. The participants are anxious to see more African-American males in the profession, but they agree this will be almost impossible without improved financial incentive and pay. The thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions from the 10 African-American male participants toward the need for monetary/financial incentives are clearly stated. This dominant theme identified throughout the interviews is vital when considering how to recruit and retain more African-American males into the teaching profession.

### **Desire to Help Others**

The participants of the study expressed their belief to become a teacher and remain in the profession; one must possess a deep desire to help others. Teaching can be described as a civil service occupation. The participants explained how teaching is a profession revolved around helping students to harness their energy, work to meet their potential, and accomplish goals. Twelve or 80% of the 15 participants conveyed helping others serves as the main motivation to become a teacher; the idea of helping their race and community is the backdrop for the process of entering education. The participants' beliefs mirrored those of other teachers from different genders and races. According to Day (2010), a strong desire to help others is one of the five characteristics required to

become a teacher. The other four characteristics are ability to disburse information in an understandable way, foster mental growth in students, be a life-long learner, and being a mentor.

The participants stated a person should not think about becoming a teacher if they do not possess the desire to help others; this desire has to be present because extrinsic factors alone will not entice a person to enter the profession and remain. Studies have shown fairly conclusively teachers are motivated more by intrinsic than by extrinsic rewards (Ellis, 1984). The best way to employ more African-American male teachers is to identify the individuals with the intrinsic desire to help others, cultivate their minds, and place them on the path to the teaching profession. Provided below are the responses from the participants to support the conclusion.

AAMT1: When I went to college I did not choose to go into teaching. I was good at math and had intentions on becoming an electrical engineer. I cannot recall having any personal motivation to enter the profession. One day after substituting to make some extra money to pay for school, I had such a wonderful experience of helping others I decided to teach.

AAMT2: It has to be intrinsic because the only reason an African-American male would want to teach is to motivate and help others.

AAMT3: I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of the youth in my community.

AAMT5: To be in the position to influence lives.

AAMT6: I actually wanted to make a difference in the lives of children, especially children who grew up in poor neighborhoods like mine. In addition, it was

Black male teachers who helped motivate me in terms of career choices.

AAMT7: My personal motivation for entering the educational profession was I felt a calling to the profession and thought I could make a difference.

AAMT8: Intrinsic. Teaching is a profession one must want to pursue and do. Outside factors will only take you so far before you are either miserable or content internally.

AAMT9: Probably intrinsic because the majority of other professions would pay us substantially more money. You chose this profession in order to try to make a real difference in the world.

AAMT11: I believe the motivation of an African-American to enter the teaching profession has to be both intrinsic and extrinsic. There has to be an inside desire to teach followed by outside rewards.

AAMT12: My personal motivation to enter the teaching profession was the ability to impact the lives of children and foster their educational and intellectual growth allowing them to be successful in the real world.

The provision of entering the teaching profession still depends on the simple philosophy and commitment to help others reach their potential. Nine or 60% of the 15 participants acknowledged the desire to help students learn and develop are factors related to the profession; the respondents believed the desire to help others were a direct consequence of having a calling to the teaching profession. This finding affirms the need for the educational system in America to recognize African-American males who have a strong desire to help others and teach while they are in high school and postsecondary schools to help them earn a degree in teaching. This action can help to reverse the

underrepresentation of African-American males in the educational profession.

### **Community Support**

The participants of the study expressed their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the underrepresentation of African-American males in education and the idea of needing more community support was an overwhelming theme. Ten or 67% of the 15 participants expressed how the African-American community has devalued education and stymied the aspirations of those trying to utilize education as a tool to better their self. The participants offered suggestions like community service as a means to help African-American males during their adolescent and teenage years. Not having African-American males educators involved in the community could manifest into the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession.

According to Wise (2006), the African-American community has long been blamed for devaluing education through idolizing pop cultural industries and alienating African-American students who perform well academically. The African-American community has placed industries such as sports and entertainment on a pedestal; therefore, its citizens especially the males think these professions are the only marks of success (Watkins, 2010). This mentality, according to Watkins, has completely handicapped the African-American males of the past two decades. They believe as long as they perform in the sports arena, they do not need to concentrate on academics; thus, lowering the value of education in the mindset of African-American males.

In the African-American community it is common place for high-achieving students to be labeled as uncool and acting White (Wise, 2006). This type of action has crippled the minds of intelligent students; during the adolescent and teenage years,

individuals want to belong and too often a student will downplay their intellectual ability and not work to their full potential in fear of being ostracized according to Wise. The participants stated this stagnation has to stop because the African-American community cannot grow and develop if minds are retarded. According to the participants, the African-American community must uplift and celebrate the academic performance of its young generation and encourage them to reach their goals. Ten or 67% of the participants believe the community should be a place of support and promotion versus one of ridicule and blockage.

The participants' statements echoed the thoughts of society in terms of the lack of importance the African-American community places on education (Wise, 2006). The participants believe the first step is to strip away the glorification of pop culture industries and celebrate the academic accomplishments of the youth to promote a positive self-image will encourage them to continue to succeed. The second step the African-American community must take is to start exploiting educators, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and professional individuals as people to emulate. By providing positive role models not in sports, African-American males can feel they do not have to use sports to succeed and they can use their mental ability. The thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the participants towards reversing the underrepresentation of African-American males in education start with the support in the community. Provided below are the responses from the participants which support the conclusion.

AAMT3: Yes it does. Based on what I said before, the negative experiences have shaped a viewpoint for most African-American males. In some cases, however, if the home situation (parent's occupation, single mother, etc.)

lends itself to foster positive educational experiences then one might choose education as a profession.

AAMT4: Neither. I believe the difficult circumstances we face in society today do not allow for us to prepare ourselves for a positive future.

AAMT6: Yes. Many black males are incarcerated and dropping out of high school. If you do not have a foundation to build upon it will be very difficult to do anything positive and constructive in life. The majority of African-American males grows up in fatherless homes and do not have a positive outlook on education or life. They are simply trying to survive. Surviving usually entails selling drugs or other illegal activities. So yes background and life experiences play a huge role in deciding to further one's education and becoming a teacher.

AAMT7: The black community does not view teaching as a manly profession for African-American males. Society also sees the profession as an underpaid profession. This does not provide an image of being successful. These two factors weigh heavily in the underrepresentation of African-American males in the classroom.

AAMT8: I do not think the effort can be criticized because the number of eligible candidates is small. I think the effort should be in educating black males and preparing them for real world life. The candidates have to be in place before recruitment efforts can be put forward

AAMT9: If the parents, the fathers to be more specific, who are ultimately responsible for these young males don't change their paradigm, these

students will continue to matriculate through our jails/prisons versus our most prestigious universities.

AAMT10: African-American males are raised in a society and culture which does not place a value on education and the teaching profession. In the black community a premium is placed on professions such as entertainment, sports, and glamorized professions. The next wave of professions the black community values are doctors and lawyers and the ones who do make it to college are encouraged to pursue these professions. Being a teacher is very rarely addressed.

AAMT12: I believe this question can honestly go either way. The achievement gap can be closed I feel if there is also a commitment given from the end of the student's living environment to accommodate the African-American male teachers efforts. Otherwise, if the living environment is not conducive to the learning atmosphere with the African-American teachers then it will continue to be a huge challenge.

AAMT14: Systematically in most cases meaning the black community is filled with negativity such as gangs and drugs. Young African-American males get caught up in the legal system and they do not have the opportunity to complete their studies and then feel they have to turn to illegal means to make a living. The problems the black community faces have a direct impact on black males not being able to expand their horizons and perform well in school.

AAMT15: In the current state of African-American male involvement within the

educational profession it is unfortunate to note there is a substantial shortage in the country. Culturally speaking, teaching is seen as more of a black female profession in the black community. African-American males are made aware of this fact and it is reinforced because they are raised by single parent families, which is usually the mother. Socially speaking it is seen as both a primarily female profession and substandard income.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The 14 teacher-related questions and the 4 additional administrator-related questions discussed in chapter 4 revealed the perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes concerning the underrepresentation of African-American males in education. The data analysis revealed 100% of the participants were in support of employing more African-American males as teachers and achieving a racial balance to the teaching force in America.

The 15 participants revealed the motivation for African-American males to enter the teaching profession would have to be intrinsic; African-American males entering the profession would have to have a strong desire to serve students and help the youth. Extrinsic factors will not draw an African-American male into the profession, but they will assist in recruiting and retaining the individual in the profession. The extrinsic factors such as job security and benefits were indicators as the main motivators to help keep African-American males in the teaching profession.

The participants revealed the shortage of African-American males in education is

a result of society and community issues. Based on their comments, more African-American males are entering prison and jail than graduating from high school and college; hence, the shortage is a result of the lack of candidates. If a person does not possess the necessary education and experience they cannot be recruited.

According to the current study's participants, the African-American community has also devalued education by choosing to glorify professions such as sports and entertainment. Education is often viewed as a secondary route to success. The African-American community has to make education a top priority as a means to help produce more candidates who are eligible for the teaching profession.

The participants revealed African-American males could have a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students. Among the participants, some spoke of their positive experiences of having an African-American male teacher when they were in school or the success of African-American male students they have taught. The participants associated this success to cultural synchronization, familiarity, and having a person of similar background. The participants also suggested this as an important consideration because in today's society most African-American male students are in need of a strong African-American male to be involved in their life and the teacher can fill a void.

The participants divulged recruiting African-American males into the teaching profession would be beneficial. The participants believed the two most viable recruitment tools would be financial incentives and exposure to the profession. Financial incentives could include but not be limited to higher salaries, bonuses, scholarships for postsecondary education, and loan repayment. The increased monetary incentives would

attract highly qualified candidates who would strongly consider entering the teaching profession over the corporate world. Exposing potential teachers to the profession would draw candidates. Having high school students experience the teaching profession through job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships would provide the students with an intimate view of the career. Students would be offered firsthand experience of the joys of teaching.

Four emerging themes were revealed through the course of the data analysis. The emerging themes were revealed as common phrases and statements consistently mentioned by the participants. The emerging themes can be used to create generalizations about the phenomena. The four emerging themes were (a) promotion of the profession, (b) monetary/financial incentives, (c) desire to help others, and (d) community support.

Chapter 5 contains the answers related to the research questions provided in chapter one and chapter three. The implications and the limitations faced in the research study is discussed as well as recommendations for further research. Each of these sections in chapter 5 has discussions concerning the positive and negative beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes of the participants towards the underrepresentation of African-American males in education.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The number of African-American males in education has declined over the last 20 years and currently only 2% of the teaching profession in America is African-American males is a point of importance and deserves attention (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Using individual interviews with African-American male teachers currently in the classroom, administration positions, and retired, the phenomenon was investigated. The teachers and retired teachers were given a standard and structured interview which consisted of 14 questions; the administrators took part in a standard and structured interview which consisted of 18 questions. The goal of the interviews was to elicit responses from the participants explaining the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the individuals. This phenomenological inquiry revealed the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the underrepresentation of African-American males in education.

Chapter 4 provided a detailed analysis of the various responses provided by the participants; outcomes from the analysis of the data identified four emergent themes. The emergent themes represent the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the African-American male teacher. In chapter 5, current literature on effective research practices and the theoretical implications of the findings of the study on African-American male teachers and the educational profession as whole is interwoven throughout the discussions. Answers to the four research questions along with an

overview of the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions African-American male teachers have towards their role and underrepresentation in education is discussed. The chapter concludes by commenting on the implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research on the phenomenon.

### **Research Questions**

The current study of the underrepresentation of African-American males in the educational profession was guided by four research questions. The four research questions were the basis of the study and what the findings aimed to answer. The data and the findings from the research study were able to provide detailed and thorough answers to the four research questions.

#### **Research Question 1**

The first research question of the study was: What is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession? This question is essential to the efforts of employing more African-American males in the teaching profession. Before an individual can be recruited into a profession, the motivation to enter the field must first be identified. Through the analysis of the data, the research question was able to be concisely answered. The motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession was dependent on a desire to help others.

Teaching is a profession built on working with other people and helping them to reach goals and dreams (Day, 2010). Teaching is a civil service profession and at its core is the idea of fostering knowledge and intellectual growth in students (Day, 2010). According to 12 or 80% of the 15 participants, a desire to help others is the number one motivation factor to become a teacher. Without this desire to help others there will not be

any interest in entering the teaching profession.

The desire to help others is a predisposed trait and cannot necessarily be developed (Day, 2010). The desire to help others is an intrinsic factor and the reward arrives when viewing others blossom and reach their goals (Day, 2010). As the educational world researches and analyzes ways to achieve a racial balance in the teaching force, it must first recognize the African-American males with a desire to help others.

### **Research Question 2**

The second research question was: Why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers? This question is important because it looked to provide answers pinpointed at the cause of African-American males being underrepresented in the teaching profession. By discovering the causes of the shortage, actions can be taken to decrease and eliminate the factors leading to the teaching force being comprised of only 2% African-American males (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The findings of the data offered the answer to the question as the lack of qualified candidates and the starting salary as the two reasons for the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession.

According to Alexander (2004), only 37% of African-American males who graduate high school enroll in a post-secondary school; out of the 37% which enroll in a postsecondary school, 35% are able to graduate. The educational profession is in competition for the limited number of eligible African-American males with other professions such as technology, computer science, law, medicine, and business.

According to Alexander (2004), four or 26% of 15 the participants, the low number of

eligible candidates has caused the shortage of African-American male teachers. The educational world has not been able to separate the profession from other industries and is usually left to sift through, recruit, and employ the remnants of other professions. To get more African-American males into the teaching profession, more African-American males will have to enroll and graduate from post-secondary school. Increasing the amount of eligible African-American male candidates in totality will yield more individuals opting to enter the teaching profession. The deficiency of eligible African-American males has helped lead to the current shortage in the teaching profession.

The second reason for the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession is the low starting salary. Eight or 53% of the 15 participants stated the low starting salary of teachers makes it a difficult decision to enter the profession. The participants explained how in society the man is considered the “breadwinner” and is charged with providing for their family. The low salary will also discourage many potential African-American males considering entering the profession (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). The starting salary is roughly \$15,000 less than individuals with similar degrees and years of training (Buzzle, 2011). The small percentage of African-American males able to graduate from postsecondary schools overwhelmingly decided to enter a profession offering a higher salary. Increasing the starting salary of teachers will help to attract more African-American males into the teaching profession and help to reverse the underrepresentation (*New York Times*, 2011). The low starting salary is one of the two culprits responsible for a shortage of African-American male teachers.

### **Research Question 3**

The third research question was: How will having more African-American male

teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students? This research question is vital in raising the educational standard of African-American male students as well as the overall performance of the American educational system. African-American males are the worst performing group of students in terms of test scores, graduation rate, and grade point average but research has revealed students achieve at a higher rate when taught by a teacher of the same race (Irvine, 2002). If the worst performing population can raise the level of their performance, it will lead to better opportunities, life decisions, and quality of life (Keeping Dropouts in School, 2004; Irvine, 2002). Educational experts and pundits theorize African-American male teachers help improve the scholastic achievement of African-American male students (Dogan, 2010). The answer to the question is African-American male teachers can improve the academic performance of African-American male students.

The reason African-American male students can improve their academic performance with African-American male teachers, as cited by 10 or 67% of the 15 participants, is familiarity and cultural synchronization. The concept of familiarity relates to being instructed by an individual of the same racial and gender composition (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Nine or 60% of the 15 participants agreed African-American males will be more receptive to a person whom they look similar to. The participants who articulated this belief all spoke from personal experience. Nine or 60% of the 15 participants, who had the opportunity to have an African-American teacher, stated they were more engaged and focused because the instructor looked similar to their self. Being able to engage and focus the students is the first step in getting them to work to their potential and reach their goals (Corbett & Wilson, 2002). Familiarity between African-

American male teachers and students will lead to improved academic performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Cultural synchronization is having an orientation and understanding of a culture between two or more individuals (Ascher, 1991). African-American male teachers and African-American male students will be able to connect and build relationships based on shared backgrounds, life experiences, and understanding of the African-American culture (Dogan, 2010). An African-American male teacher will be able to understand the plight and undue hardships placed on African-American male students according to 7 or 46% of the 15 participants. An African-American male teacher will be able to understand and discern actions, behaviors, and conduct accepted in the African-American culture other races and gender may find disrespectful or contentious (Kunjufu, 2002). African-American male teachers will be a positive role model and use their knowledge of the culture to get African-American male students to increase academic performance.

#### **Research Question 4**

The fourth research question was: In what ways can the recruiting efforts of African-American males into the profession be strengthened? The recruiting efforts of the educational system toward African-American males have been criticized for the lack of techniques and strategies aimed specifically at the population (NBC, 2009). The research question was geared to find the best techniques and strategies to recruit and retain African-American males into the teaching profession. The data revealed the answer to the question as increasing the financial incentives and exposure to the profession as the best recruiting and retention tools for African-American males into the teaching profession.

Increasing the financial incentives to attract more African-American males into teaching was the overwhelming top strategy. Eleven or 73% of the 15 participants believed the educational world has to be able to offer financial incentives to entice more African-American males into the profession. The data revealed financial incentives as increased starting salary, signing bonuses, loan forgiveness, and full scholarships. Money is a crucial element of life. African-American males are raised to be the head of the household, which entails being the financial provider (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). According to 8 or 53% of the 15 participants, the starting salary is not suitable to provide sufficiently for a family, so a person who may consider teaching is discouraged by the wages and opts for another more lucrative profession. Economic potential is a leading aspect of selecting a career and to recruit and retain talented African-American males into teaching, the educational world has to be able to compete with other industries. The corporate world routinely offers financial incentives to highly qualified candidates to tempt them and this approach must be utilized in education to draw intellectual African-American males (Orion International, 2011). Financial incentives are the top recruiting tools for African-American males to pursue a career in education.

Exposing African-American males to the educational world is a beneficial technique in recruiting and retaining them in the teaching profession. Eight or 67% of the 15 participants believe exposing young African-American males to the teaching profession will get them motivated and interested in the career. Exposure should include practices such as job shadowing, internships, conferences/lectures, and campus visits. Given the limited amount of eligible African-American males, education is in competition with other initiating similar recruiting practices; hence, education cannot

afford to show complacency.

Participants in the current study indicated educational leaders and recruiters must be aggressive and promote the profession, highlight the achievements, and display the profession. More African-American males will be inclined to join the profession upon understanding the need, the tasks/responsibilities, and how much of a difference they could make in the community. Exposure to an unfamiliar entity can lead to immeasurable dividends and the educational world should follow in the footsteps of other profession with job shadowing, internships, conferences/lectures, and campus visits to recruit African-American males to the profession.

### **Implications from the Study**

The findings of the research indicate the underrepresentation of African-American males in education because of several factors. The factors include but are not limited to low starting salary, lack of eligible candidates, lack of respect for the profession, deficient promotion of the profession, and negative personal educational experiences. The findings do not signify African-American males cannot enter the educational profession, despite the numerous obstacles encountered. The findings denoted African-American males who decide to enter the profession overcome the hurdles due to a desire to help others and the intrinsic reward of others accomplishing goals. The findings were able to document the belief African-American male teachers have toward their ability to increase the African-American male students' academic performance. However, what remains unclear is why so few African-American males cannot overcome the barriers which keep them from the teaching profession. The degree to which African-American male teachers can improve the academic performance of African-American male students is still

unclear. Further research could be conducted to remove the inconclusiveness from this area of study.

The findings of the study provided a clear understanding how African-American male teachers are together in terms of building their representation in the profession and helping African-American male students. The study was not designed to compare the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the participants at different academic levels (elementary school, middle school, high school, administrator, and retired) but through the analysis of the data common threads were identified. There were not any significant differences in the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the participants at different academic levels. All of the participants regardless of level taught aimed for the same goals. The data revealed a slight difference in the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perception of the older teachers (51 years old through 70 years old) and the younger teachers (21 years old through 40 years old). The older teachers were able to recall when teaching was a top profession for African-American males and was viewed as a profession of honor, prestige, and nobility for their generation. The younger teachers were able to recall the teaching profession as one of ridicule and low social status for their generation. The older teachers wanted to return the profession back to its original status while the younger teachers wanted better financial incentives and promotion of the profession.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The phenomenological qualitative research study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to their underrepresentation in the educational profession had limitations during the study. The limitations did not

skew the data nor negatively impact the study, but they must be addressed and discussed to fully disclose all steps in the study. After careful analysis of the data and presentation of the findings, it was evident further research on the topic is required to grasp a complete understanding. While the findings of the research study provided insight and information regarding African-American males in the educational profession, there is still an abundance of data to be uncovered. As an effort to provide guidance and direction to expand on the findings of the study, recommendation for future research will be offered.

### **Limitations**

The phenomenological qualitative study to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in the educational profession was not without limitations. There were four limitations encountered during the study. The first limitation was the primary researcher conducting the study is an employee of the school system where the participants were selected. The primary researcher conducting the study did not allow bias to impact the data of the data analysis. The primary researcher was able to accomplish this action through bracketing, which called for the primary researcher to disregard everything he knew about school system and the participants. While the methodology design discussed in chapter 3 detailed ways in which bias was reduced, this aspect of the study is a limitation and must be noted.

The second limitation is the research findings are specifically relevant to a unique demographic of the teaching profession. The research findings are only relevant to African-American male teachers. The strategies discussed to recruit and employ more African-American males into education were designed and tailored for the specific

demographic. This specific demographic information is useful and supports the findings to establish a better presence in the educational community. Other races and genders were not included in the research study; therefore, the findings do not relate to those demographics.

The third limitation was the research study only included two types of interviews as data sources. The interviews limited the type of data collected from the participants to oral descriptions and statements because it does not allow for the participants to be observed working in the classroom or interacting with the students, especially the African-American males. While the structured interviews provided the participants the opportunity to explain fully the underrepresentation of African-American males in education through their own words and experiences, utilizing different forms of data collection could provide further insight into the topic.

The fourth limitation was the research study was only concentrated on African-American male teachers improving the academic performance of African-American male students. This is a limitation because African-American male teachers will be charged with educating all students regardless of gender or race. Therefore, the study could have aimed to explore the effect of African-American male teachers on all students. The goal of the educational system in America is to educate all students equally, so African-American male teachers only positively impacting one population of student will not serve the educational system as a whole.

### **Recommendations**

Further research to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers regarding their underrepresentation in the educational profession

is highly recommended. The purpose of the research is to discover the reasons behind the shortage of African-American male teachers and implement procedures aimed at eradicating the problem. With further researcher, more data could be collected, analyzed, and presented to the educational world. One qualitative research study and one quantitative research study are recommendations for further research of the topic.

### **Recommendations: Qualitative Research Study**

The qualitative research study recommended should use direct observation, interviews, and questionnaires as data sources with current/recently retired teachers and African-American male students as the participants. Including current and recently retired teachers explores the topic from their viewpoint while including students will allow them to voice their thoughts, ideas, and perceptions as it pertains to the degree in which African-American male teachers help them achieve more academically, relationships with African-American male teachers, and what would motivate them to become a teacher.

Direct observation is a source of data collection allowing the researcher a close visual inspection of a phenomenon in a natural setting (Child Care and Early Education, 2010). Direct observation offers contextual data on settings, interactions, and individuals. Direct observation lends itself to cross-checking information. It provides the chance to notice any differences between what the participant states in other forms of data collection such as interviews and what they do (Adler & Adler, 1994). The interview will offer a platform for the participants to express their thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and perceptions about the topic orally.

The questionnaire will provide the researcher with the ability to determine if the

participants express similar opinions and perceptions about specific topics without having to go into in-depth questioning (M. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The questionnaire will serve as the gateway to access and narrow the focus of the information from participants. By conducting a research study utilizing these data collection sources, a more holistic view of the phenomenon can be obtained.

The purpose of the study towards the African-American male students should be to gather their thoughts, ideas, and perceptions about the role of African-American male teachers and the teaching profession. While the current research study involved active and retired educators, the recommended study could target future teachers. The participants are in the position to decide their future careers and could offer insight into what factors would get them interested in the teaching profession and lead them into entering the profession. This study could unlock the answers on how to recruit and steer the young eligible African-American males into the teaching profession.

### **Recommendations: Quantitative Research Study**

The quantitative research study should aim to compare the academic performance of African-American male students in the class of African-American male teachers against teachers of different a gender and race. The study should focus on 3rd grade African-American male students due to the fact this is the academic year were early positive experiences begin to sour (Gentry & Peelle, 1994). In the 3rd grade, students begin reading for comprehension and learning as well as take state assessments. When the student begins to fall behind and experience failures, their enthusiasm and excitement for school becomes replaced with disappointment and anger (Brown, 2004). Davis (2003) asserted, "Throughout the 3rd grade, black boys performed equally well as their

peers on district-wide assessment in reading and math. Beginning in the 4th grade, however, black boys experienced a sharp decline in their test scores” (p. 526).

By using a standardized test, the teacher will have no control over the questions or the scoring. The study will help to add more knowledge and understanding in the academic world in regards to getting African-American males to perform to the best of their abilities. The study will look to end the debate over the impact of teacher race on African-American male students. In the event there is no significant difference in scores on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade CRCT it will prove race is not a factor in student academic performance. In the event African-American male students in the class of African-American male teachers begin making improvements than assigned to other teachers, the findings will motivate school systems to recruit more minorities. These school systems can also subscribe to new teaching methods if there is a significant difference in test scores on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade CRCT between African-American male students in the class of a Caucasian teacher and an African-American teacher.

### **Reflection**

Education is a profession that has the ability to directly shape the future. Educators have the duty and the responsibility to model ethical behavior and principles that reflect an upright lifestyle. Educators have the ability to lead and influence students, peers, parents, and the community and should utilize this position of power to uplift education. The educational environment is definitely a large platform for educators to mold students in both academic and life sustaining ways.

I strive every day to instill in my students a sense of pride and purpose. I challenge my students to reach their full potential and be individuals that will have a

positive impact on the world. I lend assistance to students whenever it is needed. If they need someone to listen to their complaints, need life advice, or if they need help with work, I am always available.

My philosophy on education is that every student can learn and achieve if given the proper motivation under the right conditions. The information has to be relevant to the students. I teach to help our youth bridge the gap between school and real life. I teach to educate the students about making smart decisions that will impact their future. I teach because I know that my life can be viewed as an example for the students.

As an African-American male educator I build strong relationships with African-American male students through conversation and actions. Conversing with African-American male students about their interest points reflects the notion that I am actively engaged in their life and care about them as a person and not simply a student. When a student knows that you care then they will care what you know. I have been a vital part of mentoring programs that aims to provide direction and focus to the life of at-risk minority males.

When I taught on the high school level, I was the cofounder of the Brothers Of Leadership and Distinction (BOLD) Program. The BOLD Program sought to stress the importance of education to junior and senior minority males through post-secondary campus visits, operating a school store to stress entrepreneurship and financial responsibility, academic tutoring, and mentoring. I was only able to work with the program for two years due to obtain a new position in a different school system but the program was extremely successful. The first year of the program 50% of the seniors enrolled in a post-secondary institution and the second year of the program 72% of the

seniors enrolled in post-secondary institution with several receiving either an academic or athletic scholarship.

While educating on the middle school level, I have been a part of an after-school/mentoring program for underperforming students. The program is aimed at improving the grade point averages of students, preparing them for standardized testing, and teaching life skills. The program is equally focused on academics and social skills. The students complete computer programs and workbooks to improve academic performance and attend field trips and extracurricular activities to enhance social skills. The field trips expose underprivileged students to areas of life not known otherwise and other points of interest. The students are taken to exhibits, performances, restaurants, and participate in yoga and mime classes. The program is successful and the students enjoy both the academic and social aspects.

### **Conclusion**

The truth about the reasons for the underrepresentation of African-American males in education is very clear. African-American males are underrepresented in the educational profession due to (a) the low starting salary, (b) lack of eligible candidates due to the extremely low percentage of African-American male college graduates, (c) the perceived dishonor of the profession, and (d) the lack of positive promotion/recruitment of the profession. Through the findings of the research study, African-American male teachers have provided actions to be taken by the educational world to attract more African-American males. The actions are (a) provide monetary/financial incentives, (b) provide positive exposure to the profession, (c) promote the profession in a positive light, and (d) community support.

The recruiting and retaining of more African-American male teachers will also help to bolster the academic performance of African-American male students and help them to close the achievement gap. The thoughts and perceptions of the participants coincided directly with those of society in terms of linking African-American male students with African-American male teachers. Mathus (2005) asserted, “Students relate better to teachers who, in short, look like them” (p. 1). Failing to make an effort to employ more black male teachers will result in African-American boys never experiencing a black male role model in their public school classrooms and the public school system will continue to fail black males as an educational community (Cottman, 2010). Eliminating the problem of the underrepresentation of African-American males in education will not occur immediately; however, with a constant and aggressive approach to recruit more candidates into the profession the trend will reverse.

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APPENDIX A: LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
APPROVAL

**Liberty University Institutional Review Board Approval**

Good Morning Kristopher,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**

*IRB Chair, Associate Professor*

**Center for Counseling & Family Studies**

*(434) 592-5054*

## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONTENT LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

### Appendix B

#### **Participant Consent Letter**

#### **CONSENT FORM**

#### A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

Kristopher Williams, Doctoral Candidate  
Liberty University, College of Education

Esteemed educators, you are invited to participate in a research study designed to investigate the state of African-American male teachers in the public school system. Please read the letter thoroughly and in its entirety before agreeing to be included in the study. Please feel free to contact the researcher with any questions, comments, or concerns.

The study is being conducted by Kristopher Williams, Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of the study is to utilize research to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African-American male teachers related to the underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession. The research study aims to discover the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession, the reason for the shortage of African-American males in the profession, the potential to increase African-American male student's achievement, and to find ways to strengthen recruitment of African-American males. The educational world can use the findings of the study to implement plans and policy to hopefully increase and retain African-Americans in the field.

#### **Procedures**

The study will not be able to include all of the potential participants. The research study will include 15 participants. The researcher will have to eliminate some of the potential participants. Once the researcher receives the letter of consent back from the volunteers, the numbers will be reduced based on years of teaching experience. The researcher will eliminate teachers with less than three years of teaching experience from the selection process. The next step will be to randomly select the participants for the study from the remaining eligible participants. The researcher will randomly select four teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school level. Then randomly select two administrators and one retired teacher. The researcher will also randomly select two African-American

male teachers and two African-American male administrators to be included in the pilot interview. Once the entire participant number is filled, the researcher will contact you to inform you of your status for the study.

Upon agreement to be included in the study, you will be involved in a confidential structured interview with the researcher. The structured interview will allow for you to express your perceptions on the state of African-American males in the education. The interview will be audio recorded as well as transcribed through Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition for your review. The participant will be able to check the audio tape and transcription to verify all information is accurate. Once the participant verifies the information, the audio tape will be erased and destroyed and the transcribed copy of the interview will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access.

The pilot interview is pivotal in helping to establish the interview as a valid source of data collection for the research study. The pilot interview will help to redesign the questions and to eliminate any flaws in the interview protocol. The pilot interview will utilize the exact protocol as the main research interview including time arrival, prompts, wordings, audio recording, transcription through Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition, and participant review. As with the individuals participating in the main research interview, the confidentiality will be kept at all times. The data and information from the pilot interview will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access.

### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**

There are no risks associated with being in the study. The researcher would only require 30-45 minutes of time to complete the interview.

The benefits of being in the study are the opportunity to express your views of the educational profession as it pertains to African-American males. This will be a chance for your voice to be heard. You will be part of a study focused as an initiative to help recruit more African-American males into the profession and to bolster the overall performance of the American public school system.

### **Confidentiality**

The interview results will be kept private. All data and files related to the researcher study will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years then destroyed. In the published reports, there will not be any information provided which would assist in identifying any participants. The actual name of the school system and specific school a participant is employed will not be used. The real name of the participant will not be used either. Upon completion of the study, the researcher will make all results and findings available to participants.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Please note participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to address any concerns or to withdraw at any time.

**Contacts and Questions**

The names and email address for the committee members supervising the study are provided below:

- Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell, Assistant Professor, Liberty University- Committee Chair  
sdmichaelchadwell@liberty.edu
- Dr. Crystal Richardson, Adjunct Professor, Liberty University- Committee Member  
cyrichardson@liberty.edu
- Dr. Meredith Furrow, Adjunct Professor, Liberty University- Committee Member  
mjfurrow@liberty.edu

Please direct any questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding the participation in the study to Kristopher Williams at kwilliams12@liberty.edu or (404)808-4379. If there is a need to contact anyone other than the researcher, please contact the Institutional Review Board of Liberty University, 1971 University Blvd., Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information, understand the commitment, and agree to participate in the study.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date:-

\_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

**DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

PSUEDONYM/IDENTIFICATION CODE	_____
Ethnicity (i.e. African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, other)	_____
Age	_____
Highest Level of Education (i.e., High School, Cert., Assoc., BA, Master, PhD)	_____
Number of years working in education/teaching	_____
Number of years working at current school	_____
Grade level taught	_____
Subject taught	_____
Extracurricular activities sponsored	_____
Any other career/profession before education	_____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: TEACHER/RETIRED TEACHER

**Interview Questions: Teacher/Retired Teacher**

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE  
EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

Kristopher Williams, Doctoral Candidate  
Liberty University, College of Education

1. Good day. What are your thoughts on the current state of educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male?
2. What was your personal motivation to enter the teaching profession?
3. Do you believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination of both? Why?
4. In your opinion, what will it take to motivate more young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession?
5. Why is there an underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession?
6. Do you believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened intentionally or unintentionally? Why?
7. Does background and life experience factor into African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession? Why or why not?
8. There have been wide ranging debates about the belief of African-American male teachers having a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, what are your thoughts on this theory?
9. During your personal experience in school did you ever have an African-American male teacher and what was their impact on your academic performance? If you did not have the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher, what type of impact do you think it would have had on you school experience?

10. Can the achievement gap close and African-American male students demonstrate the ability to be top performing students with the assistance of African-American male teachers? Why or why not?
11. The recruitment efforts of the educational system to get more African-American males into the profession has been criticized, do you think the criticism is justified? Why or why not?
12. Were you recruited into the profession and if yes how were you recruited?
13. In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more African-American males into teaching?
14. Do you have any final comments on African-American males in teaching?

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: ADMINISTRATOR

### **Interview Questions: Administrator**

#### A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

Kristopher Williams, Doctoral Candidate  
Liberty University, College of Education

1. Good day. What are your thoughts on the current state of educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male?
2. What was your personal motivation to enter the teaching profession?
3. Do you believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination of both? Why?
4. In your opinion, what will it take to motivate more young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession?
5. In entering the teaching profession, did you always have aspirations of becoming an educational leader and what was your motivation to ascend to a position of educational leadership?
6. Why is there an underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession?
7. Do you believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened intentionally or unintentionally? Why?
8. Does background and life experience factor into African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession? Why or why not?
9. As an educational leader, what actions have you personally taking to help reverse the shortage of African-American male teachers?
10. There have been wide ranging debates about the belief of African-American male

teachers having a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, what are your thoughts on this theory?

11. During your personal experience in school did you ever have an African-American male teacher and what was their impact on your academic performance? If you did not have the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher, what type of impact do you think it would have had on your school experience?
12. Can the achievement gap close and African-American male students demonstrate the ability to be top performing students with the assistance of African-American male teachers? Why or why not?
13. As an educational leader you are privy to test scores, classroom observations, and interactions of a school. What evidence have you seen that will support the idea of African-American male teachers making a positive impact on African-American male students?
14. The recruitment efforts of the educational system to get more African-American males into the profession has been criticized, do you think the criticism is justified? Why or why not?
15. Were you recruited into the profession and if yes how were you recruited?
16. In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more African-American males into teaching?
17. As an educational leader with the ability to recommend individuals for employment what measures have you personally taken to recruit more African-American males into teaching, to your school system, or to your school?
18. Do you have any final comments on African-American males in teaching?

APPENDIX F: PILOT INTERVIEW STUDY PROTOCOL AND PROMPTS MATIX:  
TEACHER/RETIRED TEACHER

**Pilot Interview Study Protocol and Prompts Matrix: Teacher/Retired Teacher**

1. Arrive 10 minutes early to the school and classroom of the participant.
2. Greet the participant with a handshake, “hello” greeting, and expressing gratitude (saying thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview).
3. Remind the participant the interview will last 30-45 minutes. Remind the participant they have the right to end the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question without penalty. Remind the participant the interview will be audio recorded as well as automatically transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition (speech-to-text transcription program). Remind the participant they can refuse to have the interview recorded. Remind the participants to answer the questions honestly and there are not any “right” or “wrong” answers. Assure the participants their identity and responses will remain confidential. Remind the participants the data will be locked in a file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years and then destroyed.
4. Set up Acer laptop computer with Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition program installed.
5. Complete the interview by reading the questions with the same wording each time.
6. Allow for the participant to perform a member check (verify the information) on the transcribed interview document.
7. Thank the participant again for being part of the study. Provide the participant with the contact information of the researcher.

<b>Pilot Study of the Interview Questions</b>		
<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Pilot Participant Feedback</b>
Introduction/Warmup	1. Good day. What are your thoughts on the current state of educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male?	
R1: What is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession?	2. What was your personal motivation to enter the teaching profession? 3. Do you believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination of both? Why? 4. In your opinion, what will it take to motivate more young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession?	
R2: Why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers?	5. Why is there an underrepresentation of African-American males in the teaching profession? 6. Do you believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened intentionally or unintentionally? Why? 7. Does background and life experience factor into African-American males	

	deciding to not enter the teaching profession? Why or why not?	
R3: How will having more African-American male teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students?	<p>8. There have been wide ranging debates about the belief of African-American male teachers having a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, what are your thoughts on this theory?</p> <p>9. During your personal experience in school did you ever have an African-American male teacher and what was their impact on your academic performance? If you did not have the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher, what type of impact do you think it would have had on you school experience?</p> <p>10. Can the achievement gap close and African-American male students demonstrate the ability to be top performing students with the assistant of African-American male teachers? Why or why not?</p>	
R4: In what ways can the recruiting efforts of African-American males into the	11. The recruitment efforts of the educational system to get more African-American	

<p>profession be strengthened?</p>	<p>males into the profession has been criticized, do you think the criticism is justified? Why or why not?</p> <p>12. Were you recruited into the profession and if yes how were you recruited?</p> <p>13. In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more African-American males into teaching?</p>	
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>14. Do you have any final comments on African-American males in teaching?</p>	

APPENDIX G: PILOT INTERVIEW STUDY PROTOCOL AND PROMPTS MATRIX:  
ADMINISTRATOR

**Pilot Interview Study Protocol and Prompts Matrix: Administrator**

1. Arrive 10 minutes early to the school and office of the participant.
2. Greet the participant with a handshake, “hello” greeting, and expressing gratitude (saying thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview).
3. Remind the participant the interview will last 30-45 minutes. Remind the participant they have the right to end the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question without penalty. Remind the participant the interview will be audio recorded as well as automatically transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition (speech-to-text transcription program). Remind the participant they can refuse to have the interview recorded. Remind the participants to answer the questions honestly and there are not any “right” or “wrong” answers. Assure the participants their identity and responses will remain confidential. Remind the participants the data will be locked in a file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access for three years and then destroyed.
4. Set up Acer laptop computer with Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition program installed.
5. Complete the interview by reading the questions with the same wording each time.
6. Allow for the participant to perform a member check (verify the information) on the transcribed interview document.
7. Thank the participant again for being part of the study. Provide the participant with the contact information of the researcher.

<b>Pilot Study of the Interview Questions</b>		
<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Pilot Participant Feedback</b>
Introduction/Warmup	1. Good day. What are your thoughts on the current state of educational profession as it pertains to the African-American male?	
R1: What is the motivation of African-American males to enter the teaching profession?	2. What was your personal motivation to enter the teaching profession? 3. Do you believe the motivation of an African-American male to enter the teaching profession has to be extrinsic, intrinsic, or a combination of both? Why? 4. In your opinion, what will it take to motivate more young African-American males to enter and remain in the teaching profession? 5. In entering the teaching profession, did you always have aspirations of becoming an educational leader and what was your motivation to ascend to a position of educational leadership?	
R2: Why is there a shortage of African-American male teachers?	6. Why is there an underrepresentation of African-American males in	

	<p>the teaching profession?</p> <p>7. Do you believe the shortage of African-American male teachers happened intentionally or unintentionally? Why?</p> <p>8. Does background and life experience factor into African-American males deciding to not enter the teaching profession? Why or why not?</p> <p>9. As an educational leader, what actions have you personally taking to help reverse the shortage of African-American male teachers?</p>	
<p>R3: How will having more African-American male teachers be instrumental in improving the academic performance of African-American male students?</p>	<p>10. There have been wide ranging debates about the belief of African-American male teachers having a positive impact on the academic performance of African-American male students, what are your thoughts on this theory?</p> <p>11. During your personal experience in school did you ever have an African-American male teacher and what was their impact on your academic performance? If you did not have the opportunity to have an African-American male teacher, what type of impact</p>	

	<p>do you think it would have had on you school experience?</p> <p>12. Can the achievement gap close and African-American male students demonstrate the ability to be top performing students with the assistant of African-American male teachers? Why or why not?</p> <p>13. As an educational leader you are privy to test schools, classroom observations, and interactions of a school. What evidence have you seen that will support the idea of African-American male teachers making a positive impact on African-American male students?</p>	
<p>R4: In what ways can the recruiting efforts of African-American males into the profession be strengthened?</p>	<p>14. The recruitment efforts of the educational system to get more African-American males into the profession has been criticized, do you think the criticism is justified? Why or why not?</p> <p>15. Were you recruited into the profession and if yes how were you recruited?</p> <p>16. In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more African-American males into teaching?</p> <p>17. As an educational leader</p>	

	with the ability to recommend individuals for employment what measures have you personally taken to recruit more African-American males into teaching, to your school system, or to your school?	
Conclusion	18. Do you have any final comments on African-American males in teaching?	

## APPENDIX H: AUDIT TRAIL

### **Audit Trail**

Provided below, is an audit trail which summarizes the dates in which different aspects of the study including the writing, submission, data collection, and data analysis were completed.

May 11, 2011	Research proposal submitted to dissertation committee
May 30, 2011	Phone conference (proposal defense) with dissertation committee approving proposal
June 6, 2011	Institutional Review Board (IRB) application submitted for review and approval
June 15, 2011	Received letter from Newton County School System granting permission to conduct the study within the school system with employees of the system
July 19, 2011	IRB application approved
August 1-3, 2011	Identified potential participants of the study
August 4, 2011	Participant consent forms distributed to all African-American male teachers and administrators in the Newton Count School System
August 7-15, 2011 participants	Received participant consent letters from potential
August 8, 2011	Met with peer debriefing committee
August 9-13, 2011	Edited chapters 1-3
August 10, 2011	Purchased Dragon Naturally Speaking 11 Home Edition
August 15, 2011	Researcher eliminated candidates with less than three years of experience and selected the 19 participants
August 16, 2011	Communicated with the four participants selected for the pilot study and scheduled the interview dates
August 18-23, 2011	Conducted pilot interviews

August 25, 2011	Met with peer debriefing committee to review the results of the pilot interviews and to discuss the research interviews
August 29-Sep 13, 2011	Conducted research interviews
September 14-22, 2011	Data analyzed and coded for writing
September 23, 2011	Submitted chapter 4 to committee chair
October 1, 2011	Begun chapter 5
October 16, 2011	Revised chapter 4
October 18, 2011	Submitted chapter 5
October 29, 2011	Submitted dissertation to committee
November 4, 2011	Revised dissertation
November 8, 2011	Submitted dissertation to editor
November 14, 2011	Submitted completed dissertation and research consultant form to chair and research consultant
December 2- 29, 2011	Revised dissertation based on comments from research consultant