2022

Investigating Beliefs: White Female Teachers' Perceptions of Black Boys and Their Subsequent Achievement-A Qualitative Study

Kirky L. Morris
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Follow this and additional works at: https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds

 Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons, and the Educational Leadership Commons

Investigating Beliefs: White Female Teachers' Perceptions of Black Boys and Their

Subsequent Achievement – A Qualitative Study

By

Kirky L. Morris

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Educational Doctorate

In

Educational Leadership

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

October 2022

October 19, 2022

Investigating Beliefs: White Female Teachers' Perceptions of Black Boys and Their

Subsequent Achievement – A Qualitative Study

Kirky L. Morris

**This dissertation has been examined and approved by the following
members of the student's committee:**

	Dr. Natalie Rasmussen, Advisor
	Dr. Antonia Felix, Committee Member
	Dr. Melissa Krull, Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Jaime Nymann for her compassion, motivation, and inspiration throughout this whole process. I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Natalie Rasmussen for challenging, guiding, and believing in me. Thank you to my entire committee for the hours you have put into reading my dissertation and for your questions and recommendations during and after the writing. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my children: Lynkacia Peterson, Kirkaria Morris, KJ Morris, and Clare Morris. As they say, the sky is the limit to what you can accomplish. You can do and become whatever it is you choose.

ABSTRACT

Black males continue to be the lowest-performing subgroup on state standardized tests in the United States of America. A very large majority of teachers are White females. This study examined the impact of White female teachers' beliefs and actions on the achievement of Black male students. Data was collected via interviews with White female teachers that teach in grades 3, 4, and 5 in a Midwestern urban city. Because I'm a Black male principal and the participants were White females, we were intentional about having a White female do the interviews so that the participants could answer questions about their beliefs, actions, and the academic achievement gap without hesitation or reservations. The data analysis revealed 8 major themes a) Black boys have social-emotional needs that cause extreme behaviors, b) trauma causes the Black boys to struggle in school, c) White female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement, d) Black boys don't want to learn, e) perceptions about lack of parent involvement, f) lack of cultural awareness, impacts of curriculum and tracking of students, g) teachers' feelings of frustration. The findings of this study confirm that the social construction of race has a major impact on the perceptions of White female teachers on the academic performances of their Black male students. The evidence in this study suggests that the beliefs held by White female teachers do affect the academic achievement of Black male students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the United States, the academic achievement gap between racial groups of K-12 students has been measured via national standardized test scores since the 1970s (NAEP, 2018). White students are outperforming students of color, especially Black males, on these standardized tests. For quite some time there has been a great deal of attention given to the persistent disconnect between Black students and high academic achievement. The high school graduation rate for Black males in the United States is below most other ethnic subgroups (Schotts Foundation, 2015). The conundrum can best be described as nothing less than the top educational crisis of our time with no significant changes in sight (Henfield, 2012). A Dyce (2013) study stated:

Undoubtedly, this nation can no longer ignore such a crisis. It is time for concerned constituencies to conduct a careful examination of the socio-cultural, political, and economic consequences of an education system that is failing a large segment of the American population. This nation can no longer accept failure, and the research is conclusive, a lack of participation at the K 12 level results in limited to no participation at the postsecondary level. (p.165)

Specifically, Black males are at the bottom when it comes to academic achievement. According to Viadero (2014):

In education, the "achievement gap" refers to the inequalities in academic performance between groups of students generally categorized by socioeconomic status (SES), race, ethnicity, and gender. Research into the causes of disparities in student achievement

between low-income minority students and middle-income White students has been ongoing in the United States since the publication of the report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity" in 1966. This report, also known as the "Coleman Study," was ordered by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to evaluate the availability of equal educational opportunities to children of varying races, colors, religions, and origins. The authors found that 85% of Blacks who stayed in school until their senior year scored below the national average in comparison to White students. (p. 1)

Milner (2013) states that the stereotypes and misconceptions that emerge from the media can propagate myths and untruths about Black male students. The students themselves may even come to believe the negative ideologies about who they are, their worth, and their capacities for success in education and society. However, not all Black male students struggle in our current educational system. Those Black males who have managed to achieve academic success have more than likely had to overcome many obstacles (Henfield, 2012).

Duke, 2017 stated:

Framing the problem of African American student achievement in terms of high achievers opens additional possibilities for causal stories. Much can be learned from a greater understanding of schools and districts in which African American students do relatively well. (p. 109)

Some Black males also understand what Delpit (1995) called "the culture of power" and have the knowledge and skills to navigate and negotiate our educational system.

Black males are the most severely underrepresented demographic in gifted education and advanced classes. This tragic waste of gifts and talents has reached epidemic proportions. Heinfield (2012) suggests that those Black males who are achieving academic success outside of gifted and advanced classes might be even more successful if surrounded by other students in gifted and advanced courses who love learning and have a similar thirst for knowledge. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL, 2017), after it analyzed 97,000 American schools, the United States Department of Education found numerous patterns of inequality with race and poverty as the divisive factors. High schools with a high density of African Americans revealed the following: fewer college preparation courses, more likely to have first-year teachers and teachers who do not meet all the certification requirements, underrepresentation in Gifted and Talented Education Programs, and over-representation in discipline and suspensions.

The gap in achievement between Blacks and Whites continues to be very large. In the 2019 Nation's Report Card (National Association of Educational Progress, 2019), Black students scored 26 percentage points less than their White classmates on the fourth-grade reading standardized tests. In fourth-grade Math, the percentage was 25 points lower for Black students. The 2019 NAEP also revealed that the gap widened in eighth grade with a gap of 32 percentage points in Math and 28 points in Reading. According to Iruka (2018), statistics continue to show that, overall, Black boys are faring worse than their peers in education, social, and economic domains. Regardless of socioeconomic factors, the achievement gap between Black children and their White

peers emerges soon after birth and continues throughout childhood, Iruka states. Taylor

(2012) stated:

The Black-White achievement gap continues to be one of the most serious and intractable

challenges to educational research, practice, and policy in the United States. Although

this achievement disparity has been the focus of years of research scrutiny, intervention

and prevention efforts, and educational policy debate, explanations for its persistence and

efforts to address it have fallen short. (p. 587)

Many White teachers experience some ambivalence toward minority and

immigrant students (Hamer & Kumar, 2012; Hollins & Torre-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter,

2001) and doubt their efficacy in teaching students whose cultural

backgrounds differ from their own (Bean & Helfrich, 2011; Hamer & Kumar, 2012).

Dyce (2013) states:

If education is seen as the great equalizer in American society, it is clear that Black males

are not equalized. Such marginalization and disenfranchisement can be seen in the high

rates of Black male suspension, lower test scores, and disproportionate placement in

special education classes. (p. 166)

Teachers play a major role in the gap in achievement between White students and

Black male students. About 77 percent of teachers in the United States of America are

women and about 80 percent are White (Walker, 2018).

Markowitz and Puchner (2015) stated:

As we train new White teachers, they go out into schools where teachers tend to hold

(mostly unconscious) racist beliefs about African American families, and where the

preservice teachers themselves are predisposed to hold such beliefs. These beliefs have a negative impact on the teacher expectations, school climate, and the quality of the educational experience of students of color, leading to enormous negative consequences for the lives of thousands of children and youth in the U.S. (p. 9)

White students, in general, receive a strength-based education while Black students get a deficit-based education. Anderson (2004) stated:

Strength-based education involves a process of assessing, teaching, and designing experiential learning activities to help students identify their greatest talents, and to then develop and apply strengths based on those talents in the process of learning, intellectual development, and academic achievement to levels of personal excellence. (p. 1)

Black males, in particular, are judged and provided an education based on their apparent needs. They are educated based on their areas of growth. Anderson (2004) wrote that deficit-based education interferes with academic achievement and excellence.

Hadjistassou (2018) stated:

According to this deficit-based view, when individual students from cultural, racial, and ethnic-minority backgrounds enter school, they lack the self-determination, genuine interest, and knowledge-building skills to

achieve academic success. The major assumption, in this view, is that children of minority ethnic or racial or of White low socioeconomic backgrounds bring into the classroom what is believed to be limited Oral, social, interactional, and cognitive skills. (p. 220)

Although there have been many studies about the achievement gap and its possible causes, few studies have captured the White female teachers' perspective. This study attempts to capture the voices, thoughts, and beliefs of White female elementary teachers about why we have this gap in achievement between Black boys and their White classmates. The study will attempt to find answers to whether the gap is really about the lack of achievement of Black boys or whether White female teachers believe in the intellectual and behavioral capabilities of Black boys. This study will also provide information about how the teachers' beliefs impact the achievement of Black boys.

Problem Statement

When it comes to the academic achievement gap, White female teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward the academic abilities of students of color have been a topic of debate and relevance for many years (Farver, 2019; Putnick et al., 2020). In attempts for racial justice, advocates and researchers have focused on gaps in achievement as relevant educational outcomes that are related to the beliefs and attitudes of White female teachers (Quinn, 2020; Quinn & Le, 2018). This is to say that what teachers believe about their students directly impacts student learning outcomes. Despite many efforts and much research around the achievement gap, the gap still exists today. Black boys continue to be the lowest-performing group and our schoolteachers are mostly White females. Because our lowest-performing group of students is Black boys and the majority of our teachers are White females, this study is extremely relevant. This study examined the impact of White female teachers' beliefs and actions on the achievement of Black male students. Many White teachers experience some ambivalence toward minority and

immigrant students (Hamer & Kumar, 2012; Hollins & Torre-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001) and doubt their efficacy in teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Bean & Helfrich, 2011; Hamer & Kumar, 2012). The examination, study, and interview of White female teachers added to the literature on the causes of the academic gap between Black boys and White elementary school students.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine the beliefs of White female elementary teachers about Black male students and their academic and behavioral capabilities in a Midwest urban elementary school setting. This phenomenological study added to the body of literature on the achievement gap. Research has been limited that asks the experts in the field about their beliefs about the students and why they believe the achievement gap exists. Current research informs us about the impact of these teachers' beliefs and actions from the outsider's perspective but does not consider the actual teachers' experiences in their classrooms. However, in my research, I provided a space to ask the experts themselves about what their beliefs are about the teaching profession, gifted and talented students, the challenges of education, and what a successful day in education is like for the teacher.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions in this study are 1) What are the beliefs held by White Female elementary teachers regarding Black male student achievement in school? and 2) What impact do these beliefs have, if any, on their expectations for the achievement of Black boys?

Significance of the Research

Students' progress has been measured via state standardized testing since the 1970s. These tests are given in every state and generally, start in the middle elementary school years. While there might be slight variances in each state, the tests measure literacy, math, and science skills. Since the onset of standardized testing, there have been gaps in achievement among our students. The most troublesome gap in this achievement data is the racial achievement gap. The gap in achievement between Black boys and their White classmates has stood out every year. There has been significant research on this achievement gap which I will address in my literature review. As a result of current research, how we talk about and name the gap in achievement has changed from the "achievement gap" to the "opportunity gap." This change in how we address and name the issues of achievement and opportunity with our Black students, particularly Black boys, is relevant to teaching and pedagogy. My research adds to the existing body of research by addressing the particular needs of Black boys and analyzing the attitudes and beliefs of White teachers. Research has proven that the opportunity gap exists for several reasons. My research filled a gap in the existing literature by digging into the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of White female elementary teachers who serve Black male students in an urban setting. Interviewing teachers in the field in an urban setting about their beliefs and actions provided concrete evidence that can help improve classroom management and instruction. The data collected from these interviews were analyzed and in turn, resulted in recommendations on teaching practices that will benefit Black male students and all students.

There are many potential benefits of this phenomenological qualitative study. Potential benefits of my research include recommendations on how to remove the barriers that may be causing Black males in elementary schools to not achieve at the levels of their White classmates. This study may benefit pre-service teachers as they prepare to become classroom teachers by offering strategies on how to lead an equitable classroom. Other strategies for pre-service teachers include but are not limited to a clear focus on instructional pedagogy and academic excellence in place of classroom management. The results of this research will also contribute to staff development opportunities. Culturally relevant staff development will help improve teaching practices. The knowledge gained from this study can help school leaders with their coaching of teachers by demonstrating common beliefs and attitudes among teachers that can be named and addressed in coaching sessions. Improved instructional strategies and a progression of focus from teaching to learning are also possible benefits of this research.

Delimitations and Limitations   As a Black male leader in an urban school district in the Midwest, this phenomenological study poses several delimitations. Only White female educators that teach in an urban setting were interviewed. The White female teachers all teach in grades 3 - 5. The focus of this research was on the achievement of one subgroup of students (Black males) as compared to their White classmates. As a Black male who has worked in an urban school district for over 25 years, I certainly have some biases, attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions about the academic discrepancies between our Black male students and their White classmates. As I am aware of my biases and race impacting the interviews being

conducted of White female teachers, I asked a White woman to interview the teachers on my behalf. This was done so that my race and gender did not impact what the White female teachers shared about their perceptions, beliefs, and actions around Black male students. Additionally, this was an attempt to provide a safe space for the interviewees so that they can speak openly and honestly about their beliefs and actions.

My research also has several limitations that should be documented. Because we remain in a global pandemic, the interviews and collection of the information were done remotely. This limited access to the classroom and classroom artifacts. The classroom artifacts usually give administrators and other classroom visitors an idea about what the teacher believes is important to post in the classroom. It can also give insight as to what is being taught, which student work is shared publicly, and other details about daily life in the classroom. Therefore, if we were able to interview teachers at their school sites, we would have gotten more information about their beliefs which contribute to their actions. If we were able to visit schools, we would also have gotten better access to student work samples and possibly even been able to observe a teacher teaching a lesson. Because of the pandemic, this was not possible.

Definition of Key Terms

Academic Achievement. Refers to the communicative (oral, reading, writing, speaking), mathematical, science, social science, and thinking skills and competencies that enable a student to succeed in school and society (Borsato & Lindholm-Leary, 2006).

Achievement Gap. A difference in standardized achievement test scores between groups of students (i.e., race and/or gender). A difference in achievement on standardized tests between groups of students.

The Culture of Power. The structures of cultural dominance within the cultural groups characterize the U.S. educational landscape. The methods and practices of the colonialist educational ideology (Darder, 1991).

Deficit-based Education. Identifying individual students' deficits, and subsequently, selecting professional development activities and learning activities to improve those areas of improvement (Hiemstra & Van Yperen, 2015).

Educational Equity. "Access to a world-class education that helps to ensure all children with dreams and determination can reach their potential and succeed" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Inequality. The unequal treatment of a student based on race, gender, and/or religion.

Opportunity Gap. A difference in standardized test scores between groups of students is caused by the lack of resources available to certain groups of students. Also caused by low expectations for certain groups of students based on race.

Pre-service Teachers. College students who are studying to become teachers. These students become student teachers before they become licensed teachers.

Socio-economic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group based on education, income, and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often

reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power, and control (APA, 2021).

Standardized Testing. State standardized tests are given annually in the same manner to all test takers and graded in the same manner for everyone. These tests are high-stakes tests that are used to grade schools' success.

Teacher Perceptions. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and actions as they relate to student discipline and academic achievement.

Underrepresented Demographic. An underrepresented demographic describes a subset of the population that holds a smaller percentage of a significant subgroup than the subset held in the general population. For example, Black males are an underrepresented demographic in the subgroup of teachers; women are an underrepresented demographic in STEM careers.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To gain a better understanding of teachers' roles in the gap in achievement between White students and Black boys, this literature review will highlight what research reveals about White female teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and actions toward their students of color, particularly Black boys. In this chapter, I will discuss the literature that addresses how teacher expectations and implicit biases impact student achievement. Second, I will discuss the literature on the impact of teacher relationships with their students. Next will be a review of the research on the impact of race and gender on teachers' perceptions of their students. Finally, I will describe the research on what has worked for students of color in schools. This research study investigates White female teachers' perceptions of their Black male students and what has worked for Black male students' achievement in school.

White Female Teachers' Beliefs and Actions

A May 2021 report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) confirmed that most of our elementary teachers in the United States of America are White and female. The report showed that 88 percent of elementary teachers are female, and 84 percent are White. The NCES also reported that only 12 percent of elementary teachers are male and only 16 percent are teachers of color. This data shows that White female teachers are a majority in the education workforce and their impact on the education and achievement of Black students is critical.

The beliefs and biases of White female teachers are brought into their classrooms (Audley, 2019; Christopher, 2019). When it comes to the academic achievement gap,

White female teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward the academic abilities of students of color have been a topic of debate and relevance for many years (Farver, 2019; Putnick et al., 2020). In attempts for racial justice, advocates and researchers have focused on gaps in achievement as relevant educational outcomes that are related to the beliefs and attitudes of White female teachers. (Quinn, 2020; Quinn & Le, 2018). This is to say that what teachers believe about their students directly impacts student learning outcomes. There is research that indicates that elevating student voice for our Black students has a positive impact on their academic achievement in school. Listening to the voices of Black male students in Pre-K through 12th-grade classrooms can influence the implications of gaps in achievement between White and Black students. Hearing our Black male students' voices potentially creates awareness. The possibility of incorporating the voices of our Black male students into teacher education programs for our pre-service teachers should be encouraged (Bryan, 2017). This dialogue might bring to light teachers' implicit biases in their classrooms.

Teacher Expectations and Implicit Bias

Prior research has shown that teachers' implicit bias and low expectations impact Black student outcomes in negative ways (Desai, 2016; Liang & Rivera; 2017; Copur-Gencturk et al., 2019; & Peterson et al., 2021). La Salle et al. (2019) stated:
Implicit biases are the subtle, automatic attitudes and stereotypical associations people make against others based on their cultural group affiliation. In schools, this is evident when teachers are immediately reactive toward students who are perceived to be acting

out; the behavior may result in a warning for a White student, but detention or being sent to the office for a Black or brown student.

(p. 318)

When we discuss the disparities in academic excellence in education, major concerns surround teacher attitudes and their implicit biases (Liang et al., 2019; Liang & Rivera). Copur-Gencturk et al. (2019) examined teachers' implicit biases in two ways. The first was whether teachers' estimations of the accuracy of students' answers to mathematical equations varied by their assigned gender and race. They also analyzed the synergy between teachers' races and students' races to find whether teachers from different races showed similar levels of bias. "White sounding names were rated significantly higher than those of Black and Hispanic sounding names for both boys and girls" (p. 36). This research indicates that there is an impact on some students of color whose names sound Black or Hispanic. In addition, teachers are more bothered by students that misbehave in minor ways and consider it a pattern if the student has a Black-sounding name: these students were likely to be considered troublemakers (Sparks, 2017).

The researchers Copur-Gencturk et al. (2019) added that teacher discernments are based on formative and summative evaluations progressively over time which one test can't capture. Teacher educators must admit and confront their own biases by acknowledging that their biases exist, looking into where the biases started, researching techniques to confront them, and tackling the biases head-on through courageous conversations with people of different cultural backgrounds (Cross & Jett, 2016). Other

researchers (Bryan 2019; Harper & Associates 2014; Toldson & Johns, 2016; Warren, 2016) gathered that teacher education researchers should continue to conduct analyses with a focus on what would assist teachers with examining and confronting their stereotypes and biases about Black boys. Teacher stereotypes and biases about Black boys may be a reason for their deficit-based perspectives and approaches.

Deficit-Based Teacher Perspectives

Tochluk & Utt (2020) maintain that White teachers in urban schools must examine and reframe their racialized deficit-based perspective of students of color to a strengths-based focal point for students of color. Centering beliefs on the deficits of students of color has negative results and outcomes (Baker, 2019; Bryan, 2019; Grace & Nelson, 2018). Bryan (2019) suggested that instead of preservice educators learning the practice of teaching, they acquire skills in the practice of racial profiling. He proposes that "White teachers influence White children's perceptions of Black boys, as they disproportionately target and discipline Black males for minor and subjective school disciplinary infractions" (p. 327). Bryan also explored the intergenerational cynical views of Black males which subscribe to the disproportionate amount of school discipline and the school-to-prison pipeline. These ideas are important for pre-service teachers to explore as they embark on a career where they could have a sizable impact on the education of Black children.

Critical research has continued to explain the criminalization of Black boys in schools. Evidence suggests that there is a clear connection between school-based discipline and the disproportionate number of Black males designated as defiant is caused

by the deficit mindset regarding these Black male students (Baker, 2019; Bryan, 2019; Grace & Nelson, 2018). Some teacher presumptions are still based on an inflexible view of students, which focuses on low expectations, color blindness, and deficit thinking (Madsen & Luevanos, 2019). Little and Tolbert (2018) recommend that to challenge and disrupt the damaging consequences of deficit-based instruction for Black boys, teachers must use culturally responsive pedagogical tools and methods. Madsen and Luevanos (2019) express that teachers must use culturally responsive pedagogy to ensure an inclusive and culturally relevant educational environment. The use of culturally responsive pedagogy and techniques is one-way teachers can attempt to engage with and build relationships with their Black male students.

The progression from perceived troublemaker into incarcerated felon is referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Hambacher, 2018). Basile (2019) called for teaching practices that interrupt punitive-based racial mistreatment of Black boys. He described a way of decentralizing the classroom environment by having no whole group teacher-directed instruction; in place of whole group instruction, students would go directly to small groups with a set of directions as they enter the classroom. Additionally, Basile went on to voice that teachers should plan lessons that contain several contrasting ways in which students conduct their inquiries and investigations. Creating a student-centered and student-led environment could impact achievement results for Black boys. This is an example of culturally relevant pedagogy that could impact how Black boys learn.

White Female Teachers' Racial Knowledge of Self

Tochluk & Utt (2020) also emphasized the importance of White teachers' understanding of themselves and the entitlement they bring into the classroom regardless of their racial comprehension or preparedness to be a social justice representative. Tochluk and Utt, White education researchers, work with White educators to help evolve more anti-racist ways of being White. They propose that instead of concentrating on people of color, White educators must place their attention on what is going on with "Whiteness." They stated that if there is not a positive foundation built for White anti-racist identity, it can come with self-hate, guilt, and shame. The writers committed to six areas for examining and understanding one's White racial identity: (a) analyzing privilege and micro-aggressive behavior, (b) exploring ethnic and cultural identities, (c) engaging with the history of White anti-racists and multiracial struggles for justice, (d) developing intersectional identity, (e) building White anti-racist community, (f) and demonstrating accountability across race. This White Racial Identity Model was developed by psychologist Janet Helms in 1990. It is a racial and ethnic identity model created specifically for people who identify as White. In the 1995 model of Janet Helm's WRID model, she identified the stages of the White Identity model. The stages are a rejection of color-blind ideology, an appreciation of the differences and similarities of racial groups, forming cross-racial relationships, awareness of the structures of racism, and antiracist activism. Tockluk & Utt discussed the importance of White educators in urban schools' awareness of the racialized truths of teaching while thinking about their attitudes and actions. The objective is for White teachers to have a profound knowledge of themselves

and for them to start a positive, anti-racist White identity free of microaggressions (Carter et al., 2017; Compton-Lilly, 2020; Durkee, Hope, & Keels, 2017). This workaround White identity can be another way to impact how White female teachers teach.

Over the past decade, research on racial and ethnic development among youth of color has increased (Dastrup et al., 2021 & Williams et al., 2020). Since there has not been a parallel examination of racial identity among White youth, it reinforces Whiteness as normative and invisible (Dastrup et al., 2021 & Rogers, 2019). The construct of Whiteness and White racial identity in higher education has now become a focal point (Grzanka et al., 2020; Hays et al., 2021, Schooley et al., 2019). This revelation that Whiteness is the norm could have considerable implications on how racial awareness is approached by educators and on how that awareness could impact gaps in achievement or opportunity gaps.

Mackey & Matias (2015) declared that it is crucial to reveal pedagogical implementations of critical Whiteness education. They considered the importance of U.S. urban teacher education courses planned for preservice teachers, predominantly middle-class White females who have hardly ever experienced relationships with people of color. These White females desire to teach in U.S. urban schools because there are mostly students of color in our urban settings. This is a collision between two very separate worlds. "If racism is the symptom, then enactments of whiteness that uphold white supremacy is the disease; to cure such a disease we cannot simply apply anti-racist approaches without thoroughly understanding the disease itself" (p. 34). Teacher education programs should take seriously the negative impact that Whiteness can have on

a teacher's understanding of children of color and urban schools (Makey & Matias, 2015; Picower, 2009).

Whiteness studies must become a framework to deconstruct the material, physical, emotional, and political power of Whiteness. White teachers may be able to benefit from doing antiracist work before entering the teaching profession. Mackey and Matias (2015) posit:

In understanding how race and racism impact people of color—a knowledge set that can be applied to teaching urban diverse student populations—the study of critical whiteness provides teachers, many of whom are White, with a process of learning about their whiteness and how the exertions of whiteness create a violent condition within which people of color must racially survive. (p. 35)

Teacher-Student Relationships

The research over multiple decades suggests that the relationship between students and teachers affects both academic outcomes and the behavioral functioning of the students. In addition, teacher self-efficacy could have an impact on teacher-student relationships. The relationships between teachers and students can cause both positive and negative results. Chestnut et al. (2020) stated that teachers' interpretations of behavior and their responses to behavior differ based on race. The behaviors of Black students are described by teachers as being "more aggressive, defiant, and problematic" than their White classmates (p. 142). "In the classroom, teachers and students are constantly acting upon the environment, attending to environmental changes, encoding

new information, and making decisions about appropriate responsive behaviors" (p. 144).

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

The self-efficacy of teachers determines whether the teacher and student have a positive or negative relationship (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Teacher self-efficacy has been defined as an individual teacher's belief in themselves; it reflects their confidence in their ability to control their behavior, motivation, and learning environment (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Researchers Zee and Koomen (2016) stated that the teacher-student relationship plays a decisive role in determining students' behavioral and academic outcomes. When there is a positive relationship between the teacher and their students, the learning environment thrives, and all students benefit. In addition, teacher self-efficacy is found to be positively related to the closeness to their students and also negativity connected to student conflict with their teachers. Furthermore, teachers' self-efficacy is also a crucial part of creating an inviting learning space for students. Teachers' beliefs about their ability in performance indicators such as effective and inclusive instructions are a result of their self-efficacy. (Siwatu et al., 2016; Hajovsky et al., 2020).

The research on the self-efficacy of teachers continues to explain the importance of their self-efficacy to the academic achievement of their students (Hajovsky et al., 2020; Zee & Koomen, 2017). When reflecting on their ability to engage with decisions related to instruction, assessment, and behavior management, teachers rely on various sources of information when assessing their teaching ability, including mastery of content, indirect feedback, persuasive narratives, and emotional and physiological

sources of information (Hajovsky et al., 2020). Teachers' self-efficacy is regarding their confidence in their ability to teach through challenging and difficult lessons regardless of students' attitudes and behaviors (Kunemund et al., 2020). According to Kunemund et al., (2020) teachers' self-efficacy can also be assessed. The authors go on to state that self-efficacy can be assessed through teaching practices, reflections, and evaluations. In addition, the teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students continue to be impacted by race and race matching (Kunemund et al., 2020). Students benefit from having a teacher from a similar demographic, especially racial/ethnic minority students (Cherng et al., 2016; Egalite & Kisida, 2017; Luke, 2017).

Teachers' self-efficacy in working with Black and White students has also been studied by Geerlings et al., 2018. The results of their study confirmed that White teachers felt less efficacious when working with students of color. These researchers found that the difference in the academic and behavioral support received by the White students as opposed to the Black students was considerably more positive. Teacher classroom practices which include classroom management are a result of their self-efficacy beliefs (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). The classroom management practices used when it comes to Black students are oppressive and are an attempt to control the students (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Teachers tend to refer Black students to the office of behavior specialists for subjective infractions such as being disrespectful but White students are referred to the office of behavior specialists for more objective reasons such as being tardy to class. This may be because these teachers feel more confident and efficacious to teach White students.

Discipline Disproportionalities

The development of strong, positive, and reflective relationships between teachers and their Black students could be affected by teachers' stereotypes that contribute to disciplinary disproportionality (Bohmer & Glock, 2018; Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2015). A national report by The Civil Rights Project (2020) found that the lost instruction due to out-of-school suspensions in secondary schools is five times higher than in elementary schools. The report also showed that the rate for Black students is much higher than for their White classmates. Black students missed 103 days per 100 students enrolled which is 82 more days than their White peers lost due to out-of-school suspensions. This data from The Civil Rights Project proves that sending students to the office for minor infractions and subsequently suspending them does not help the student find success in the classroom. If a student is not in the classroom or school, the student is missing out on their learning opportunities. Girvan et al. (2017) and Liang et al. (2019) found that overusing office referrals for minor offenses is possibly a function of racial bias inserted in the educational systems that place students of color at a major disadvantage. Furthermore, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has shown that "students who are suspended from school lose important instructional time, are less likely to graduate on time, and are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the juvenile justice system" (United States Government Accountability Office, 2018, p. 1). Teachers need to build stronger relationships and interact more with their students of color so that they can understand the students' perceptions of the school climate and academic experiences (Liang et al., 2019).

Quality teacher-student relationships are associated with lower rates of disruptions and suspensions in the school setting (Quin, 2017). Teacher-student relationships seem to be a major factor in academic outcomes. Some research has shifted from teacher perceptions to student perceptions of the classroom and school climate, as well as students' relationships with teachers (Raufelder, Scherber, & Wood, 2016). Research has also shown that when teachers focus on learning about students' cultures, home lives, and interests, it enhances their ability to build strong relationships with their students and easily resolve conflict (Brewer et al., 2020). These relationships are important because when less time is spent on behavior management, perhaps more time is spent on instruction and learning.

Academic Expectations and Accountability

Although teachers closely monitor Black boys' behavior, they have very low academic expectations for them. In their study, Kao and Zimmermann (2020) found that in comparison to their White students, teachers penalize Black children in math and other subject areas. Kao & Zimmermann define a penalty or an advantage as the unequal relationship between children's non-cognitive skills and teacher ratings of academic ability. O'Connor (2020) defines noncognitive skills as personality traits such as creativity, cognitive flexibility, cooperation, and collaboration. "For example, in comparison to White children with identical noncognitive skills, we find that teachers are more likely to rate Black children as below average in math when their noncognitive skills are below average" (p.433). Perceptions of abilities, both cognitive and noncognitive, can affect how a teacher perceives a student's academic performance.

Because our educational system is built on racist ideas and beliefs that dismiss and invalidate Black children, our educational system is getting the intended results (Brooms & Rogers, 2020; Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas, 2014). The effectiveness of teachers can be traced directly to what the teachers' beliefs are about their students (Emdin, 2016). Generally, teachers have lower academic achievement expectations for their Black male students (Allen, 2013; Howard, 2014; Rogers & Brooms, 2020). The case study by Rogers and Brooms (2020) advised that teachers' perceptions of their teaching practices were opposite of their overall low academic achievement expectations from their Black male students.

A 2016 report from the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted that racial minorities had multiple disparities which included varying levels of access to academic coursework. Advanced Placement is a program that offers high school students the opportunity to earn college credit and develop college-ready skills. This rigorous program has historically denied access to students of color (Kolluri, 2018). Black males are overrepresented in special education classes but significantly underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Johnson & Larwin, 2020). According to NCES (2017) data, the White student population represented in gifted and talented programs is 50% higher than Black students. The misidentification of Black male students allegedly acting out might contribute to the lack of teacher identification of Black male students in gifted and talented programs (Besnoy et al., 2016). Over the past decade, there have been several studies that have found that Black boys are underrepresented in high-level academic programs but overrepresented in unfavorable

programs (Brinkley et al., 2018). These adverse programs may include Emotional

Behavior Disorder for special education or remedial courses as well as basic skills

courses.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Teacher Perceptions of Black Male Students</h3>

Differences in teacher perceptions based on race play a major role in the gap in

achievement between Black and White students. Canivez et al. (2018) stated that the true

differences in student achievement between different racial groups stem from

environmental factors, teacher biases, and teacher expectation differences. Based on the

perceived way Black boys play, they are socially constructed as criminal, dangerous, and

monstrous in schools. (Bryan 2020; Rosen 2017; Ulen, 2016). As we reimagine the

childhood of Black boys, (Dumas & Nelson, 2016) educators, policymakers, and

community advocates must pursue pedagogical and policy interventions that create

opportunities for Black boys to participate in a true childhood free of criminalization.

Student-Teacher Race Match

Redding (2019) suggests that while teacher perceptions can influence a range of

behavioral and academic outcomes, the most powerful evidence of student success points

to a shared cultural understanding which comes from verification of an alliance between

teacher and student racial/ethnic matching. "For schools to narrow racial and ethnic

opportunity and achievement gaps, policies and practices must be found that benefit

children from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic groups" (p. 499). There has been

a growing body of research over the past five years that reveals that students benefit from

having a teacher from a similar demographic, especially racial/ethnic minority students

(Cherng et al., 2016; Egalite & Kisida, 2017; Luke, 2017). When studying student-teacher racial matches, Bohrnstedt and Yarnell (2017) proposed that a match of Black male students with a Black teacher resulted in better reading outcomes for Black male students. However, Copur-Gencturk et al. (2019) stated that although student-teacher race matching might be beneficial to Black students overall, this does not guarantee higher student achievement for this racial group. These researchers also found that race and gender matching also impact teachers' perceptions of their student's academic abilities. Copur-Gencturk (2019) also stated, "White mathematics teachers were significantly more likely to indicate that their class was difficult for Black students" (p. 32). In addition, Redding's (2019) review suggests a mixed set of race-matching findings concerning teachers' ratings of students' academics, ranging from significantly negative to significantly positive findings for Black students and no significant findings for other student groups. In their study, White teachers were less optimistic about their Black students as compared to other races. Research from Grissom, Rodriguez, & Kern, 2017 states that when a school has a principal and/or many teachers of the same racial or ethnic groups as the student, the achievement gaps do not exist. This research confirms that Black male students benefit from having a Black male teacher.

The Black Male Student Narrative

According to Little and Tolbert (2018), Black male students, no matter how young, are often labeled by their teachers as "bad"; this word is not only indicative of their conduct but is also an attack on their character. Teachers' negative narratives about their Black male students play into the school-to-prison pipeline. According to McCarter

(2017), the school-to-prison pipeline refers to the path from our educational system to the juvenile or criminal justice system. Not only are Black boys victims of the school-to-prison pipeline, but they are also victims of the school playground-to-prison pipeline (Bryan, 2020). Similar to the school-to-prison pipeline, "the school playground to prison pipeline is a consequence of White children's accusations, fears, misperceptions, and misreading of Black boys' play" (Bryan, p. 644). Few studies have set out to understand the actual playground and play-in-the-classroom experiences of Black boys in early childhood education. Most studies that do investigate them often socially construct Black boys' play as criminal, dangerous, and monstrous (Bryan, 2020). The research by Bradshaw et al. (2019) states that White students are significantly less likely to be in the criminal justice system than students of color who are not engaged or equally engaged in school.

Some schools have zero-tolerance discipline policies and systems that are set up to control and criminalize Blackness while at the same time minimizing White student defiance in schools which contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline for Black students (Heitzeg, 2016). Black boys' attitudes and actions are considered problematic in many schools throughout our country (Little & Tolbert, 2018). The very same attitudes and actions as White students are not considered in the same way as Black students. This happens from preschool through college and/or to the criminal justice system. School is promoted as a safe place for all students, but research shows that these perceptions are not necessarily true, since a safe environment cultivates genuine learning experiences and establishes a higher quality of life for all students (Moreno & Scaletta, 2018).

Research by Gilliam et al. (2016) demonstrates that teachers expect challenging behavior from Black preschoolers and especially Black boys. Little and Tolbert (2018) stated,

From preschool to college, deficit-based narratives, fueled by historical racist and sexist stereotypes, contend that African American boys and young men are deviant, disengaged, disruptive, undisciplined, unintelligent, problematic, confrontational, threatening, and difficult to teach—all in a place that should be safe and affirming. (p. 409)

Supporting Black Male Students' Academic Performance

Black males continue to perform well below their White classmates on standardized tests. In the 2019 Nation's Report Card (National Association of Educational Progress, 2019), Black students scored 26 percentage points less than their White classmates on fourth-grade reading standardized tests. In fourth-grade math, the percentage was 25 points lower for Black students. The 2019 NAEP also revealed that the gap got larger in eighth grade with a gap of 32 percentage points in math and 28 points in reading. Many of the reasons for this gap are explained in this literature review. Wright & Counsell (2018) stated that in kindergarten and first grade, most Black male students do not get the support needed to cultivate their academic abilities and talent in school. This is one of the main reasons Black boys are often overlooked for gifted and talented programs (Davis et al., 2019; Wright & Counsell, 2018). According to Woodson & Harris (2018), Black males are overrepresented in special education classes. Black youth are also more than five times more likely to be detained or incarcerated than White youth (NCES, 2019). All of these data points indicate gaps in the educational system.

Johnson and Larwin (2020) stated that failure to create early opportunities for success in the lives of Black boys would be detrimental to the system. Fast forward to high school, the Council of Great City Schools study (2017) found that only 4.7% of Black males were prepared for AP courses, compared to 30% of their White peers, and less than 4.7% of Black male students were enrolled in AP courses. Glock and Klopproth (2017) contended that teachers' stereotype-based expectations and attitudes are believed to contribute to the disadvantages suffered by ethnic minority students. C.M. Steele (1997) proposed that members of a stereotyped group (Black males) may experience added pressure when placed in situations where their behavior could be interpreted as evidence that validates the stereotype. The more affluent parents are, the more educated they are on options for students regarding gifted and talented services (Johnson & Larwin, 2020). Parental advocacy of their children being offered these services is a major factor in identifying students for gifted and talented services (Card & Giulano, 2016). The College Board (2019) encourages equity measures in honors courses and promotes breaking down barriers to these courses based on students' indigenous backgrounds, origins, and socioeconomic status. Since ethnic minority and culturally diverse students continue to be underrepresented in gifted and talented programs, it is reasonable to ask if creating a new system in gifted identification might help increase balance and equity in these programs (Luria et al., 2016).

Effective Teaching of Black Male Students

There is a growing body of research that helps support the growth and achievement of Black boys in schools. Teachers spend the most time with Black boys

while they are in school in comparison to the students' own families. Therefore, they must be informed of the techniques and strategies that help Black male students succeed (Anderson et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2019)). For students of color, literacy experiences in schools have great potential for being socially and emotionally freeing but instead, they are often constricting and isolating (Martin & Spencer, 2020). Our educators must be competent in delivering pedagogical literacy experiences that use texts that are affirmative and accurate representations of diverse communities (Leland, Lewison, & Harste, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Education

The two leading frameworks in the field of cultural diversity and education are culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010). Teachers of Black male students should consider and explore their cultural lenses and implicit biases that could impact instruction, interactions, and learning for their students (Walker & Hutchinson, 2021). These researchers learned that culturally responsive teaching is one avenue through which Black male students attain a feeling of relevance and therefore find academic success. According to Abacioglu et al., (2020) and Aronson & Laughter (2016) culturally responsive teaching (CRT) has been associated with increased engagement of students of color.

Warren (2018) recommends teachers engage in the social lives and actualities of people from culturally diverse communities that differ from their own. Warren (2018) states that the experience of engaging in the lives of people of color should bring about change in the teacher's awareness, attitudes, beliefs, and values about cultural differences. This

research by Warren (2018) suggests that empathy improves teachers' capacity to react or respond to their students in ways that produce evidence of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP).

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) were both developed in response to the educational disadvantages of Black students and ethnic groups of color. The literature points to the primary focus for both frameworks, which is around the racial and ethnic elements of culture (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). We must improve teachers' awareness of approaches to educating students different from themselves (Paris & Alim, 2017).

The educational experiences of students of color are often negatively impacted by curricula, policies, and practices that function to exclude them from the full benefits of schooling (Banks, 2018). Educators should promote their appreciation for diverse texts and cultural responsiveness which can be facilitated through interactive learning experiences between members of the classroom learning community (Martin & Spencer, 2020). According to Martin and Spencer, teacher educators must give teachers learning experiences that are affirmative and culturally responsive in the P-12 classroom setting and that also promote students' literacy skills. Culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy can be transformative and help shape the identity of both students and teachers (Martin & Taylor, 2019).

Black Male Teachers

In conjunction with CRT and CRP, it is very important that Black male students feel connected to their school community and have a sense of belonging (Brooms, 2016).

More recent research highlights the importance of teacher-student relationship qualities and achievement (Hajovsky et al., 2020). Researchers have identified parental involvement, after-school programs or school engagement, mentoring, teacher-student relationship qualities, and family and community support as factors that promote success for young Black males in education (Orrock & Clark, 2018). Some scholars have argued that Black male teachers help improve learning and teaching outcomes for students of color, (Warren 2020; Warren & Bonilla 2018), support students' social-emotional development (Bristor & Mentor 2018) and contribute positively to their colleagues' professional development and preparation to teach (Bristol & Goings, 2018; Thomas & Warren 2017; Warren 2020).

Bryan (2021) stated that the perceptions and perspectives of Black family members about the teaching, learning, and educational practices of Black male teachers are often missed in academic literature. The lack of a substantial number of Black male teachers in early childhood education directly impacts institutional inequities that exist within and beyond schools (Bryan, 2021). For many Black males, poor K-12 schooling experiences and culturally biased assessments that include the PRAXIS I and II, the exams preservice teachers must pass to obtain their teaching license, create an unstable pipeline from K-12 students to in-service teachers (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

A recent study by Allen (2019) revealed that the racial identity of Black teachers is relevant to their pedagogical knowledge and their work with students of color. Allen (2019) went on to say:

More specifically, racially literate teachers can help their students to understand racial grammar and how it may influence perceptions of self, particularly within a culture of respectability where the humanity of Black and brown youth is tied to their ability to assimilate white, middle-class ways of being. (p. 90)

Young and Young (2020) stated that Black male educators and White female teachers exist on opposite ends of the classroom representation continuum. In our K-12 classrooms in the U.S., Black males remain very much underrepresented while White females are overrepresented in the teaching profession. According to the US Department of Education (2016), only 2 percent of classroom teachers were Black males. The presence of Black male teachers serving as mentors in the public school system could lessen the school-to-prison pipeline (Young & Young, 2020).

Black Boys' Voice and Choice in Their Education

Black boys and other students of color who have been marginalized must have their voices heard more when policies and practices are created to support them in schools (Carey et al., 2018). Improving Black boys' achievement is being talked about by many educators without talking to or with Black male students about what is or is not working for them in their schooling experiences (Carey, 2020). Research by Corley et al. (2020) states that school social workers can also learn a lot about how to support Black student achievement by giving them and their families a voice to share their own lived experiences.

When the most marginalized group of students' voices are heard, their dominant experience in school no longer needs to be one of resistance (Butler et al., 2017).

Students must be able to dialogue with their teachers about their learning experiences (Rogers, 2018). Dumas and Nelson (2016) called for radical relational transformation in the education of Black boys. Understanding teachers' ideologies and practices with Black male students offers insight into how teachers can serve as change agents (Rogers & Brooms, 2020).

The negativity in the school experiences of Black boys receives much more attention than the engagement and resources they find and depend on to be successful and maintain their hope and perseverance in school (Brooms, 2020). More attention must be placed on hearing Black male voices and experiences and how they see and navigate potential trouble in their lives (Howard 2014; Wright et al., 2016). The investigation by educators on how Black male students interpret their self-concept and how they navigate their academic and personal efforts could be critical in understanding how this group of students engages and strategizes in their efforts in school (Allen, 2017; Arbouin, 2018; Brooms, 2019; & Jett 2019).

Summary

After decades of research, nationally, we continue to have an achievement gap, which is often otherwise called the opportunity gap. The term "opportunity gap" is used to reference the fact that our students of color are not given the same positive learning opportunities as their White classmates. The largest gap between all racial groups continues to be between Black males and their White classmates. In this chapter, I examined the research on the impact of White female teachers' beliefs, actions, and perceptions on Black male students. Research has shown that White female teachers can

have a positive effect on the academic growth of their Black male students, but they can also negatively impact the academic success of their Black male students. White female teachers need to consider the low expectations they have and the implicit biases they bring into the classroom. All White female teachers should have a clear racial knowledge of themselves and strong self-efficacy. This will help close the opportunity gap because their academic expectations and accountability for Black male students will improve, therefore increasing the academic performance of this group of students.

In this chapter, I also examined the research that supports the need for more Black male teachers. One of the reasons White students outperform other student groups is because of the student-teacher race match. Most of the teachers in this country are White females. According to the literature, Black male students would have more success if there were more Black male teachers and administrators working in schools. The research in this review also supports the need for more culturally responsive teaching and voice and choice in education.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODS

This chapter will describe the research design, target population, participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the role of the researcher. Despite the many efforts and large amounts of research around the academic achievement gap, or opportunity gap, the gap still exists today, and we aren't entirely sure of the root cause. Black boys continue to be the lowest-performing group on standardized tests. Our schoolteachers are mostly White females. Since the lowest performing group of students are Black boys and most of the teachers are White females, this study is extremely relevant. The differences in race and gender between Black boys and adult White female teachers, are relevant to the study of the achievement gap and deserve more attention. These differences in life experience, due to race and gender, could have a significant impact on the educational experiences and outcomes of Black boys. More research is needed in this area to make any further determination of its relevance and impact of this. The examination, study, and interview of White female teachers will fill a gap in the literature on the academic achievement gap or opportunity gap.

The overarching research questions in this study are 1) What are the beliefs held by White female elementary teachers regarding Black male student achievement in school? and 2) What impact do these beliefs have, if any, on their expectations for the achievement of Black boys?

Research Design

This was a qualitative study that used a phenomenological approach to examine the beliefs of White female teachers about their Black male students' academic

achievement. A phenomenological approach was used to discover the experiences of these White female teachers in working with Black male students in an urban setting in the Midwest. A phenomenological approach was used to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon experienced by a group of individuals (Creswell, 2018). Phenomenology aims to make a lived experience or element of consciousness transparent (van Manen et. al., 2016), and describes rather than analyzes or explains their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The exploration of how a person makes sense of their own experiences and brings those experiences to life is the way Patton (2002) described a phenomenological approach. Using a phenomenological approach when interviewing teachers helped bring to light trends in their descriptions of their experiences and beliefs.

Qualitative research provides information that is different from quantitative research methods; it goes into depth about a participant's behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Patton, 2015). In qualitative research, participants are allowed to share their experiences as the researcher listens without injecting their own opinion (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). In alignment with a phenomenological approach, this study aimed for participants to describe their experiences and beliefs as much as possible in response to questions. The questions focused on the experiences and beliefs of the teachers interviewed and not on quantitative data, such as test scores. Guetterman (2015) suggests that qualitative research has between eight and fifteen participants. For this phenomenological qualitative study, we interviewed eight participants.

After the interviews were conducted, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to examine the potential role of race and racism of the White female participants in this

study. The researcher used the "social construction of race" tenet of critical race theory while analyzing the data (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The social construction of race determines that races are created by social thoughts and relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Bell (1987) challenged the dominant ideologies that maintained the racial inequities that exist whether they are on the macro or micro levels of society which benefits people with inherent power over others. We were able to identify that race was relevant to the data by examining the responses to the interview questions, looking for particular words and phrases that were used, or not used, when responding.

Participants

In a phenomenological study, participants must have experience with the phenomenon that is being explored (Creswell, 2018). White female teachers that work in an urban setting in the Midwestern part of the United States of America were the targeted participants for this study. The school district where the White female teachers' work has approximately 38,380 students. There are 48 elementary schools in this district. In qualitative research, the sample size should not be too large or too small. This was a study of eight White female elementary school teachers that teach in grades 3, 4, and 5. This number allowed for enough breadth of opinion but also kept the study centered and focused.

White females are the vast majority of teachers in the United States. This is also true for the teacher demographics in the Midwest. White female teachers were interviewed for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to identify and select the participants for this study. The researcher contacted the principal directly to get approval

for teachers to be interviewed. The teachers that agreed to participate signed the informed consent form. The teachers that were chosen as participants taught either grades three, four, or five. The interviewer contacted the participants via email to schedule the interviews. The teachers were chosen as participants were all from urban settings. The teachers were interviewed on a volunteer basis.

Role of the researcher

I am a Black male high school principal that has been in education for over 25 years. I have also worked in elementary schools as a teacher and administrator. Having grown up in the south and now living in the Midwest for the past 29 years, I have a deep understanding of my racial identity. I also have a passion for helping others get the best education possible. Educational equity is very important to me. One of the many reasons is that our Black male students continue to be outperformed by other demographic groups on state standardized tests. Since the lowest performing group on standardized tests are Black boys and most of our teachers are White females, race and gender have a perceived impact on the learning of Black male students. Although I was not the interviewer for this study, my role in this phenomenological qualitative study was to gather, analyze, and reflect on the data that was collected from the participants.

I had no authority nor any association with the participants of this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. It is my decision how to portray the voices of my study. I am aware of the potential biases that I might have encountered as I analyzed the information that I received from the participants. I needed to monitor my biases and keep them in check as I recorded the findings of the interviews. The biases

that I brought into this study came from my lived experiences and my experiences as a veteran Black male educator. My personal experience as a Black male student in one of the southern states of the USA is filled with mistreatment because of the color of my skin. I understood very early in school that I could not do things that my White classmates were able to do. That included having a casual conversation with my friends so I became "mute" so that I could stay out of trouble. As a Black male administrator in an urban Midwest school district, I've witnessed firsthand the explicit and implicit biases that some of our White female teachers exhibit in their classrooms. I'm cognizant of the fact that we have a gap in achievement because of the lack of high academic expectations, and consequently achievement, for our Black male students. I'm also aware of the differences in behavioral expectations of our Black students in comparison to their White classmates. Although I have these strong beliefs as an educational leader, I was able to remain objective and keep my own biases in check.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collected for this research study was collected through interviews with teachers. In phenomenological research, the participants are individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Cresswell, 2018). Cresswell also states that in a phenomenological research study, the researcher discusses "what" and "how" the participants experienced the phenomenon.

Because we are in a global pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually. The researcher is a Black male and the participants are White females. In an attempt to increase the veracity of the respondents, a White female researcher and writer conducted

the interviews. Because interviewing is a social process, we can improve data quality by race-matching the respondents and interviewers (Cobb et. al., 2008).

Interviews

The primary method of data collection for a qualitative phenomenological study is interviews (Creswell, 2018). To gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of White female teachers that teach Black boys in an elementary school, we asked eight interview questions. The following are the eight questions that were asked of the participants.

1) What do you think are the differences between teaching in an urban, suburban and rural settings?

2) If you could make any changes to the teaching profession, what would those changes be and why?

3) Think about and describe intellectually gifted students. What are the characteristics of these students?

4) Think about and describe the situations that have been the most challenging for you in your teaching career. Please tell me why these situations were a challenge for you.

5) What are the emotions that are triggered in you when situations are challenging in the classroom? How would you describe your feelings or emotions during the episodes?

6) Describe any Professional Development you have had around race. How has this impacted you professionally. What else would you like to learn?

7) Tell about your experience teaching Black boys.

8) What factors do you think to attribute to the racial disparities in elementary

schools?

The questions were open-ended to gather the data needed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon. The final questions also targeted race and the achievement gap in a more direct way so that analyzing this phenomenon was more straightforward.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data started promptly after the interviews. I read each interview transcription several times so that I could process the dialogue that occurred between the interviewer and participants. The data analysis followed a systematic process that moved from significant statements to broader statements, onto detailed descriptions that summarize "what" and "how" the participants have experienced the phenomenon (Cresswell, 2018).

The content of each interview was transcribed and studied verbatim in this study. After receiving the transcribed interviews, the transcriptions were coded by category and then by theme. The categories came from the interview questions. The themes came from the responses and conversations in response to the questions. The technique, of iterative categorization (IC), was used with inductive codes to support the interpretative phenomenological analysis (Neale, 2016). The codes were organized into themes during the analysis process.

With this process of analyzing the data collected from the recorded interviews, I was able to organize and display the thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs of the participants as it relates to the academic achievement of their Black male students. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism has an impact on the experiences of people of color. The tenant of CRT that was used to help understand the data is the social construction of race. Using the social construction of race helped me, the researcher, understand the thoughts and relations of the White female teachers and how those thoughts and relations impact the behavior and achievement of their Black male students. The six steps for qualitative data analysis created by Cresswell (2013) were used:

1. Organize and prepare data for analysis

2. Reading and looking at all the data

3. Coding the data.

4. Utilize the coding process to come up with descriptions of the participants, setting, or categories/themes for analysis

5. Represent the themes in a qualitative narrative

6. Interpret the findings or results

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to investigate the beliefs of White female elementary teachers about Black male students and their academic achievements. A large majority of elementary teachers are White females. A May 2021 report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) confirmed that most of our elementary teachers in the United States of America are White and female. The report showed that 88 percent of elementary teachers are female, and 84 percent are White. The NCES also reported that only 12 percent of elementary teachers are male and only 16 percent are teachers of color. Black males are the lowest performing demographics of students on standardized tests and are also the most referred students for discipline issues. In the 2019 Nation's Report Card (National Association of Educational Progress, 2019), Black students scored 26 percentage points less than their White classmates on the fourth-grade reading standardized tests. In fourth-grade math, the percentage was 25 points lower for Black students. The 2019 NAEP also revealed that the gap widened in eighth grade with a gap of 32 percentage points in math and 28 percentage points in reading. According to Iruka (2018), statistics continue to show that, overall, Black boys are faring worse than their peers in education, social, and economic domains. Regardless of socioeconomic factors, the achievement gap between Black children and their White peers emerges soon after birth and continues throughout childhood.

The findings of this research will help contribute to the larger body of research on the achievement gap which is otherwise known as the opportunity gap. In Chapter 2, the literature explained in detail some of the reasons for the achievement or opportunity gap. There has been a growing body of research over the past five years that reveals that students benefit from having a teacher from a similar demographic, especially racial/ethnic minority students (Cherng et al., 2016; Egalite & Kisida, 2017; Luke, 2017). When studying student-teacher racial matches, Bohrnstedt and Yarnell (2017) proposed that a match of Black male students with a Black teacher resulted in better reading outcomes for Black male students. However, Copur-Gencturk et al. (2019) stated that although student-teacher race matching might be beneficial to Black students overall, this does not guarantee higher student achievement for this racial group. These researchers also found that race and gender matching also impacts teachers' perceptions of their student's academic abilities.

This study is an attempt to obtain White female teachers' perspectives about teaching Black boys and the causes of the opportunity gap. This chapter provides an overview of the research questions, participants, data analysis techniques, themes, and findings.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions in this study are:

1)What are the beliefs held by White Female elementary teachers regarding Black male student achievement in school? 2) What impact do these beliefs have, if any, on their expectations for the academic achievement of Black boys?

Data Analysis Techniques

Due to the global pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually. The researcher is a Black male and the participants are White females. Many White female teachers might feel uncomfortable with a Black male high school principal interviewing them about race. In an attempt to increase the comfort level and the veracity of the respondents, a White female researcher and writer conducted the interviews. Because interviewing is a social process, we can improve data quality by race-matching the respondents and interviewers (Cobb et al., 2008). After the interviews were conducted, the interviews were transcribed via Zoom translation. Zoom translations were downloaded and proofread for accuracy by the interviewer. The transcriptions were sent from the interviewer to the researcher via email. The data was analyzed using a systemic approach. The analysis moved from significant statements to broader statements. Then detailed descriptions summarized what and how the participants have experienced the phenomenon of teaching Black boys and the opportunity gap between Black boys and their White classmates.

With this process of analyzing the data collected from the recorded interviews and emailed transcripts, I was able to organize and display the thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs of the participants as they related to the academic achievement of their Black male students. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism has an impact on the experiences of people of color. The tenant of CRT that was used to help understand the data was the *social construction of race.* Using the social construction of race, helped me, the researcher, understand the thoughts and relations of the White female teachers and how

those thoughts and relations impact the behavior and achievement of their Black male students. Iterative categorization was also used with inductive codes to support the interpretative phenomenological analysis. The codes were then organized into themes.

Findings

After analyzing the data, coding, refining the analysis, and iterative categorization, several themes emerged as a result. The data analysis results have been organized according to research questions by themes. To protect the identity and privacy of the participants, pseudonyms are used for each participant.

Research Question One: What are the beliefs held by White Female elementary teachers regarding Black male student achievement in school?

Table 1 below outlines the four major themes that emerged as a response to research question one.

Table 1

Themes for Research Question One: Beliefs Held by White Female Teachers about Black Boys.

Themes For Research Question One	Number of Participants
Black boys have social-emotional needs that cause extreme behaviors.	6 out of 8
Trauma causes Black boys to struggle in school.	7 out of 8
White female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement.	6 out of 8
Black boys don't want to learn.	6 out of 8

Theme 1: Black boys have social-emotional needs that cause extreme behaviors.

These findings of social-emotional needs include a) family structures, b) challenging students, c) being assertive and active, and d) learning disabilities.

In her interview, **Jada** mentioned that getting accustomed to the different cultures in the inner city was one of the most challenging parts of teaching in an urban school. She went on to state that it was a challenge in understanding her role in teaching social-emotional things and learning about other cultures.

Stacy stated that the most challenging situations for her would be students that have behavioral social-emotional needs. Some of the behaviors she referenced are tipping desks and knocking over bookshelves. "Having extreme behaviors and not having the right support to help them. Usually, at my school, we have a process."

Alicia felt like her experience working with Black boys has both challenged her and made her a better teacher. She felt like a lot of Black boys that she has worked with felt the need to prove themselves or "to go against her as a White teacher." She went on to describe a situation from several years ago where she had a student that called her racist a couple of times. This situation caused her to examine the actions that possibly caused her student to see her as racist.

Elise stated that in her experience, Black boys are the challenging kids. She felt like she had to go get advice or help from other adults that were African American. She went on to discuss her struggles with the behavior of this race of students and contacting their parents.

So, I'm trying to put these in the right words because I know you're taking this all down I have experienced where I've reached out to a parent and they were not happy with what I talked to them about or what I brought up and it's happened not just with boys, but with girls as well. It makes it hard for me to want to reach out to the parents because I feel like I am doing something wrong. And no matter what I do or say they're going to dislike what I did or said.

In her interview, **Monica** added that she found that some cultures of students are a little bit more reserved and less willing to speak out. When she looked back at her African American students, they are assertive, confident, curious, and very active.

Barbara went on to admit that early in her career she had stereotypes about Black boys that impacted her teaching. When speaking of her Black boys, she said, "I love you, but I love you over there." She went on to say that early in her career, she struggled with how to communicate with them and struggled with her perception of them. Her perception was that they were loud, naughty, didn't care, and angry.

Theme Two: Trauma causes Black boys to struggle in school.

The second theme Trauma causes Black boys to struggle in school emerged from the conversation with seven of the eight participants. This theme aligns with research by Garo and Lewis (2018) who stated that fear, terror, helplessness, and despair are typical responses to trauma that affect children's ability to cope with everyday stress and their abilities to develop competencies in school and at home. The trauma in these findings includes individual and community trauma.

Stacy stated that a lot of Black students suffer from social-emotional regulations which are caused by traumas at home and attributed to racial disparities in school. She went on to say that it's important for them to get support from social workers and other things to support the social-emotional regulation "because that has to happen before the learning can happen." Teachers also must have the tools in their classrooms to teach students how to regulate themselves when they're upset.

Jada agreed that the negativity in Black boys' lives causes them to struggle in school and that they can't see past the present toward a better future. In her interview, she showed empathy for the Black male students who are suffering from trauma. She stated that to see some of the terrible things these boys have seen, she would feel very angry, emotionally unstable, and would have a hard time sitting still and learning.

In her interview, **Alicia** also mentioned that Black boys need to see beyond what they are exposed to. She stated that it is her job to help them beyond their exposure. She strives to expose her students to new ideas and values the diversity they bring to the classroom.

Elise mentioned that in teaching in an urban setting, one needs to be aware of issues that involve trauma with students that block their learning. She went on to say: And it's just completely normal for these kids to wake up and understand their parents are stressed because of so much trauma. And if the teachers teaching them don't understand that, that will just continue to happen. I mean, we're not going to end poverty, but if poverty could end, we would have a better situation because a lot of things cause

trauma in urban populations, and impoverished people also suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues.

Barbara had struggled at the beginning of her career working with and building relationships with Black boys. It was hard for her to even relate to her Black male students. There was a major challenge seeing the suffering that some of her students endured. She recalled seeing a boy with warts all over his hands and some kids not having jackets in the winter.

Melinda added to the trauma findings by speaking about the Black moms of her former Black male students. She stated that Black moms know what the world thinks and are open to partnering with White female teachers.

Theme Three: White female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement.

The third theme: White female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement materialized. Seven of the eight participants commented on White female teacher norms. Lived experiences and cultural influences of White educators do not match students of color in today's schools. These differences contribute directly to students of color not experiencing rigorous and high-quality instruction relating to their world (Dawson, 2019).

Alicia attributes the racial disparities in elementary schools to the classroom community and students not feeling included. She stated:

I think it has to do with White teachers who have a particular way of seeing a classroom and how it should be run and what the volume should be at and what that looks like. I think a lot of teachers kind of unknowingly push their belief systems on students in their

classroom and have a certain idea of what participation looks like and if the person doesn't participate in the same way, then the person must not be participating. I think that assumptions are being made and students aren't allowed to show themselves and feel empowered by the learning that they are doing in the classroom. I've learned so much more about African American history within the past few years, especially considering, you know, there were things I never knew. Despite them being history, no one was ever teaching that in my suburban district, so I think I'm looking at things now through a different lens and thinking about how what we do in the classroom translates to what people are living outside the classroom and considering that Black students have had to live in a White norm.

Elise agreed with Alicia. She mentioned that she has seen a lot of changes in education. However, the one thing that does not change is the fact that White affluent women are the ones teaching in our schools. She continued to say that these White affluent women don't understand what it's like and they don't know what kids who live in the city are going through on a day-to-day basis.

Barbara spoke about the staff not seeing the brilliance in all students and the teachers having the mentality that things are how they were 25 years ago. Barbara stated that she believes a lot of teachers say they love their students but doesn't believe they are willing to risk showing the students that love. Her current struggle is with relationships with adults that have differing perspectives, and how to navigate those without compromising the students.

Melinda added that better preparation is needed specifically in two areas. One of the challenges is that we tend to teach the way we were taught. The other challenge is that we teach in a very White-based educational approach. "It's just White centric and we need to mix things up more with staff so there isn't predominantly one ethnicity."

In her interview, **Jackie** revealed that at some point we must accept and make changes because what is being taught is not resonating with our Black male students in an urban setting. She doesn't think it always feels true to their experiences. "As people, we prioritize things, if something doesn't seem relevant to us, or it doesn't match our experience, we are much more likely to lower the priority or quite frankly not notice it at all."

Monica contributed to this finding by pointing out that we can't expect our Black male students to be perfect little humans because that is not realistic, and the exception should be that they are learning which includes appropriate behavior. She went on to say that we need to teach them how to be productive members of society and that looks different for each student.

Theme Four: Black boys don't want to learn.

Six of the eight participants discussed the fourth theme: Black boys don't want to learn. Perceptions of respect toward oneself and one's racial and ethnic group operate similarly in n school engagement and attitudes toward teachers for students of color (Liang et. al., 2020). These findings include a) discipline, b) engagement, c) relationships, and d) academic struggles.

Elise made a very strong statement about a student who was not interested in doing any work, was off task a lot, and was very critical of her as the teacher. This Black male student struggled with math, so he refused to do the work. Elise would give him consequences for not doing his math. He was not allowed to participate in other things consequently.

Alicia discussed the idea that a lot of Black boys wanted to do academics but didn't. She felt like this group of boys was concerned about what others saw them as doing academically. She went on to say that if they weren't strong academically, they didn't want to try when other people were around.

Stacy stated that it is all about relationships in her class. She said that all the Black boys that were challenged while they were in her classroom would come back to visit.

She went on to say:

As a younger grade teacher, to me, it's always about relationships and learning to love school. In my room, I have a tent, so instead of kids running out of the room if they're having a hard time, they go sit in the tent. I've got tools in there like a sand timer and seashells and stuffed animals and pictures of animals and breathing balls. They can listen to their iPad in there and just have a place where they can be frustrated, you can be upset, you can be sad, and it's going to tell you don't need to run out of the room and run away. I feel like that's helped students connect and feel like oh, my teacher wants me in here, I don't need to leave.

In her interview, **Melinda** mentioned that her Black boys are just seen as "cute." She said that even though they get bigger by fifth grade, she still could only see them as cute and that makes her sad. Now she worries about some of her Black boys because she knows what society is going to see in them and that it is all founded on myth and socialization; not who that person is.

Jada's experiences with working with Black boys have some positives and some negatives. She has found that there is stubbornness from the Black males towards their White teacher or certain drives towards working hard. She went on to say that with students that are struggling with one parent at home or multiple parents and abuse at home, or other things outside their control, she can't imagine what it is like. She continued by stating that as a teacher, she can't take these Black boys where they are surrounded by men and boys that are going to jail/prison or dying in front of them, and then try to tell them it can be different. These Black boys would just get frustrated at the situation, get mad at her, and push back at the idea.

Barbara discussed how her awareness rate has heightened with the way Black boys are treated by Non-Black staff members and the reaction to her heightened passion around wanting a safe space for all students. She stated that as a White teacher who is working on her consciousness and racial injustices daily, it breaks her heart to watch the navigation that the Black male students have endured. She added that it must be exhausting for her Black male students to navigate school because of the Whiteness that exists systemically, and the White supremacy that exists systemically in schools.

Research Question Two: What impact do these beliefs have, if any, on their expectations for the academic achievement of Black boys?

Table 2 outlines four additional major themes that emerged in response to research question two.

Table 2

Themes for Research Question Two: What impact do White female teachers' beliefs have on their expectations for Black male achievement?

Themes For Research Question Two	Number of Participants
Perceptions about Lack of Parent Involvement	5 out of 8
Lack of Cultural Awareness.	8 out of 8
Impacts of Curriculum and Tracking of Students	5 out of 8
Related Experience: Teachers' Feelings of Frustration	8 out of 8

Theme One: Parent Involvement

The first theme: Perceptions about lack of parental involvement, emerged from the findings of five of the eight participants. Parental involvement in school is an undoubtedly important element of a student's educational experience and outcomes. Students with elevated emotional and behavioral risks (EBR) tend to experience poor educational outcomes, and research suggests varying levels of parental involvement across domains for these at-risk students (January et. al., 2022).

Elise expressed that contacting parents has always been the most challenging part of teaching. For her, it was about wanting their parents to like her. She felt that some parents didn't want to be bothered when she was finally able to get in contact with them.

The parents wanted things to be taken care of at school. She continued by saying that when talking to the parents of her students, she is afraid that she is going to say something wrong or offensive.

Jada also discussed the challenges of working with parents. This is what she said while discussing the Black male students:

Their main source of learning about the world around them is what they are doing at home, so that plays a massive role in who they are as students and who they are in my classroom and our community. That was a big thing, and it was challenging at first because I didn't make that connection instantly. It opened my eyes to that and I was able to admit that I didn't know what I was doing when I'm interacting with those families at my first conferences or having that language barrier, wanting to look them in the eye and talk to them about their kid, but they don't understand what I'm saying and having an interpreter say that and being able to make that relationship with them was hard and it's still hard, but it's a good start and I'm still learning about that. It is challenging because I'm not about to tell somebody how to parent or tell them what they're doing is right or wrong.

Melinda went on to support families by saying her issues are with other educators. When she hears a single narrative about a student, family, or other situation she expresses that she thinks the hardest thing has been gaining the confidence to speak in those spaces and question the other White female teachers. She went on to say that many of the comments are unfounded and they betray bias and ignorance about what others are capable of. **Stacy** added to this finding by discussing early childhood.

She stated:

So, I feel like early childhood is a huge starting point for discrepancies because then you

go to kindergarten, and you got the kids who have never been in school, they are just

learning how to sit in school. The social constructs of school versus kids who, and of

course, it's usually White students who have been in school and who get the experience

of school. Some can start preschool at 33 months or whatever, and then pre-K, and so I

do think it starts early on those discrepancies.

Alicia added that what Black male students are exposed to and how to help them

see beyond necessarily what they are exposed to is an important factor of teaching in an

urban setting.

Theme Two: Lack of Cultural Awareness

The second theme emerged from the interviews of all eight participants. An

unfortunate, yet persistent, truth in U.S. public schools is the large achievement gap

existing between children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their

White, middle-class counterparts. The potential for cultural dissonance between

contemporary teachers and their students necessitates that educators must persistently

seek culturally responsive practices (Carrero et. al., 2017).

Jackie bluntly stated that the achievement gap is not about the Black male

students' ability to learn. She said that it is about the teachers. Her wondering was about

whether teachers are making learning about something they can hold on to. She went on

to say that she thinks it is a material relevance issue. Jackie continues by saying that

teachers must take the information they are trying to present and present it in such a way that the students can make it their own and can also see how it applies to their lives.

Melinda feels like she has done a lot of work from an intellectual perspective, but now she has to work on interrupting when she sees Whiteness impacting the work environment with staff and students. She continued by saying that White culture is so ingrained that confronting is not the norm because it might hurt someone's feelings.

Jada agreed that understanding other cultures impacts the teaching profession. She stated:

I think getting accustomed to the different cultures that we have and understanding what my role is when I'm teaching some of those social-emotional things or learning about their cultures. I thought I knew a lot of stuff, but then when you see families, how they interact and listen to them about what's going on at home or what they're feeling, it opened my eyes a lot to how I can help or how I can incorporate that in my teaching. I have been able to see so intimately those different dynamics and how they play a role in their education. I only get them for six hours a day. Their main source of learning about the world around them is what they are doing at home, so that plays a huge role in who they are as students and who they are in my classroom and our community.

Elise added that one of the most impactful professional developments she has had was the Zaretta Hammond book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. She was able to make the connection between the book and *The Innocent Classroom* which is about finding the good in each student regardless of their background. Elise added that

discussing the innocence of students with other staff members made her realize that some teachers are clueless about Black male students' backgrounds and cultures.

Alicia stated that she thinks that we need to acknowledge what's gotten us to where we are and how Black students have had a huge disservice done to them. "Just thinking of roles between men and women and men having to go out and earn a living or whatnot, and just thinking back to 400 years ago." When speaking about this, she talked about the injustices of Blacks being improperly imprisoned and how it still impacts the Black community today.

Stacy commented that instead of having district staff come to present about culture and equity, we should get more parents and people in the community to come to speak to the staff. She feels it is important to hear the voices of the Black community members and what works for the Black male students. She continued to say that she would like to know what Black male fathers and grandfathers would like to see from the teachers and how they would prefer for the teachers to be teaching.

Barbara added that no matter who you are as a teacher there should be more accountability. She said teachers get stuck and it impacts the Black male students' experiences in school. She also said that some White female teachers don't actively engage in the school's equity work and there is no accountability because they are tenured teachers.

Monica contributed to the conversation about culture by speaking about teacher mindsets. She agreed with Barbara that White female teachers negatively impact Black

male student achievement because the teachers are not exposed to the Black culture until they become teachers.

Theme Three: Impacts of curriculum and tracking of students.

The third theme emerged from five of the eight participants. Beard (2019) stated that tracking harms Black male students and exacerbates inequities and the ethics of separating students within intellectual spaces. Tracking research informs us of the damaging effects for and on African American students, who comprise the largest population in lower-track classes.

Jada emphasized the importance of making connections across different subjects. She stated that we need to take deeper dives into questioning the curriculum. She discussed students that are into STEM and feels that more is needed. She went on to say that they do the basics of science, technology, and engineering but her students need more.

Elise stated that you couldn't get people to think a certain way, but we need to have more mandatory training. She said we could have experts do the mandatory training instead of having White teachers sit around having book studies. She went on to add, "We should have people from the Black culture come and talk about what it is like being black in this state so that you understand where your kids are coming from, where your students are coming from."

Monica added more about the systemic pieces. When asked what factors attribute to the racial disparities in elementary schools, she said:

So definitely the systemic pieces, does the curriculum meet their needs? is it going to? slow or too fast? All of those play a large role in the disparities, and attendance, are they attending school as much as possible? I don't expect perfect attendance, I don't think that's realistic, but if you're not at school regularly, for whatever reason, whether that's a suspension, whether that's an illness, whether you just didn't get up in time and missed the bus, which happens to everybody, how are you supposed to learn if you're not there?

Stacy suggested that the resources seem to be very different in the urban and suburban schools. She said that when she first started teaching, they didn't have access to materials such as construction paper or other physical materials.

Barbara added that tracking traps the Black male students. Most of them do not end up in the gifted and talented programs and a penguin holed into the lower track. She went on to say about the Black boys, "And you can't read by whatever day we decide, you have to read by now so now you're going to intervention class." For her, it's those systems that have been around for a very long time that many White female teachers, even those she respects deeply, believe are the right things to do for students.

Theme Four: Teachers' feelings of frustration

The fourth theme was determined from the findings of all eight participants. This theme does not answer research question number two. However, it was a profound finding for all of the participants as they discussed their emotions during challenging times. When these White female teachers are frustrated, it impacts the learning of their entire class which includes Black boys. Because the Black boy's behavior is the cause of the challenge, it may take longer for the teacher to get centered enough to continue to

instruct the Black male student. This could cause a loss of learning time or the attention needed to complete an academic task. These findings include the participants' responses to the emotions that are triggered in them when situations are challenging in their classrooms. Feelings of anxiety and helplessness are also included in these findings.

Elise informed us that the emotions that are triggered during challenging situations are frustration and sadness. She feels that it sometimes comes off as anger, but it's just her being frustrated about not getting the desired outcome that she wants, whether that's students learning what is expected of them or their behavior not being the behavior the teacher expects. Her sadness comes from her feelings of frustration.

Alicia added that when she feels the most frustration in her classroom is when she thinks the students within her classroom community are being harmed. She is set off when students are being disrespectful to each other. She went on to say:

If I hear students insulting one another, that sets me off. I feel like there are different kinds of chaos in a classroom and I feel okay with what might look to others to be a sort of chaos. I think there can be respectful chaos, where students are doing their things. But what I guess would trigger me is when students are being disrespectful, when they're speaking over one another and not letting other students' voices be heard, or when insults are being given in the classroom. That's the big trigger for me.

Jackie shared that she feels an overwhelming sense of helplessness when she is unable to meet student needs. She feels this way because she can't meet her needs and feels overwhelmed and helpless because the situation is bigger than her. Once the

situation has distance, she gets into problem-solving mode and tries to decide what the next steps are.

Stacy shared a feeling of anxiousness when things get challenging. When behaviors challenge her, she gets a tightening chest and just feels worried. She stated that "you are in the moment of just doing how do I get this kid calm, how do I make sure everyone else is safe?"

Stacy shared an example of a student who was physically knocking things down or throwing things and mentioned her thoughts about being anxious about how to get everyone else in the classroom safe.

Melinda added to the theme by stating that she gets frustrated when she feels like her students are not listening to each other. She said that she has strategies to just pause, wait, and say, "Hey, we have great ideas, but I can't hear any of them, and you can't hear each other. How can we fix this?"

Jada also gets very frustrated because she is a big communicator. So, when she is not able to communicate, it is hard for her. She wants her students to feel welcome but also wants them to know that she is a tough-love teacher. She wants her students to know that tough love is coming from a place of love and respect. Her students need to know that she is going to challenge them because that's how our brains grow.

Barbara also gets frustrated when situations are challenging in the classroom. She gets frustrated with individual students and frustrated with the other students who miss out on learning because of one student. After being frustrated, she feels a sense of sadness and thinks about what she might be doing wrong. She went on to say: "And

probably at the moment it's about the other person, not me; I'm being honest with you."
Barbara said that a lot of time goes into lesson planning and preparing the lessons and the
frustration is with the student screwing it all up.

Monica stated that she gets frustrated with situations and shuts down like some
students and just can't take it anymore. She sits and processes through whatever the
frustration was. Sometimes her body reacts like she is being stressed, instead of whatever
the heightened emotion is. This frustration and stress sometimes come out a little snippy.

Summary

As stated above, this study was conducted to answer the research questions: What
are the beliefs held by White Female elementary teachers regarding Black male student
achievement in school? and: What impact do these beliefs have, if any, on their
expectations for the academic achievement of Black boys? Since most of our teachers are
White females and our lowest performing group on standardized tests are Black boys, this
study set out to find out the correlation between the two. To gain a deeper understanding
of this phenomenon, the study was done to find out how the beliefs and actions of White
female teachers impact the achievement of Black boys in elementary school. Because
standardized testing starts in third grade and ends in fifth in elementary schools in the
Midwest, only White female elementary teachers who teach in grades three through five
participated in this study.

There was a total of eight major themes that emerged during this study. For
research question one, the themes were: a) Black boys have social-emotional needs that
cause extreme behaviors, b) Trauma causes the Black boys to struggle in school, c) White

female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement, and d) Black boys don't want to learn. The themes that answered research question two were: a) perceptions about lack of parental involvement, b) lack of cultural awareness, and c) impacts of curriculum and tracking of students. One additional theme emerged from all eight participants of this study. The theme was: teachers' feelings of frustration. According to this research, all eight themes have an impact on the academic achievement of Black boys in elementary schools.

In the next chapter, Critical Race Theory will be discussed to explain the impact of White female teachers' beliefs on the academic achievement of their Black male students. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism has an impact on the experiences of people of color. The tenant of CRT that was displayed during the data collection process was *the social construction of race*. Using the social construction of race, assisted with the understanding of the thoughts and relations of the White female teachers and how those thoughts and relations impact the behavior and achievement of their Black male students.

Chapter V: Conclusion

When it comes to the academic achievement gap, White female teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward the academic abilities of students of color have been a topic of debate and relevance for many years (Farver, 2019; Putnick et al., 2020). In attempts for racial justice, advocates and researchers have focused on gaps in achievement as relevant educational outcomes that are related to the beliefs and attitudes of White female teachers (Quinn, 2020; Quinn & Le, 2018). This is to say that what teachers believe about their students directly impacts student learning outcomes. Despite many efforts and much research around the achievement gap, the gap still exists today. Black boys continue to be the lowest-performing group and our schoolteachers are primarily White females. A May 2021 report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) confirmed that most of our elementary teachers in the United States of America are White and female. The report showed that 88 percent of elementary teachers are female, and 84 percent are White. The NCES also reported that only 12 percent of elementary teachers are male and only 16 percent are teachers of color. Black males are the lowest performing demographics of students on standardized tests and are also the most referred students for discipline issues. In the 2019 Nation's Report Card (National Association of Educational Progress, 2019), Black students scored 26 percentage points less than their White classmates on the fourth-grade reading standardized tests. In fourth-grade math, the percentage was 25 points lower for Black students. The 2019 NAEP also revealed that the gap widened in eighth grade with a gap of 32 percentage points in math and 28

percentage points in reading. Because our lowest-performing group of students is Black boys and most of our teachers are White females, this study is extremely relevant.

This study examined the impact of White female teachers' beliefs and actions on the impact of Black male students' achievement. Many White teachers experience some ambivalence toward minority and immigrant students (Hamer & Kumar, 2012; Hollins & Torre-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001) and doubt their efficacy in teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Bean & Helfrich, 2011; Hamer & Kumar, 2012). The examination, study, and interview of White female teachers added to the literature on possible causes of the academic gap between Black and White elementary school boys.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the beliefs of White female elementary teachers about Black male students and their academic and behavioral capabilities in a Midwest urban elementary school setting. Research is limited that is asking the experts in the field about their beliefs about the students and why they believe the achievement or opportunity gap exists. Current research informs us about the impact of these teachers' beliefs and actions from the outsider's perspective but does not consider the actual teachers' experiences in their classrooms. However, in this study, the experts themselves were asked about their beliefs about the teaching profession, gifted and talented students, the challenges of education, and what they think impacts the achievement or opportunity gap.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are many potential benefits of the findings in this phenomenological study. Potential benefits of this research include recommendations

on how to remove the barriers that may be causing Black males in elementary schools to not achieve at the levels of their White classmates. This study may benefit pre-service teachers as they prepare to become classroom teachers by offering strategies on how to lead an equitable classroom. Other strategies for pre-service teachers include but are not limited to a clear focus on instructional pedagogy and academic excellence in place of classroom management. These findings will also contribute to staff development opportunities. Culturally relevant staff development will help improve teaching practices. The knowledge gained from this study can help school leaders with their coaching of teachers by demonstrating common beliefs and attitudes among teachers that can be named and addressed in coaching sessions. Improved instructional strategies and a progression of focus from teaching to learning are also possible benefits of conducting this research.

Discussion

There are many factors affecting the academic performances of Black boys in American schools today. White female teachers have historically had success teaching White students and have had a lack of academic success teaching Black boys. Jordan (2017) stated that the most notable aspect of teaching and learning that teachers and administrators perceived to be ineffective in closing the reading achievement gap is the fact that the prescribed district curriculum appears to lack relevance for many Black boys. Students with high cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and low valuation for educational outcomes have lower expectations regarding their educational outcomes. Thus, it is advantageous to develop a strong, positive cultural identity that is consistent

with academic achievement in African American males (Little, 2019). Green (2020)

added that racism is deeply woven into the fabric of American culture. As educators, we

can and should engage in meaningful dialogues about race, opportunity, and the success

of our students and their families. Several books and articles have challenged the racial

ideology of colorblindness by documenting the depth and persistence of structural racism

and arguing that "race-conscious" policies and practices are necessary to address

systemic inequalities. Omni and Winant (2016) said:

We are suggesting, then, that the phenomic dimensions of race have their origins in early

processes of the social construction—or political construction, or biopolitics if you

prefer. These early racial formation processes emerged with a certain immediacy from

conquest and settlement and African racial slavery themselves. They were 'social facts''

(Durkheim's phrase) that predated, and perhaps prefigured, any worked-out account of

race. The social construction of race was there from the beginning, driven not by any

consolidated view on who black people were or whom Native Americans were (those

views developed later), or indeed who Europeans were. Indeed, the early articulations of

phenomic raciality often confounded the only systematic classificatory tool that people

had: their religion. (p. 1065)

The Social Construction of Race

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and

scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and

power (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). Critical Race Theory provides a critique of racial

color blindness, assimilation, and multiculturalism, revitalizing race consciousness and

critiquing White racial privilege (Mills & Unsworth, 2016). The CRT tenet of the *social construction of race* determines that races are created by social thoughts and relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This tenet surfaced often while analyzing the data for this study. The findings of this study confirm that the social construction of race has a major impact on the perceptions of White female teachers on the academic performances of their Black male students. The four themes that emerged from research question one were all analyzed using the CRT tenet of the social construction of race. Research question one was what are the beliefs held by White Female Teachers about Black boys?

Social Emotional Needs

The theme that Black boys have social-emotional needs that cause extreme behaviors was a finding among most of the participants. The participants felt that the social-emotional needs of Black boys significantly affect their behavior in school. Consequently, these Black boys' behavior allegedly affects their academic performance. This finding could be a result of implicit biases or a lack of social-emotional competence of the teachers.

One of the participants, **Elise,** stated that in her experience, Black boys are the challenging kids. She felt like she had to go get advice or help from other adults that were African American. She went on to discuss her struggles with the behavior of this race of students and contacting their parents:

So, I'm trying to put these in the right words because I know you're taking this all down. I have experienced where I've reached out to a parent and they were not happy with what I talked to them about or what I brought up, and it's happened not just with boys, but with

girls as well. It makes it hard for me to want to reach out to the parents because I feel like I am doing something wrong. And no matter what I do or say they're going to dislike what I did or said.

One prominent stream of research identifies teacher implicit bias as a possible mechanism for these disparate outcomes, as racialized beliefs Socially constructed manifest in teacher-student interaction (Staats, 2016). Teachers with higher social-emotional competence would better self-regulate their own cognitive biases and better empathize with the experience of their students (d'Abreu & Ura, 2021).

I think this theme points to how social-emotional needs is also a social construction and much of what we see today is a white reliance on social-emotional needs as the reason Black boys can't learn. Again, rather than pointing to the adult beliefs or the social construction of race of which we have all been indoctrinated by….

Trauma

The second theme that trauma causes Black boys to struggle in school emerged from the conversations with seven of the eight participants. This theme aligns with research by Garo and Lewis (2018) who stated that fear, terror, helplessness, and despair are typical responses to trauma that affect children's ability to cope with everyday stress and their abilities to develop competencies in school and at home. The trauma in these findings includes individual and community trauma.

Participant **Stacy** stated that a lot of Black students suffer from social-emotional dysregulations which are caused by traumas at home and attributed to the racial disparities in school. She went on to say that it's important for them to get support from

social workers and others to support the social-emotional regulation "because that has to happen before the learning can happen." Teachers also must have the tools in their classrooms to teach students how to regulate themselves when they're upset.

Jada agreed that the negativity in Black boys' lives causes them to struggle in school and that they can't see past the present toward a better future. In her interview, she showed empathy for the Black male students who are suffering from trauma. She stated that to see some of the terrible things these boys have seen, she would feel very angry, emotionally unstable, and would have a hard time sitting still and learning. Vaughans (2021) stated,

Greater psychoanalytic attention to theorizing and understanding cultural attitudes on race, to understanding the impact of racism on how we think about Black boyhood with a psychoanalytic interrogation of transgenerational trauma, could positively impact our understanding of how racism impacts the therapeutic process for us all as clinicians and as citizens. (p. 47)

Assuming prior trauma can be a direct result of a socially constructed idea that Black boys act the way they do because of trauma….and that all Blacks simply are the result of themselves and their own traumatized lives.

White Female Teacher Norms

The third theme that White female teacher norms affect Black male student achievement emerged from seven of the eight participants' comments. Lived experiences and cultural influences of White educators do not match those of students of color in today's schools. These differences contribute directly to students of color not

experiencing rigorous and high-quality instruction relating to their world (Dawson, 2019).

      Alicia attributes the racial disparities in elementary schools to the classroom community and students not feeling included. She stated:

I think it has to do with White teachers who have a particular way of seeing a classroom and how it should be run and what the volume should be at and what that looks like. I think a lot of teachers kind of unknowingly push their belief systems on students in their classroom and have a certain idea of what participation looks like and if the person doesn't participate in the same way, then the person must not be participating. I think that assumptions are being made and students aren't allowed to show themselves and feel empowered by the learning that they are doing in the classroom. I've learned so much more about African American history within the past few years, especially considering, you know, there were things I never knew. Despite them being history, no one was ever teaching that in my suburban district, so I think I'm looking at things now through a different lens and thinking about how what we do in the classroom translates to what people are living outside the classroom and considering that Black students have had to live in a White norm.

      Redding (2019) suggests that while teacher perceptions can influence a range of behavioral and academic outcomes, the most powerful evidence of student success points to a shared cultural understanding which comes from verification of an alliance between teacher and student racial/ethnic matching. "For schools to narrow racial and ethnic opportunity and achievement gaps, policies and practices must be found that benefit

children from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic groups" (p. 499). There has been a growing body of research over the past five years that reveals that students benefit from having a teacher from a similar demographic, especially racial/ethnic minority students (Cherng et al., 2016; Egalite & Kisida, 2017; Luke, 2017). Social construction here…White female norms come from a social construction, too.

Black Boys Don't Want To Learn

The fourth theme, Black boys don't want to learn, was discussed by six of the eight participants. Perceptions of respect toward oneself and racial and ethnic groups operate similarly in school engagement and attitudes toward teachers for students of color (Liang et. al., 2020). These findings include a) discipline, b) engagement, c) relationships, and d) academic struggles. The negativity in the school experiences of Black boys receives much more attention than the engagement and resources they find and depend on to be successful and maintain their hope and perseverance in school (Brooms, 2020). More attention must be placed on hearing Black male voices and experiences and how they see and navigate potential trouble in their lives (Howard 2014; Wright et al., 2016). The investigation by educators on how Black male students interpret their self-concept and how they navigate their academic and personal efforts could be critical in understanding how this group of students engages and strategizes in their efforts in school (Allen, 2017; Arbouin, 2018; Brooms, 2019; & Jett 2019).

Stacy stated that it is all about relationships in her class. She said that all the Black boys that were challenged while they were in her classroom would come back to visit.

She went on to say:

As a younger grade teacher, to me, it's always about relationships and learning to love

school. In my room, I have a tent, so instead of kids running out of the room if they're

having a hard time, they go sit in the tent. I've got tools in there like a sand timer and

seashells and stuffed animals and pictures of animals and breathing balls. They can listen

to their iPad in there and just have a place where they can be frustrated, you can be upset,

you can be sad, and it's going to tell you don't need to run out of the room and run away.

I feel like that's helped students connect and feel like oh, my teacher wants me in here, I

don't need to leave.

Melinda mentioned that her Black boys are just seen as "cute." She said that even

though they get bigger by fifth grade, she still could only see them as cute and that makes

her sad. Now she worries about some of her Black boys because she knows what society

is going to see in them and that it is all founded on myth and socialization; not who that

person is.

According to Little and Tolbert (2018), Black male students, no matter how

young, are often labeled by their teachers as "bad"; this word is not only indicative of

their conduct but is also an attack on their character. Teachers' negative narratives about

their Black male students play into the school-to-prison pipeline. According to McCarter

(2017), the school-to-prison pipeline refers to the path from our educational system to the

juvenile or criminal justice system. Not only are Black boys victims of the school-to-

prison pipeline, but they are also victims of the school playground-to-prison pipeline

(Bryan, 2020).

Wright & Counsell (2018) stated that in kindergarten and first grade, most Black male students do not get the support needed to cultivate their academic abilities and talent in school. This is one of the main reasons Black boys are often overlooked for gifted and talented programs (Davis et al., 2019; Wright & Counsell, 2018). Black boys don't want to learn stems from the CRT tenet as White folks have "constructed" the idea that Blacks don't really want to learn rather than learning about the condition we create so that learning cannot happen.

Janet Helm's White Racial Identity Development (1990) was also used while analyzing the data from the findings of this study. This was significant in answering research question number two: What impact do White Female Teachers' beliefs have, if any, on their expectations for the academic achievement of Black boys?

White Racial Identity

White Racial Identity Development centers on racism and white supremacy, offering a framework to analyze white racial identity in the context of systemic inequity (Moffitt et. al., 2021). For centuries, racist policies, research, and societal expectations have situated White people as more human than BIPOC individuals (Bruneau & Kteily, 2017), which makes whiteness the baseline marker for humanity (Ducey & Feagin, 2019). For this reason, Helms (1990) contends that viewing white supremacy as "normal" while denying the importance of race is itself a racial identity. Helms (2020) now uses the language of "schemas" — lenses through which a person views race and their racialized experiences, which are neither mutually exclusive nor rigidly linear. Moffit et. al., (2021) stated:

In the three Phase 1 schemas, white individuals shift from willing or

unintentional obliviousness about the role of race and the meaning of whiteness (Contact)

to a confused state of grappling with the recognition of whiteness (Disintegration) to a

conscious embracing of the inequitable status quo (Reintegration). In Phase 2, the

individual may first adopt assimilationist views, recognizing the existence of racism and

aiming to "help save" BIPOC individuals (Pseudo-independent), then begin engaging in a

more active exploration of racism as systemic (Immersion/Emersion), and finally

confront racism as a part of a multilayered system of intersectional oppression, while also

feeling comfortable within their white identity (Autonomy). (p. 1142)

The four themes that answer research question two are: a) perceptions about the

lack of parent involvement, b) lack of cultural awareness, c) impacts of curriculum and

tracking, and d) white female teachers' feelings of frustration.

Lack of Cultural Awareness

The first theme emerged from the interviews of all eight participants. An

unfortunate, yet persistent, truth in U.S. public schools is the large achievement gap

existing between children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their

White, middle-class counterparts. The potential for cultural dissonance between

contemporary teachers and their students necessitates that educators must persistently

seek culturally responsive practices (Carrero et al., 2017). Teachers need to build stronger

relationships and interact more with their students of color so that they can understand the

students' perceptions of the school climate and academic experiences (Liang et al., 2019).

Quality teacher-student relationships are associated with lower rates of disruptions and

suspensions in the school setting (Quin, 2017). Teacher-student relationships seem to be a major factor in academic outcomes. Some research has shifted from teacher perceptions to student perceptions of the classroom and school climate, as well as students' relationships with teachers (Raufelder et al., 2016). Research has also shown that when teachers focus on learning about students' cultures, home lives, and interests, it enhances their ability to build strong relationships with their students and easily resolve conflict (Brewer et al., 2020). These relationships are important because when less time is spent on behavior management, perhaps more time is spent on instruction and learning.

The participant, **Melinda,** feels like she has done a lot of work from an intellectual perspective, but now she must work on interrupting when she sees Whiteness impacting the work environment with staff and students. She continued by saying that White culture is so ingrained that confronting is not the norm because it might hurt someone's feelings. This is an example of the pseudo-independent stage of White Racial Identity.

Jada agreed that understanding other cultures impacts the teaching profession. She stated:

I think getting accustomed to the different cultures that we have and understanding what my role is in that when I'm teaching some of those social-emotional things or learning about their cultures. I thought I knew a lot of stuff, but then when you see families, how they interact and listen to them about what's going on at home or what they're feeling, it opened my eyes a lot to how I can help or how I can incorporate that in my teaching. I have been able to see so intimately those different dynamics and how they play a role in

their education. I only get them for six hours a day. Their main source of learning about

the world around them is what they are doing at home, so that plays a huge role in who

they are as students and who they are in my classroom and our community.

Jada's responses show that she is in the Immersion or Emersion stage of White Identity

development.

Perceptions About Lack of Parent Involvement

The second theme, perceptions about lack of parental involvement, emerged from

the findings of five of the eight participants. Parental involvement in school is an

undoubtedly important element of a student's educational experience and outcomes.

Students with elevated emotional and behavioral risks (EBR) tend to experience poor

educational outcomes, and research suggests varying levels of parental involvement

across domains for these at-risk students (January et al., 2022). Because they have

identified parental involvement as one of the most important factors in the academic

success of students, some college access programs have begun to incorporate a parent

element into their access model (Brewer, 2019). Researchers have identified parental

involvement, after-school programs or school engagement, mentoring, teacher-student

relationship qualities, and family and community support as factors that promote success

for young Black males in education (Orrock & Clark, 2018).

Although parent involvement is a major factor in positive outcomes for Black

male academic achievement, some White female teachers may be misinterpreting what

parent involvement looks like for these Black student families. Some Black parents find it

hard to connect to another oppressive institution that devalues their culture and mislabels their families (Brewer, 2019).

Participant **Elise** expressed that contacting parents has always been the most challenging part of teaching. For her, it was about wanting their parents to like her. She felt that some parents didn't want to be bothered when she was finally able to get in contact with them. The parents wanted things to be taken care of at school. She continued by saying that when talking to the parents of her students, she is afraid that she is going to say something wrong or offensive. With these responses, it is evident that Elise is in the disintegration stage of White Racial Identity Development.

Jada also discussed the challenges of working with parents. This is what she said while discussing the Black male students:

Their main source of learning about the world around them is what they are doing at home, so that plays a huge role in who they are as students and who they are in my classroom and our community. That was a big thing, and it was challenging at first because I didn't make that connection instantly. It opened my eyes to that and I was able to admit that I didn't know what I was doing when I'm interacting with those families at my first conferences or having that language barrier, wanting to look them in the eye and talk to them about their kid, but they don't understand what I'm saying and having an interpreter say that and being able to make that relationship with them was hard and it's still hard, but it's a good start and I'm still learning about that. It is challenging because I'm not about to tell somebody how to parent or tell them what they're doing is right or wrong.

With these comments, it is evident that Jada's responses indicated that she was in the reintegration phase of her White Racial Identity Development.

Brewer (2019) confirmed the difference between the parental involvement of White families and Black families. Brewer stated in his 2019 research, Brewer stated, "multiple factors contribute to differences in parent involvement across the ethnicities. Such factors include family structure, socio-economic status, lack of resources, time, and the level of parental educational attainment. Family structure has become increasingly culturally specific."

Impacts of Curriculum and Tracking

The third theme emerged from five of the eight participants. Beard, 2019 stated that tracking harms Black male students and exacerbates inequities and the ethics of separating students within intellectual spaces. Tracking research informs us of the damaging effects for and on African American students, who comprise the largest population in lower-track classes (Beard, 2019). Wright & Counsell (2018) stated that in kindergarten and first grade, most Black male students do not get the support needed to cultivate their academic abilities and talent in school. This is one of the main reasons Black boys are often overlooked for gifted and talented programs (Davis et al., 2019; Wright & Counsell, 2018). According to Woodson & Harris (2018), Black males are overrepresented in special education classes. Black youth are also more than five times more likely to be detained or incarcerated than White youth (NCES, 2019). All these data points indicate gaps in the educational system.

White Female Teachers' Feelings of Frustration

The fourth theme was determined from the findings of all eight participants. This theme does not directly answer research question number two. However, it was a profound finding for all of the participants as they discussed their emotions during challenging times. When these White female teachers are frustrated, it impacts the learning of their entire class which includes Black boys. Because the Black boy's behavior is the cause of the challenge, it may take longer for the teacher to get centered enough to continue to instruct the Black male student. This could cause a loss of learning time or the attention needed to complete an academic task. These findings include the participants' responses to the emotions that are triggered in them when situations are challenging in their classrooms. Feelings of anxiety and helplessness are also included in these findings.

Critical research has continued to explain the criminalization of Black boys in schools. Evidence suggests that there is a clear connection between school-based discipline and the disproportionate number of Black males designated as defiant, which is caused by the deficit mindset regarding these Black male students (Baker, 2019; Bryan, 2019; Grace & Nelson, 2018). Some teacher presumptions are still based on an inflexible view of students, which focuses on low expectations, color blindness, and deficit thinking (Madsen & Luevanos, 2019). Little and Tolbert (2018) recommend that to challenge and disrupt the damaging consequences of deficit-based instruction for Black boys, teachers must use culturally responsive pedagogical tools and methods. Madsen and Luevanos (2019) express that teachers must use culturally responsive pedagogy to ensure an

inclusive and culturally relevant educational environment. The use of culturally responsive pedagogy and techniques is one-way teachers can attempt to engage with and build relationships with their Black male students. The objective is for White teachers to have a profound knowledge of themselves and for them to start a positive, anti-racist White identity free of microaggressions (Carter et al., 2017; Compton-Lilly, 2020; Durkee, Hope, & Keels, 2017). This work on White identity can be another way to impact how White female teachers teach.

Elise informed us that the emotions that are triggered during challenging situations are frustration and sadness. She feels that it sometimes comes off as anger, but it's just her being frustrated about not getting the desired outcome that she wants, whether that's students learning what is expected of them or their behavior not being the behavior the teacher expects. Her sadness comes from her feelings of frustration. With these comments, Elise demonstrated that she was in the contact phase of White Racial Identity Development.

Alicia added that when she feels the most frustration in her classroom is when she thinks the students within her classroom community are being harmed. She is set off when students are being disrespectful to each other. She went on to say that she is triggered most when students are speaking over one another and not letting other students' voices be heard; or when students are insulting each other. These responses indicated that Alicia was in the contact phase of White Racial Identity Development.

Implications For Practice

This study benefits educators and specifically White female educators in the self-assessments of ways they can contribute to closing the achievement or opportunity gap. There has been a significant amount of research on the achievement gap. However, there has been limited research asking the professionals themselves about their role and responsibility for educating all students which include Black boys.

The evidence in this study suggests that the beliefs held by White female elementary teachers in a Midwest urban city do affect the academic achievement of Black male students. The White female teacher's beliefs specifically affect their expectations for the academic achievement of Black boys. The perceptions of White female teachers about black boys affect the teachers' actions, reactions, judgment, and responses to behavior. Prior research has shown that teachers' implicit bias and low expectations impact Black student outcomes in negative ways (Desai, 2016; Liang & Rivera; 2017; Copur-Gencturk et al., 2019; & Peterson et al., 2021). La Salle et al. (2019) stated: Implicit biases are the subtle, automatic attitudes and stereotypical associations people make against others based on their cultural group affiliation. In schools, this is evident when teachers are immediately reactive toward students who are perceived to be acting out; the behavior may result in a warning for a White student, but detention or being sent to the office for a Black or brown student.

(p. 318)

The theme of White female teachers' feelings of frustration emerged from all the participants. The frustration generally happens when Black boys' behavior is challenging,

they are not participating in the lesson, or they are interrupting the lesson. These feelings

of frustration impact the teachers' ability to breathe properly, to focus on the lesson being

taught, and sometimes causes the teacher to shut down. Teachers need to recognize when

frustration is taking over their ability to teach their class or even individual students.

Once recognition happens, they should be able to make the necessary adjustments so that

instructional time is not lost. The loss of instructional time has major implications for

students, specifically, Black male students. This is because Black males are the lowest-

achieving subgroup.

The theme of trauma causing Black boys to struggle in school emerged from

seven of the eight participants. Trauma is significant when it comes to the education of

Black boys. This theme aligns with research by Garo and Lewis (2018) who stated that

fear, terror, helplessness, and despair are typical responses to trauma that affect children's

ability to cope with everyday stress and their abilities to develop competencies in school

and at home. However, our teachers should still maintain high academic standards and

expectations for all students regardless of their lived experiences. This does not mean that

teachers should give all students the same assignment and expect them to all be

successful with that same assignment. The importance of differentiation still exists. Each

student has a right to a quality education regardless of their struggles. Sympathy should

not get in the way of educating our Black boys. Empathy from White female teachers for

our Black male students about and for the trauma the boys have experienced should be

expected and accepted. This way the teacher accepts the students for who they are and

should continue to hold high academic standards for all students.

Recommendations For Further Research

This research study intended to gain an understanding of the teaching and learning gap between black boys and their White female teachers in a Midwestern urban setting. The main purpose of this research was to examine the beliefs of White female elementary teachers about Black male students and their behavioral and academic achievement. The participants in this study shared thoughts about why the achievement gap exists. They shared the challenges of teaching Black male students. They also shared their perceptions of what is getting in the way of educating Black boys; both internally and externally. As mentioned, four themes answered research question number one, and three themes answered question two. Another theme arose from all participants that explained the impact of White female teachers' work with Black male students. The findings of this study will help close the opportunity gap. However, additional research is needed to continue to gain momentum in closing the opportunity gap.

All of the participants in this study shared that frustrations with our Black male students sometimes interrupt the learning process and impact their teaching. I recommend further research on White female teachers' behavioral expectations for Black boys in comparison to their behavioral expectations for White boys. This research will provide more self-awareness for the teachers. It will also provide some incite to them about the causes of frustration during instructional and learning time. Another benefit of this research could be an acceptance of Black male behavior in school and an openness to teaching expected behaviors.

Another theme that all eight participants shared was a lack of cultural awareness. White female teacher norms have not positively impacted Black male student achievement. I recommend further research on Whiteness and how Whiteness impacts the academic achievement gap also known as the opportunity gap. The research on the impact of Whiteness will help identify specific characteristics and expectations that Black students find success in class. This research can also help change the structure of the school day which can ultimately help all students find behavioral and academic success in school.

I also recommend further research on sympathy and empathy. Trauma-informed instruction has been introduced to many educators. Most recently, social-emotional learning (SEL) has been used as a means of providing support to students that suffer from trauma (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Borowski, 2018). The intent behind trauma-informed instruction is powerful and could have a positive impact. However, some educators feel sorry for students and the students' situations and lower expectations as a result. The teachers' sympathy for their students gets in the way of high academic expectations. Whereas empathy allows trauma-informed practices to be successful.

My final recommendation is further research on the successful teaching of White male students. This research can help examine the practices that have worked, particularly for White male students. These strategies should be used for all students. These strategies will help White female teachers have more success with their Black male students.

References

Abacioglu, C., Volman, M., & Fischer, A.(2020). Teachers' multicultural
attitudes and perspective-taking abilities as factors in culturally responsive
teaching. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *90*(3), 736–752.
https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12328

Alaca, B., & Pyle, A. (2018). Kindergarten teachers' perspectives on culturally
responsive education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *41*(3), 753–782.

Allen, K. M. (2019). Transformative vision: Examining the racial literacy
practices of a Black male teacher with his Black male students. *Journal for
Multicultural Education*, *13*(1), 82–93. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-04-2017-
0029

Allen, Q. (2013). ''They think minority means lesser than'': Black middle-class
sons and fathers resisting microaggressions in the school. Urban Education, 48,
171–197.

Allen, Q. 2017. "'They write me off and don't give me a chance to learn
anything: Positioning, Discipline, and Resistance of Black Male High School
Students." Anthropology & Education Quarterly 48: 269–283.

American Psychological Association. 2021

Anderson, E. (2004). What is strengths-based education? A tentative answer by
someone who strives to be strengths-based educator. Unpublished manuscript.

Arbouin, A. 2018. Black British graduates: Untold stories. Trentham.

Audley, S. (2020). Searching for the golden rule: A case study of two White

    novice teachers' beliefs and experiences of respect in urban schools. *Education*

    and Urban Society, *52*(6), 872–903. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124519894984

Banks, J. A. (2018). An introduction to multicultural education (6th ed.). New

    York, NY: Pearson.

Barton, P.E., & Coley, R.J. (2009). Parsing the achievement gap II. Princeton, NJ:

    Educational Testing Service.

Bean, R., & Helfrich, S. (2011). Beginning teachers reflect on their experiences

    being prepared to teach literacy. *Teacher Education and Practice, 24*(2), 201-

    222.

Beard, K. S. (2019). Getting on track: aligning the achievement gap conversation

    with ethical educational practice. *International Journal of Leadership in*

    Education, *22*(1), 30–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1503821

Bell, D. A. (1987). And we are not saved: The elusive quest for racial justice.

    New York, NY: Basic Books.

Besnoy, K. D., Dantzler, J., Besnoy, L. R., & Byrne, C. (2016). Using exploratory

    and confirmatory factor analysis to measure construct validity of the traits,

    aptitudes, and behaviors scale (TABS). Journal for the Education of the Gifted,

    39, 3–22. Retrieved from

    https://eps.cc.ysu.edu:8443/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?dir

    ect =true&AuthType=ip, uid&db=eric&AN=EJ1090759&site=ehost-

    live&scope=site

Borsato, G., Lindholm-Leary, K. Educating English language learners.
www.cambridge.org/9780521859752

Brinkley, B., Hines, E., Jones, A., McMillian, E. G., Sturdivant, B., & Walker, M.
(2018). Male teachers: Lessons for teacher education programs." Journal of
Teacher Education. doi:10.1177/0022487118789367.

Bristol, T. J., & Goings, R. B. (2019). Exploring the boundary-heightening
experiences of Black male teachers: Lessons for Teacher Education Programs.
Journal of Teacher Education, *70*(1), 51–64.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118789367

Bristol, T. J., and M. Mentor. 2018. "Policing and teaching: The positioning of
Black male teachers as agents in the universal carceral apparatus." The Urban
Review 50 (2): 218–234. doi:10.1007/s11256-018-0447-z.

Brooms, D. R. (2019). "I was just trying to make it": Examining urban Black
males' sense of belonging, schooling experiences, and academic success. *Urban
Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*, *54*(6), 804–830.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916648743
Brooms, D.R. (2020). "I didn't want to be a statistic': Black males, urban
schooling, and educational urgency. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 1–19.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1803821

Brown v. Board of Education. Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Brewer, S. K., Brown, E. C., Buntain-Ricklefs, J., Cook, C. R., Nguyen, L., Gaias, L. M., Kiche, S., Shi, J., & Duong, M. T. (2020). A mixed methods pilot study of an equity explicit student-teacher relationship intervention for the ninth-grade transition. *The Journal of School Health*, *90*(12), 1004–1018. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12968

Bryan, N. (2017). White teachers' role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline: Recommendations for Teacher Education. *The Urban Review*, *49*(2), 326–345. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0403-3

Bryan, N. (2020). Shaking the bad boys: troubling the criminalization of black boys' childhood play, hegemonic white masculinity and femininity, and the school playground-to-prison pipeline. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *23*(5), 673–692. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1512483

Bryan, N. (2021). "To me, he teaches like the child learns:" Black maternal caregivers on the pedagogies and schooling practices of a Black male kindergarten teacher. *The Urban Review*, *53*(3), 491–515. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-020-00577-9

Butler, J. K., Kane, R. G., & Morshead, C. E. (2017). "It's my safe space": student voice, teacher education, and the relational space of an urban high school. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*, *52*(7), 889–916. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915574530

Card, D., & Guilano, L. (2016). Universal screening increases the representation

    of low-income and minority students in gifted education. Proceedings of the

    National Academy of Sciences, 113(48), 13679-13683.

Carey, R. L. (2020). Missing misters: uncovering the pedagogies and

    positionalities of male teachers of color in the school lives of Black and Latino

    adolescent boys. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *23*(3), 392–413.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1663991

Carey, R. L., L. S. Yee, and D. E. DeMatthews. 2018. "Power, penalty, and

    critical praxis: employing intersectionality in educator practices to achieve school

    equity." *The Educational Forum* 82 (1): 111–130.

    doi:10.1080/00131725.2018.1381793.

Carrero, K. M, Gibbon, T., Lewis Chiu, C., Lusk, M. E., Sayman, D., & Zolkoski,

    S. M., (2017). Developing Culturally Competent Preservice Teachers. *Multicultural*

    Perspectives (Mahwah, N.J.), *19*(1), 47–52.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2017.1267515

Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2017). You can't fix

    what you don't look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline

    disparities. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*, *52*(2), 207–

    235. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660350

Cherng, H.-Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers:
Student perceptions of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher*, *45*(7), 407–420. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16671718

Christopher, E. (2019). *White female teachers and their students: A cross-sectional exploration of the beliefs of preservice teachers and interns regarding intersectionalities of today's students*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Cobb, P. Denise, Cindy Boland-Perez, and Patricia LeBaron. 2008. "Race-Matching: interviewers' reactions to the race-matching process." *Survey Practice* 1 (5). https://doi.org/10.29115/SP-2008-0020.

College Board. (2019). AP program participation and performance data 2019. Retrieved from:https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/participation/ap-2019

Copur-Gencturk, Y., Cimpian, J. R., Lubienski, S. T., & Thacker, I. (2020). Teachers' bias against the mathematical ability of female, Black, and Hispanic students. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(1), 30–43. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19890577

Corley, N. A., Reeves, P., & Odera, S. G. (2020). "That's just who I am": African American high school seniors and their mother's perspectives on academic success. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *37*(1), 25–37. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-019-00621-y

Council of Great City Schools. (2017). Excellence for all: Creating environments

for success for journal of organizational and executive leadership. Vol. 6, Issue 2,

Article 3 33 males of color in the great city schools. Retrieved

from https://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=89

5&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-

848fa8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=3218&PageID=766

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among

five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design:

choosing among five approaches* (Fourth ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Publications

Darder, A. Culture and Power in the Classroom: A critical foundation for

bicultural education. Bergin & Garvey. Westport, Connecticut

Dastrup, K. R. H., Moffitt, U., Rogers, L. O., Beyond Ethnicity: Applying

Helms's White Racial Identity Development Model among White youth. (2021).

Journal of Research on Adolescence. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12645

Davis, J., Anderson, C., & Parker, W. (2019). Identifying and supporting Black

male students in advanced mathematics courses throughout the K-12 pipeline.

Gifted Child Today Magazine, *42*(3), 140–149.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217519842234

Delgado, & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: an introduction* (3rd ed.).

New York University Press.

Delale-O'Connor, Alvarez, A. J., Murray, I. E., & Milner, I. (2017). Self-Efficacy

beliefs, classroom management, and the cradle-to-prison pipeline. *Theory into*

Practice, *56*(3), 178–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2017.1336038

Einstein, A., B. Podolsky, and N. Rosen, 1935, "Can quantum-mechanical

description of physical reality be considered complete?", Phys. Rev. **47**, 777-780.

Emdin, C. (2016). For White folks who teach in the hood . . . and the rest of y'all

too: Reality pedagogy and urban education. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Davis, J., Anderson, C., & Parker, W. (2019). Identifying and supporting Black

male students in advanced mathematics courses throughout the K-12 pipeline.

Gifted Child Today Magazine, *42*(3), 140–149.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217519842234

Davis, J., Goings, R., Allen, K. (2019). Developing pre-service mathematics

teachers to meet the needs of Black male students in teacher education programs.

In Prime, G. (Ed.), Centering race in the STEM education of African American

K-12 learners. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Dawson. (2019). *Students of Color Deserve a Chance, Too! A Single-Topic Case*

Study of White Female Teachers and Their Perceptions of Culturally

Responsive Teaching Practices. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Dumas, M. J. (2014). Losing an arm: Schooling as a site of Black suffering.

Race, Ethnicity and Education, 17, 1–29.

Dumas, M. J., Nelson, J. D. (2016). (Re) Imagining Black boyhood: Toward a
    critical framework for educational research. Harvard Educational Review, 86, 27–
    47.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd
    ed.). New York, NY: NYU Press.

Delpit, L. (1995). Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom. *New
    York: New Press.*

Desai, S. R. (2019). Humanizing Trayvon Martin: Racial profiling, implicit
    biases, and teacher education. Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.), 54(8),
    1031–1057. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916646609

Dove, S. (2009). The campaign for black male achievement. *The Journal of
    Negro Education. 78*(3), 193-194.

Dumas, M. J. (2014). Losing an arm: Schooling as a site of Black suffering.
    Race, Ethnicity and Education, 17, 1–29.

Dyce, C. M. (2013). Disappearing into the unknown: The state of Black male
    achievement in American public schools. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(3), 165-
    167. doi: 10.1080/15210960.2013.809307

Ellison, T. (2018). The matter of parents' stories: Urban African American
    mothers' counter-stories about the common core state standards and quality
    teaching. Urban Education. https://doi. org/10.1177/0042085917702199.

Farver, S. D. (2019). *Beliefs. Barriers. Beckys: Using critical Whiteness studies to
    examine teaching and teacher education*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Ford, D.Y. (2006). Identification of young culturally diverse students for gifted education programs. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly, 20*(1), 2-4.

Ford, D.Y., Grantham, T.C., & Whiting, G.W. (2008). Another look at the achievement gap. *Urban Education, 43*, 216 - 239.

Ferguson, R. R. (2003). Teachers' perceptions and expectations and the Black White test score gap. *Urban Education, 38*, 460-507.

Garo, Allen-Handy, A., & Lewis, C. W. (2018). Race, poverty, and violence exposure: A critical spatial analysis of African American trauma vulnerability and educational outcomes in Charlotte, North Carolina. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *87*(3), 246–269. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.3.0246

Gerardo Moreno, & Michael Scaletta. (2018). Moving Away from zero tolerance policies: Examination of Illinois educator preparedness in addressing student behavior. *The International Journal of Emotional Education*, *10*(2), 93–110.

Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. W. (2018). The long run impacts of same-race teachers (NBER No. w25254). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Gilliam, W. S., Maupin, A. N., Reyes, C. R., Accavitti, M., & Shic, F. (2016). Do early educators' implicit biases regarding sex and race relate to behavior expectations and recommendations of preschool expulsions and suspensions? A research study brief. Yale University Child Study Center, September 28, 2016. Retrieved from https://medicine.yale.edu/ Little and Tolbert 419 child

study/zigler/publications/Preschool%20Implicit%20Bias%20Policy%20Br ief_final_ 9_26_276766_5379_v1.pdf

Girvan, E. J., Gion, C., McIntosh, K., & Smolkowski, K. (2017). The relative contribution of subjective office referrals to racial disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *32*(3), 392–404. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000178

Glock, S., & Boehmer, I. (2018). Teachers' and preservice teachers' stereotypes, attitudes, and spontaneous judgments of male ethnic minority students. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *59*, 244–255. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2018.09.001

Glock, S., & Klapproth (2017). Bad boys, good girls: Implicit and explicit attitudes toward ethnic minority students among elementary and secondary school teachers. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 53, 77–86. doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2017.04.002

Goings, R. B., & Bianco, M. (2016). It's hard to be who you don't see: An exploration of Black male high school students' perspectives on becoming teachers. The Urban Review, 48, 628–646.

Grace, J. E., & Nelson, S. L. (2019). "Tryin' to survive": Black male students' understandings of the role of race and racism in the school-to-prison pipeline. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *18*(4), 664–680. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2018.1513154

Grissom, J. A., Rodriguesz, L. A., & Kern E. C. (2017). Teacher and principal

    diversity and the representation of students of color in gifted programs: Evidence

    from national data. *The Elementary School Journal, 117,* 396 - 422.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/690274

Guetterman, T. C. (2015). Descriptions of sampling practices within five

    approaches to qualitative research in education and the health sciences. Forum:

    Qualitative Social Research, 16(2), Article 25. https://doi-

    org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.17169/fqs-16.2.2290

Hadjistassou, S. (2008). Deficit-based education theory. In J. M. González (Ed.),

    Encyclopedia of bilingual education (pp. 219-223). Thousand Oaks, CA:

    SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412963985.n90

Hamer, L. & Kumar, R. (2012). Preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward

    student diversity and proposed instructional practices: A sequential design

    study. *Journal of Teacher Education. 64*(2) 162-177. doi:

    10.1177/0022487112566899

Harper, S. R., & Associates. (2014). *Succeeding in the city: A report from the*

    New York City Black and Latino male high school achievement Study. University

    of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education.

Hajovsky, D. B., Oyen, K. A., Chesnut, S. R., & Curtin, S. J. (2020). Teacher-

    student relationship quality and math achievement: The mediating role of teacher

    self-efficacy. *Psychology in the Schools*, *57*(1), 111–134.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22322

Hiemstra, D., Van Ypern, N.W. The effects of strength-based versus deficit-

    based self-regulated learning strategies on students' effort intentions. Motiv Emot

    39, 656-668 (2015). http://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-015-

    9488-8

Henfield, M.S. (2012). The stress of Black male achievement. *Gifted Child*

    Today, 35(3) doi: 10.1177/1076217512445999

Hollins, E.R., & Torres-Guzman, M.A. (2005). Research on preparing teachers

    for diverse populations. *Studying teacher education: A report of the AERA panel*

    on research and teacher education, 477 - 548.

Hosan, N. E., & Hoglund, W. (2017). Do teacher-child relationships and

    friendship quality matter for children's school engagement and academic skills?

    School Psychology Review, *46*(2), 201–218. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-

    0043.V46-2

Howard, T. C. (2014). Black male(d): Peril and promise in the education of

    African American males. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Irez, S. (2007). Reflection-oriented qualitative approach in beliefs research.

    Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, *3*(1), 17-

    27. https://doi.org/10.12973/ejmste/75370

Iruka, I. (2016). Black boys, early childhood education and. In D. Couchenour &

    J. Chrisman (Eds.), *The sage encyclopedia of contemporary early*

    childhood education (pp. 157-158*). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications,*

    Inc doi: 10.4135/9781483340333.n40

Jagers, R.J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Borowski, T. (2018). Equity and social-

emotional learning: A cultural analysis (CASEL Assessment Work Group Brief).

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Jett, C. C. 2019. "'I have the highest GPA, but I can't be valedictorian?': Two

Black males' exclusionary valedictory experiences." Race Ethnicity and

Education 1–19. doi:10.1080/13613324.2019.1599341.

Jett, C. C., & Cross, S. B. (2016). Teaching about diversity in Black and White:

Reflections and recommendations from two teacher educators. *The New*

Educator, *12*(2), 131–146. https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2015.1058448

Johnson, Luther EdD and Larwin, Karen H. PhD (2020) "Systemic bias in public

Education: The exception of African American males enrolled in gifted

and advanced placement courses," Journal of Organizational & Educational

Leadership: Vol. 6: Iss. 2, Article 3.

Journal of Organizational and Executive Leadership, Vol. 6, Issue 2, Article 3 32

Fixing systems, not kids: Changing the narrative of Black males in Guilford

County schools. Voices in Urban Education, 48, 19–25. Retrieved from

https://eps.cc.ysu.edu:8443/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?dir

ect=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=eric&AN=EJ1174511&site=ehost-

live&scope=site

Keels, M., Durkee, M., & Hope, E. (2017). The psychological and academic costs

of school-based racial and ethnic microaggressions. *American Educational*

Research Journal, *54*(6), 1316–1344. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217722120

Kristja´n Kristja´nsson (2004). Empathy, sympathy, justice, and the child. *Journal of Moral Education*, *33*(3), 291-305, doi: 10.1080/030572404200073306

Kolluri. (2018). Advanced placement: The dual challenge of equal access and effectiveness. *Review of Educational Research*, *88*(5), 671–711. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318787268

Kunemund, R. L., Nemer McCullough, S., Williams, C. D., Miller, C. C., Kunesh, C. E., & Noltemeyer, A. (2019). Understanding disciplinary disproportionality: stereotypes shape pre-service teachers' beliefs about Black boys' behavior. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*, *54*(4), 471–498. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915623337

La Salle, T. P., Wang, C., Wu, C., & Rocha Neves, J. (2020). Racial mismatch among minoritized students and White teachers: Implications and recommendations for moving forward. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *30*(3), 314–343. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2019.1673759

League, A. D. (2017). US Anti-Semitic incidents spike 86 percent so far in 2017 after surging last year, ADL finds. *Anti-Defamation League*.

Leland, C., Lewison, M., & Harste, J. (2018). *Teaching children's literature: It's critical!* Routledge.

Liang, C.T.H., & Rivera, L. (2017). Psychological approaches to working with vulnerable children. In. F. Beachum & F. Obeakor (Eds.), *Improving educational outcomes of vulnerable children: Starting from the bottom* (pp. 117 - 144). Svedala, Sweden: Oakleaf Books.

Liang, C. T. H., Rocchino, G. H., Gutekunst, M. H. C., Paulvin, C., Melo Li, K.,

    & Elam-Snowden, T. (2020). Perspectives of respect, teacher-student

    relationships, and school climate among boys of color: A multi-focus group study.

    Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 21(3), 345–356.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000239

Little, S. D., & Tolbert, L. V. A. (2018). The problem with Black boys: Race,

    gender, and discipline in Christian and private elementary schools. *Christian*

    Education Journal, *15*(3), 408–421. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739891318805760

Loewus, L. (2017). The nation's teaching force is still mostly White and female.

    Education Week, 37(1), 11.

Luke, A. (2017). Commentary: On the race of teachers and students: A reflection

    on experience, scientific evidence, and silence. *American Educational Research*

    Journal, *54*(1_suppl), 102S–110S. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216679503

Luria, S. R., O'Brien, R. L., & Kaufman, J. C. (2016). Creativity in gifted

    identification: increasing accuracy and diversity. *Annals of the New York*

    Academy of Sciences, *1377*(1), 44–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13136

Luther Johnson, & Karen H Larwin. (2020). Systemic bias in public education:

    The exception of African American males enrolled in gifted and advanced

    placement courses. J*ournal of Organizational and Educational Leadership*, *6*(2),

    0_1–37.

Madsen, J., Mabokela, R. O., & Luevanos, E. A. (2019). School context: implications for teachers of color. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 38*(1), 56-70. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1108/EDI-02-2018-0031

Markowitz, L. & Puchner, L. (2015). Do Black families value education? White teachers, institutional cultural narratives & beliefs about African Americans. *Multicultural Education,* 9 – 16.

Martin, A. D., & Spencer, T. (2020). Children's literature, culturally responsive teaching, and teacher identity: An action research inquiry in teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education*, *42*(4), 387–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2019.1710728

Martin, A. D., & Taylor, T. (2019). An intergenerational self-study of narrative reflections on literature, gender, and LGBTQ identities. In A. D. Martin & K. J. Strom (Eds.), Exploring gender and LGBTQ issues in K12 and teacher education: A rainbow assemblage (pp. 163–182). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

McCarter, S. (2017). The school-to-prison pipeline: A primer for social workers. *Social Work (New York)*, *62*(1), 53–61. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/sww078

McCarter, S., Venkitasubramanian, K., & Bradshaw, K. (2020). Addressing the school-to-prison Pipeline: Examining micro- and macro-level variables that affect school disengagement and subsequent felonies. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *46*(3), 379–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2019.1575323

Milner, H. R. (2013). A talk to teachers about black male students. *Counterpoints,*

    383, 67 – 85. Perry, T. (2003). Up from the parched earth: Toward a theory

    of African American achievement. *Boston, MA: Beacon,* 1-10.

National assessment of educational progress (2018). Retrieved from

    https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2019). Retrieved from

    https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2019/pdf/2020013O

    H4.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). Retrieved from

    https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/clr

Neale. (2016). Iterative categorization (IC): a systematic technique for analyzing

    qualitative data. *Addiction (Abingdon, England)*, *111*(6), 1096–1106.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/add.13314

O'Connor. (2020). Life Satisfaction and noncognitive skills: Effects on the

    likelihood of unemployment: Life satisfaction and noncognitive skills. *Kyklos*

    (Basel). https://doi.org/10.1111/kykl.12226

Orrock, J., & Clark, M. A. (2018). Using systems theory to promote academic

    success for African American males. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*,

    53(8), 1013–1042. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915613546

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies:*

    Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world. Teachers College Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Pendergast, L. L., Nickens, L., Pham, S., Miliaresis, S., & Canivez, G. L. (2018).
Race and gender differences in teacher perceptions of student homework
performance: a preliminary examination. *Contemporary School Psychology*,
22(3), 294–302. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-017-0162-x

Peterson, E.., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers'
explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement:
Relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. Learning and
Instruction, 42, 123-140.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.010

Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined Whiteness of teaching: how White teachers
maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*,
12(2), 197–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320902995475

ProPublica/Miseducation (2019). Teacher demographics. Retrieved from:
https://projects.propublica.org/miseducation

Prosek, & Gibson, D. M. (2021). Promoting rigorous research by examining
lived experiences: a review of four qualitative traditions. *Journal of Counseling
and Development*, *99*(2), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12364

Putnick, D. L., Hahn, C., Hendricks, C., Suwalsky, J. T. D., & Bornstein, M. H.
(2020). Child, mother, father, and teacher beliefs about child academic
competence: predicting math and reading performance in European American

adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *30*(S2), 298–314.

https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12477

Quin. (2017). Longitudinal and contextual associations between teacher-student

relationships and student engagement: a systematic review. *Review of Educational*

Research, *87*(2), 345–387. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316669434

Quinn, D.M. Experimental effects of "achievement gap" news reporting on

viewers' racial stereotypes, inequality explanations, and inequality prioritization.

Educational Researcher. 2020;49(7):482-492. doi:10.3102/0013189X20932469

Quinn, D. M., & Le, Q. T. (2018). Are we trending to more or less between-

group achievement inequality over the school year and summer comparing across

ECLS-K cohorts? AERAOpen. https:// doi.org/10.1177/2332858418819995

Raufelder, D., Scherber, S., & Wood. M. A. (2016). The interplay between

adolescents' perceptions of teacher-student relationships and their academic self-

regulation: Does liking a specific teacher matter? *Psychology in the Schools, 53,*

736-750. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pits. 21937

Redding, C. (2019). A Teacher Like Me: A review of the effect of student–

teacher racial/ethnic matching on teacher perceptions of students and student

academic and behavioral outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, *89*(4), 499–

535. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319853545

Rodgers, C. (2018). Descriptive feedback: student voice in K-5 classrooms.

Australian Educational Researcher, *45*(1), 87–102.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0263-1

Rogers, L. O., & Brooms, D. R. (2020). Ideology and identity among White male

    teachers in an All-Black, all-male high school. *American Educational Research*

    Journal, *57*(1), 440–470. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219853224

Rosen, R. 2017. "Between play and the quotidian: inscriptions of monstrous

    characters on the racialized bodies of children." *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*

    20 (2): 178–191. doi:10.1080/13613324.2015.1121218.

Schotts Foundation (2015). Black lives matter: The Schott 50 state report on

    public education and Black males. Retrieved from

    http://www.blackboysreport.org/2015-black-boys-report.pdf

Siwatu, K. O., Chesnut, S. R., Alejandro, A., & Young, H. A. (2016). Examining

    preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy doubts. The

    Teacher Educator, 51(4), 277–296. https://doi-

    org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1080/08878730.2016.11

Sleeter, C.E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research

    and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *52*,

    94-123.

Sutherland, K. S., Conroy, M. A., & Granger, K. (2020). The mediating role of

    teacher self efficacy in the relation between teacher-child race mismatch and

    conflict. *Psychology in the Schools*, *57*(11), 1757–1770.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22419

Taylor, A. R. (2012). Academic achievement of African American boys: Bringing African American girls into the picture. *Journal of School Psychology*, *50*(5), 587-592.

Taylor, A. J., Whitesell, N. (2020). A lifespan model of ethnic-racial identity. *Research in Human Development*, 1–31

The Civil Rights Project. National Analysis of Suspension Data (2020). Retrieved from https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/news/press-releases/press-releases-2020/nnational-report-calls-attention-to-frequent-use-of-suspension-and-impact-on-inequities-in-opportunity-to-learn

Thomas, E. E., and C. A. Warren. 2017. "Making it relevant: How a black male teacher sustained professional relationships through culturally responsive discourse." Race Ethnicity and Education 20 (1): 87–100.

Toldson, I., & Johns, D. (2016). Erasing deficits. *Teachers College Record, 118*(6), 1–7.

Timberly L. Baker. (2019). Reframing the connections between deficit thinking, microaggressions, and teacher perceptions of defiance. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *88*(2), 103–113. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.88.2.0103

Ulen, E. N. 2016. "When play is criminalized: racial disparities in childhood", Retrieved from: www.truth-out.org/articles/item/36947-when-play-is-criminalized-racial-disparities-in-Childhood

United States Government Accountability Office Report on K-12 Education:

Better use of information could help agencies identify disparities and address racial discrimination. Retrieved October 14, 2017, from

https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345

United States Government Accountability Office. (3 2018). K-12 education: Discipline disparities for Black students, boys, and students with disabilities. Report to congressional requesters. Retrieved from https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/690828.Walker, T. National Education Association Today. 2018

Ura, S. K., & d'Abreu, A. (2021). Racial Bias, Social–Emotional Competence, and Teachers' Evaluation of Student Behavior. *Children & Schools*, *44*(1), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdab028

Van Manen, Higgins, I., & van der Riet, P. (2016). A conversation with Max Van Anen on phenomenology in its original sense. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, *18*(1), 4–7. https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12274

Viadero, D. (2014). Race report's influence felt 40 years later. Education Week, *25(41)*, 1, 21-24. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/06/21/41coleman.h25.html

Walker, S., & Hutchison, L. (2021). Using culturally relevant pedagogy to influence literacy achievement for middle school Black male students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *64*(4), 421–429. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1114

Warren, C. (2016). "We learn through our struggles": Nuancing notions of urban

    Black male academic preparation for postsecondary success. Teachers College

    Record, 118(6), 1–38.

Warren, C. A. (2018). Empathy, teacher dispositions, and preparation for

    culturally responsive pedagogy. Journal of Teacher Education, 69, 169–183.

    https://doi-org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1177/0022487117712487

Warren, C. A. (2020). Meeting myself: race-gender oppression and a genre study

    of Black men teachers' interactions with Black boys. *Race, Ethnicity and*

    Education, *23*(3), 367–391. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1663982

Warren, C. A., and C. Bonilla. 2018. "Care and the influence of student-adult

    stakeholder interactions on young Black men's college aspirations." Multicultural

    Perspectives 20 (1): 13–24. doi:10.1080/15210960.2017.1400913.

Williams, C. D., Byrd, C. M., Quintana, S. M., Anicama, C., Kiang, L., Umaña-

    Woodson, L., Lorenzo, A., & Harris, S. M. (2018). Teacher and student

    demographic variables which predict teacher referrals of males for special

    education evaluation. Journal of At Risk Issues 21(1), 32–43.

Wright, B. L., & Counsell, S. L. (2018). The brilliance of Black boys: Cultivating

    school success in the early grades. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Zee, M., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2016). Teacher self-efficacy and its effects on

    classroom processes, student academic adjustment, and teacher well being: A

    synthesis of 40 years of research. Review of educational research, 86(4), 981–

    1015. https://doi-org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.3102/0034654315626801

Zimmermann, C. R., & Kao, G. (2019). Unequal returns to children's effort:

Racial/Ethnic and Gender Disparities in Teachers' Evaluations of Children's

Noncognitive Skills and Academic Ability. *Du Bois Review*, *16*(2), 417–438.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X20000016