

7-25-2013

The Influences of Race and Gender on the Leadership of African American Female Principals of Predominantly White Elementary Schools

Shauna Angelina Carter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carter, Shauna Angelina, "The Influences of Race and Gender on the Leadership of African American Female Principals of Predominantly White Elementary Schools" (2013). *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs)*. 1902.
<https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/1902>

**The Influences of Race and Gender on the Leadership of African American
Female Principals of Predominantly White Elementary Schools**

Shauna Angelina Carter

Dissertation Committee

Barbara Strobert, Ed.D., Mentor
Anthony Colella, Ph.D.
David Aderhold, Ed.D.
Carol Kelley, Ed.D.

Submitted In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Seton Hall University

2013

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

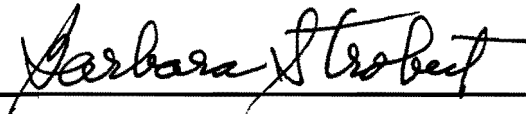
Doctoral Candidate, **Shauna Carter**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the EdD during this Summer Semester 2013.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

(please sign and date beside your name)

Mentor:

Dr. Barbara Strobert



7/25/13

Committee Member:

Dr. Anthony Colella



7/25/13

Committee Member:

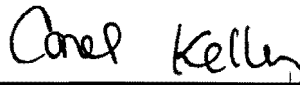
Dr. David Aderhold



7/25/13

Committee Member:

Dr. Carol Kelley



7/25/13

The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate's file and submit a copy with your final dissertation to be bound as page number two.

Abstract

Although small in number, the experiences of African American female principals of predominantly White schools reveal important race and gender issues that could inform the field of education leadership and perhaps encourage more minorities to lead as principals. The purpose of this study is to research the extent to which race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools and to bring more awareness of race and gender-related issues to the education research field, education administration programs, schools districts, and individual administrators, who can better support and encourage African American women to lead all types of schools, regardless of the racial background of the students. Similarly, researching how race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools identifies strategies to better prepare future education leaders, assist current principals who struggle with similar circumstances, and add to the discourse about race and gender in education leadership.

Through semi-structured, open-ended interviews with African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in the Northeast region of the United States and by detailing the personal, education, and professional backgrounds and experiences that influence their leadership, this researcher analyzed their responses through the lens of the Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought. From the study participants' counter-stories, seven themes emerged. Although some of these themes appear to address only the influences of race on their leadership, most of the themes are a result of the participants being both Black and female. When analyzing their counter-stories through the Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought lenses, race or gender may have been magnified in certain experiences, but the race and gender

connection cannot be separated due to the historical significances of being both Black and female in America.

Acknowledgments

I thank God for His strength, comfort, and blessings during this journey.

I thank Dr. Barbara Strobert for mentoring me, seeing the potential of my topic, and making sure that this paper came to fruition.

I would like to thank Dr. Anthony Colella, my university reader, for not allowing different time zones to interfere with his ongoing support and guidance.

Thank you to Dr. David Aderhold, who inspired me to enter education administration and pursue my doctorate. He has always kept me focused.

I would like to thank Dr. Carol Kelley for sharing her professional network with me and praying for me before, during, and even after my doctoral program.

Thank you to Dr. Michael Osnato and Dr. James Caulfield, the keystones of the Seton Hall University's Executive Ed. D. Program in Education Leadership, Management, and Policy. Without you two, this paper would not be.

Thank you to the six study participants who willingly shared their stories with me for this paper. You are a blessing not only to me, but to many African American women who are the "best of the best."

To my father and late mother, thank you for always supporting me and sacrificing so much so I could achieve my dreams. I hope I will always make you proud.

To my sister, thank you for listening to me and then reminding me to get back to work.

To my Seton Hall Sisters of Cohort XV and the women of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, especially from Mu Delta Chapter and Nu Xi Omega Chapter, thank you for the laughs, the tissues, and the reality checks when I needed them. I love you all!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
 CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	
Background of the Problem.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Question.....	7
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Critical Race Theory.....	8
Black Feminist Thought.....	11
Design and Methodology.....	12
Locating Myself in the Study.....	14
Significance of the Study.....	15
Limitations.....	17
Delimitations.....	18
Definitions of Terms.....	19
Summary.....	20
 CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Introduction.....	22
Historical Perspective.....	22
Race Influences in Education Leadership.....	26

Gender Influences in Education Leadership.....	30
Review Methods.....	32
Theoretical Framework.....	33
Limitations of the Review.....	34
Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Literature.....	35
Examination of Current Literature.....	36
Other Dissertations.....	39
Summary.....	42

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study.....	41
Research Design.....	45
Participants.....	46
Measure.....	49
Data Collection.....	52
Interviews.....	53
Data Analysis.....	54
Validity and Reliability.....	55
Limitations and Delimitations.....	57
Summary.....	58

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

Introduction.....	59
Emergent Themes.....	62
Knowing the Predominantly White Community.....	62
Commitment Against Race and Gender Inequalities.....	68
Obligation to the Race.....	72

Leadership for All.....	75
Image of Authority.....	79
Being Race- and Gender-less.....	83
Self Empowerment and Empowerment Through a Support System.....	86
Research Questions.....	93
Summary.....	96
 CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	
Introduction.....	98
Summary of Findings.....	98
Research Questions.....	101
Recommendations for Current Practice.....	106
Education Administration Programs.....	106
School Districts.....	107
Future African American Female Principals.....	108
Recommendations for Policy.....	109
Governmental Policies.....	110
School Districts' Board Policies.....	110
Recommendations for Future Research.....	110
Variation of Grade Level or Geographic Region.....	111
Former Principals of Predominantly White Schools.....	111
Inclusion of Males and Other Ethnic Groups.....	112
Inclusion of Predominantly White School Districts' Perspective.....	112
Epilogue.....	114
REFERENCES.....	115

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Interview Guide.....	127
APPENDIX B. Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board Informed Consent Form.....	128

List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Study Participants' Demographics.....	49
Table 2. Interview Questions Based on Theoretical Framework.....	51
Table 3. Overview Procedures Used To Collect Data.....	53
Table 4. Content Analysis Codes.....	55
Table 5. Coding Analysis.....	61

List of Figures

Figure 1. Coding Process.....	60.
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the role of school principal has been held by White males, with females, specifically White females, as teachers, and schools consisting mostly of White students (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Brown, 2005; Tillman, 2004). According to the RAND Corporation (2004), there were about 110,000 principals in the 1999-2000 school year, with 76% being public school principals and the majority of those principals leading elementary schools. In the same school year, 44% of all public school principals were female, an increase from 35% in 1993–1994 and from 25% in 1987–1988. In 1999-2000, 55% of the public school female principals were elementary school leaders, and nearly 18% of public school principals were members of a non-White minority. Eight years later, in 2008, the number of non-White, minority principals remained at approximately 18%, although the enrollment of minority students steadily approached 50% (Battle & Gruber, 2009).

As the racial demographics of public schools change, the racial make-up of public school principals should also change, but non-White, minority principals are leading schools where the majority of the student body is similar to their own racial identity (Holloway, 2011; McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). According to the National Center of Education Statistics (2006), the majority of African American principals are leading predominantly Black schools in urban areas; and the research shows that African American female principals are more likely to be hired to lead a predominantly Black school than a predominantly White school.

African American female principals are a growing group within education leadership, but they are usually found leading large, urban schools that are

underperforming on standardized tests and have insufficient amounts of funding, instructional materials, and certified teachers (Brown, 2005; Taylor, 2004). Researchers have claimed that African American women take these leadership roles because they have a goal of “salvaging their own people” and have created strategies to empower themselves and better the experiences of their students, staff, and the communities they serve (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). However, African American principals of predominantly White schools also face challenges, and the literature about African American female principals of predominantly White school is limited (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006). Most education leadership literature focuses on the disparities between White male leaders and White female leaders, White male leaders and African American male leaders, or African American male leaders and African American female leaders of predominantly urban, African American schools. African American female principals of predominantly White schools face important race and gender issues that could inform the field of education leadership and perhaps encourage more minorities to lead as principals (Beckford-Bennett, 2009).

Background of the Problem

In the business world, race and gender have been extensively researched separately; but more recently, researchers have explored how the dynamics of race and gender interact in corporate workplaces (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Catalyst, an organization that conducts research on women in the workplace, identified several findings of racism and sexism among 23 focus groups in their 2004 report entitled *Advancing African American Women in the Workplace: What Managers Need to Know*. Although the research was conducted with 936 African American women from Fortune 1000

companies, the following findings may be transferrable to African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools:

1. Encountering negative, racial stereotypes; questioning of their credibility and authority; and experiencing lack of support from their corporations
2. Being a “double outsider” to informal networks. For example, unlike the White women or African American men, who shared either gender or race in common with the majority of their colleagues, the African American women reported being excluded from these relationships
3. Surpassing performance expectations, finding connections to mentors, managers, and colleagues; and manipulating their cultural backgrounds in order to enhance their positions. (pp. 7-8).

Ultimately, the Catalyst (2004) study confirmed that unlike the “glass ceiling” broken by many White women in the business world, Black women have to jackhammer the “concrete ceiling” of race and gender in order to move up the corporate ladder (p. 3). Sherman (1993) also posits this phenomenon of racism and sexism against African American women in corporations through his allegorical “rock ceiling.” Other researchers have also shown that this experience is seen in education administration for African American female leaders (Campbell, 2010; Peters, Kinsey, & Malloy, 2004; Scinto, 2006).

Reed and Evans (2008) posit that “African American female principals may confront racism and sexism from their White and African American constituents, as well as complex and intersecting racialized and gendered role expectations above and beyond those expected of other administrators” (p. 488). For example, according to researchers,

African American female principals are marginalized as education leaders by being placed in poor and failing schools and expected to discipline students and increase student achievement, even though they are excluded from decision-making processes such as curriculum changes or distribution of resources (Brown, 2005; Taylor, 2004). Similarly, "Colleagues know little about who they are, where they come from, and how their career and life experiences set them apart. Some assume Black women and Caucasian women share similar professional and personal histories because they share the same gender. Others see race as the key variable and assume the experiences of the Black Woman mirror the experiences of their Black male colleagues" (Scinto, 2006, p. 21). However, African American women have a dual identity of being both Black and a woman; and, as a result, their experiences may be influenced by both race and gender discrimination and prejudices.

Even though the face of education leadership has changed from exclusively White males to more females, there is limited representation of the experiences of African American female leaders in education research. According to Taylor (2004) and Beckford-Bennett (2009), African American female principals are excluded from academic texts about education leadership, and it is necessary to research African American female principals in order to validate their experiences as education leaders. More specifically, by researching the experiences of African American female principals who lead predominantly White schools, the discussion of race and gender in education leadership can include the challenges and successes of a different type of leadership (Rolle, Davies, & Banning, 2010).

As Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, and Ballenger (2007) revealed in their empirical research of female administrators, meaningful research on the influence of gender on education leadership must be seen through the female theoretical lens rather than just comparing male and female leadership styles. As a result, research on African American female principals should also come from a racial theoretical lens specific to African American females rather than a comparison of White female leadership to African American female leadership.

Ultimately, shedding light on the experiences of African American female principals of predominantly White schools brings the needed attention to African American female leaders, who are underrepresented in the actual administrative field (Bridges, 2010; Brown, 2005; Campbell, 2010; Scinto, 2006). Similarly, this research is necessary to document how African American female principals conquer the hurdles of race and gender in their predominantly White settings and then, hopefully, cause more African American females to pursue administrative positions (Campbell, 2010; Scinto, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

In 1954, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* started the desegregation of public schools in the United States, but it did not eliminate discrimination in education or education leadership. Racism in the era of desegregation caused many African- American principals to be dismissed from their existing positions and caused others to be not even considered for new ones (Brown, 2005; McCray et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004). Holloway (2011) states that "In one southeastern state, there was a 99% decrease in the number of African American principals between 1963 and 1973.

More specifically, in the same state, the number of African American principals went from 209 individuals to 3” (p. 5). During the 1980s, more African American principals steadily began leading schools again; however, most of the schools were in predominantly urban and minority areas. Similarly, most of the Black principals were male and still underrepresented compared to the number of White principals of urban school districts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Unfortunately, the majority of the education research on African American leadership still focuses on male principals of predominantly urban, public schools with mostly African American and Hispanic student bodies (McCray et al., 2007). If researchers expand their context of African American leadership to female principals of predominantly White schools, they will develop a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics of African American principals as well as of women (Tillman, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the extent to which race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools. African American females in education leadership positions in predominantly White schools have to work with students, parents, and staff of a different background and are faced with unique challenges due to their race and gender; however, their experiences are underrepresented in education research (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006). By bringing more awareness of race and gender-related issues to the education research field, education administration programs, schools districts, and individual administrators can better support and encourage African

American women to lead all types of schools, regardless of the racial background of the students (Campbell, 2010; DeJarnette 1992; Germany, 2005; Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009). Similarly, by researching how race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools, strategies are identified to better prepare future education leaders, assist current principals who struggle with similar circumstances, and add to the discourse about race and gender in education leadership (Alton, 2000; Germany, 2005; Kowalski & Stouder, 1999).

Research Questions

1. How do African American female principals perceive race and gender influences on their leadership of predominantly White schools?
2. What are the challenges faced by African American female principals who lead predominantly White schools?
3. How do African American female principals address race and gender challenges in predominantly White schools?

Conceptual Framework

According to Banton (2000), race is a socially constructed category to identify differences among people, and gender is often determined by biology; but both categories are based on a “set of assumptions and beliefs on both individual and societal levels that affect the thoughts, feelings, behaviors, resources, and treatment” of people (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 16). As a result, leadership studies on race and gender have been viewed through the perspective of the dominant race and gender, the White male experience (Parker, 2005). When research is based on race and gender outside of the White male majority, culturally sensitive methodologies and conceptual frameworks, such as Critical

Race Theory (CRT) and Black Feminist Thought (BFT), are needed. These culturally sensitive research methodologies will assist in the exploration of the societal influences of race and gender in the leadership styles of African American female principals of predominantly White schools (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003).

Critical Race Theory

In the 1970s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) developed from the legal ideology of critical legal studies (CLS) and radical feminism which addressed the racism that appeared in the United States judicial system (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Critical Race Theory “distinguishes the consciousness of racial minorities and acknowledges the feelings and intangible modes of perception unique to those who have historically been socially, structurally, and intellectually marginalized in the United States” (Barnes, 1990, p. 1894). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) then used Critical Race Theory in education research in order to identify how race influences behaviors, systems, and relationships within education structures.

More specifically, Critical Race theorists recognize that the experiential knowledge of African Americans, or any person of color, is essential in understanding how race influences education. In fact, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) identify that “racism is endemic in U.S. society. It is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically and reinforces traditional ways of thinking and being, which omit the experiences of people of color” and, as a result, advocate that “narrative research in education be utilized to prove comparable insights into the education system” (p. 235). Through the following five components of Critical Race Theory, the experiences of minorities are validated and researchers can authentically explore the effects of racism

and sexism from the minority perspective: *counter-storytelling*, *permanence of racism*, *Whiteness as property*, *interest convergence*, and *critique of liberalism*. Ultimately, it is through these five components of Critical Race Theory that education leadership discourse will be broadened to include the influences of race and gender.

Counter-storytelling is the main source of research based on Critical Race Theory (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; McCray et al., 2007). Counter-storytelling is a means of challenging the beliefs of the majority and giving marginalized groups an opportunity to communicate their own experiences in their own words (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These counter-stories can be told through personal narratives, biographies, or parables (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

Another element of Critical Race Theory is the *permanence of racism* and the realization that racism has a dominant role in American society and, as a result, in the education system (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; McCray et al., 2007). Many CRT scholars have found that the overt racial acts of lynching and Jim Crow have been replaced by today's hiring and placement practices of African American administrators and the disciplinary actions towards African American students (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; McCray et al., 2007; Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

The permanence of racism is also often associated with another CRT concept, *Whiteness as property*. This concept, Whiteness as property, can best be described as the privileges White people have due to their race. Harris (1993) explains that these privileges stemmed from the legal term of property functions: the right of possession, the right to use, the right to disposition, the right to transfer, the right of use and enjoyment,

and the right of exclusion. Some researchers have found that in education, access to honors and advanced placement curricula falls under Whiteness as property since most White families have the financial means to pay for tutoring and offer other life experiences that support the rigor of these classes (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Interest convergence is the fourth component of Critical Race Theory and explains that although the interest of the majority converges with the interest of the minority in order to establish some type of equity, the majority still has the power to negotiate how much of the equity is achieved (Milner, 2008). An example of interest convergence would be the desegregation of schools after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling when African American children were displaced from their home schools and bussed to predominantly White schools. On the administrative level, African American principals of predominantly Black schools were also demoted from their leadership roles, while White principals lead their schools (McCray et al., 2007).

The last component of Critical Race Theory is the *critique of liberalism*. In this component, CRT scholars often challenge the notions of color-blindness, celebrations of multiculturalism and diversity, and promotion of equality in education. They see these concepts as attempts to cover up racism and falsely portray that all races have the same value in schools. Close scrutiny of these concepts reveals that they are actually slow, incremental changes controlled by the majority and do not dismantle the racial structures necessary to move towards social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Black Feminist Thought

In the United States, “Black feminism emerged in response to the racial oppression” African American women “experienced within the Women’s Movement . . . [and] . . . the sexual oppression they experienced within the Civil Rights Movements” (Peters, 2003, p. 13). This oppression that African American women experienced “often render[ed] them invisible in the eyes of their oppressors” (Peters, 2003, p. 13). Collins (2000) theorizes that this oppression of race and gender occurs within the following five dimensions: (a) the presentation of an alternative social construct based on African American women’s experiences, (b) a commitment to fighting against race and gender inequality, (c) recognition of women’s legacy of struggle, (d) the promotion of empowerment through voice, visibility, and self-definition, and (e) a belief in the interdependence of thought and action (as cited in Smith, 2008, p. 5).

To be more specific, Black Feminist Thought proposes that people other than African American women shape the identity of Black women through negative images that are perpetuated over time. For example, Collins (2000) explains that Black women remain oppressed through the images of “mammies, Jezebels, and breeder women of slavery to the smiling Aunt Jemimas on pancake mix boxes, ubiquitous Black prostitutes, and . . . welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture” (p. 6). As a result, African American women feel it is important that “self-valuation, self-definition, and knowledge validation” from life experiences replace these stereotypical images (Smith, 2008, p. 5).

Similarly, Black Feminist Thought acknowledges the “multifaceted identities” of African American women which originate from a legacy of struggle for Black women in this society (Collins, 2000). In other words, as a result of a history of being denied the

right to vote, to hold political office, or to attend particular education institutions, African American women still do not receive the same rights as their White female or male counterparts.

Last, Black Feminist Thought encourages African American women to identify, redefine, explain, and share experiences of racism and sexism that may be unique to their experiences (Collins, 2000; Smith, 2008; Taylor, 2004). As a result, it is essential that this researcher study the experiences of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools and broaden the understanding of race and gender on education leadership through the unique experiences of this invisible group.

Design and Methodology

In order to thoroughly explore the race and gender influences on the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools, this study used a cross-sectional, qualitative design. "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Qualitative research, through interviews, provides the depth needed to describe and understand the meaning of these experiences.

For this study, the researcher used semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. "The questions on a semi-structured interview guide are preformulated, but the answers to those questions are open-ended; they can be fully expanded at the discretion of the interviewer and the interviewee" (Schensul, LeCompte, Nastasi, & Borgatti, 1999, p. 149). The semi-structured interview structure allows the interviewer to predetermine the questions around particular theories and factors, while the open-ended questions

allow the participants the opportunity to further explain and deepen their responses (Patton, 2000; Weiss, 1995). By using the semi-structured, open-ended interview guide within the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, the researcher had the opportunity to present authentic counter-stories of African American female principals who work within the constructs of predominantly White elementary schools. Ultimately, using this type of interview guide allowed the researcher to provide detailed descriptions, multiple perspectives, and varied interpretations of how race and gender influence education leadership.

Since very few African American principals are leading predominantly White schools, this qualitative study used a purposeful, unique snowball sampling in order to obtain participants (Brown, 2005; Holloway, 2011; McCray et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004). Merriam (2009) explains that "a unique sample is based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 78). Since African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools are underrepresented on a national level for education leadership, the researcher used her professional affiliations in the Northeast to communicate to principals about her study and asked for potential participants. "By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (Patton, 2000, p. 237).

The following is the selection criteria for participants:

- Female African American principal
- Served as an education leader for at least three full school years
- Had served or is presently serving in the capacity of a principal of a

predominantly White elementary school in the northeast region of the United States.

In an effort to maintain the integrity of these participants and provide validity and reliability to the research on African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, data were collected through interviews and literature review. The interviews supported the counter-storytelling within Critical Race Theory and gave the participants an opportunity to communicate their own experiences in their own words (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Similarly, data collected from the interviews and literature review under Black Feminist Thought gave the African American female principals a voice to publicly recognize how race and gender influenced their leadership in predominantly White schools.

After data were collected from the interviews, the researcher used directed content analysis to code themes from the data because “the goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought served as coding categories for the initial coding of the data. In Keeping with the directed content analysis approach, statements from the interviews were highlighted as categories from Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, while statements that could not be coded under the theoretical categories were coded with new categories and later analyzed as either refuting or supporting the theories.

Locating Myself in the Study

Attending primary and secondary schools where I was one of only a few African American female students, I experienced firsthand how race and gender influences

predominantly White education systems. At times my experiences were negative, but despite these challenges, I continued to attend predominantly White schools and became an English teacher. I purposely applied to diverse high schools in order to find inclusion in a racially harmonious education environment; but unfortunately I was still one of only a few African American educators, and my professional experience drastically varied from my White colleagues. Now as I conclude my sixth year as an administrator, I work in a racially diverse school district and have seen more African American female educators employed than I encountered growing up, while teaching, or even while studying to become an administrator.

Although my current school district is not predominantly White, nor is it predominantly African American, I cannot help but question if the African American female educators feel the same influences of race and gender as I once felt and still feel. I desire to find other African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in order to confirm how my leadership style, decision-making, and interactions with stakeholders are influenced by race and gender. I desire to know what secrets they hold to counter and conquer the racial and gender barriers that are intentionally and unintentionally set within their leadership journeys. Overall, I hope to understand myself as a leader by understanding their leadership.

Significance of the Study

Research on African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools is important because these schools are microcosms of a “gendered and racist society” (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000, as cited in Peters, 2003, p. 15). Unfortunately, limited research is available on these school leaders, and Tyack and

Hansot (1982) have labeled this a “conspiracy of silence.” This “conspiracy of silence” allows African American women to be omitted from the education leadership research discourse; and, as a result, this exclusion perpetuates the idea that African American women are not effective leaders, are only effective in predominantly minority settings, or are perhaps not even interested in these leadership positions (Peters, 2003). Peters (2003) offers the following reasons for studying the leadership of African American principals in her dissertation entitled *A Case Study of an African American Female Principal Participating in an Administrative Leadership Academy*:

1. It is important to understand how a racist and gendered society influences institutions such as schools.
2. Since little data has been collected “specifically” and “consistently” about African American females in education leadership, information is needed to accurately reflect changes in the profession.
3. Including African American women in the discussion on education leadership dispels erroneous notions that they lack interest in leadership positions and that they are ineffective leaders.
4. Including African American women in the discussion on education leadership is the key to understanding the “multiple jeopardies” or “multiple burdens” that influence their opportunities to acquire leadership positions (as cited in Smith, 2008, p. 7).

Although Peters’ (2003) study focused on African American female principals in a leadership academy, her research participants, like many other participants in other studies, recounted their leadership experiences in predominantly African American,

urban settings. By expanding the research to include African American female principals of predominantly White schools, this researcher can provide further information on race and gender for education leadership programs so they can reflect on their existing or non-existent preparation courses. Similarly, school districts could use the findings to evaluate their resources of support for their minority education leaders. Finally, this research provides experiential insight for future African American female principals who may have opportunities to work in predominantly White schools.

Limitations

The following are limitations to researching this topic:

1. Although the researcher is an African American female administrator in neither a predominantly White school nor a predominantly Black school, she still brings her own bias to the study. It should be noted that researcher's bias is present in any study; however, the extent to which bias interferes with the study's findings are made clear and transparent to the reader.
2. Only African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools are included in this study. As a result, generalizations cannot be made for African American female principals in predominantly White middle and high school settings.
3. Although the researcher would have liked to interview as many participants as possible, African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools is a relatively small population across the nation; therefore, the researcher limited districts to the Northeast region of the United States, to which the researcher could easily travel within a three-hour

timeframe. In addition, the district superintendents had to approve the researcher's request to conduct the study with their principals, and the principals had to agree to be interviewed. Ultimately, only six out of the sixteen education leaders in the Northeast region of the United States received approval from their superintendents and agreed to be interviewed; consequently, the sample size of the principals is small and four different districts are represented in the study. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to African American female principals of predominantly White elementary, middle, or high schools in other geographic locations in the United States.

Delimitations

1. In order to gather broad experiences and yet establish a more intimate connection with the participants through face-to-face interviews, the researcher limited participant selection to African American female principals, who varied in age, years of experience, and school type and resided within three hours of the researcher.
2. Some participants were pre-identified as a result of a snowball sampling within the personal and professional circles of the researcher. The dissertation topic and participant criteria were shared with other administrators and contact information of three potential participants was given to this researcher. As a result, these participants were already aware of the context of the research.

3. This researcher used a digital recorder to ensure accuracy of the participants' stories. Transcripts of the interviews were made and reviewed by the participants for accuracy.
4. Although the topic of race and gender in leadership is quite controversial, the researcher is not concerned with lack of cooperation by the participants. The researcher has the same background and professional experience as some of the participants, and thus this researcher easily established trust with participants.

5. Definition of Terms

African American - a United States citizen who is described as African American or Black, Non-Hispanic by the United States Census Bureau. This term will be interchangeably used with "Black."

Black Feminist Thought (BFT) - defined by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) as a method to explore experiences of African American women and to give "greater recognition of the interplay of race, class, and gender in shaping women's oppression" (p. 241).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) - the conceptual framework that analyzes how race influences behaviors, systems, and relationships within education institutions. The five components of CRT are *counter-storytelling*, *permanence of racism*, *Whiteness as property*, *interest convergence*, and *critique of liberalism*.

Elementary School - primary school for kindergarten through fifth grade students.

Predominantly African American school - a school in which more than 40% of the student body and staff identify with the United States Census Bureau's term African American or Black, non-Hispanic.

Predominantly White School - a school in which more than 40% of the student body and staff identify with the United States Census Bureau's term White, non-Hispanic.

Principal - the main building administrator of a school. This term will be interchangeably used with "education leader" and "administrator," which may include department supervisors, directors, or superintendents.

White - a United States citizen who is described as White, non-Hispanic by the United States Census Bureau. This term will be interchangeably used with "majority."

Summary

Chapter I of this study discusses how African American female principals of predominantly White schools are underrepresented in the education leadership practice as well as in education research. To thoroughly explore how race and gender influences this particular leadership role, the researcher interviewed African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in the northeast region of the United States. The research findings may lead education leadership programs to reflect on how race and gender are discussed in their preparation courses, school districts may use the findings to evaluate their resources for minority education leaders, and future African American female principals may receive valuable experiential information on a different type of education leadership.

Chapter II contains a relevant literature review on the historical perspective of African Americans in education leadership as well as a literature review, through a Critical Race and Black Feminist theoretical perspective, on the influence of race, gender, and the combination of the two on the leadership of African American principals, female principals, and African American female principals.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief historical review of African Americans and public school education, including a description of the impact of significant federal legislation on African American principals. The chapter also provides a brief overview of the representation of African American principals across the United States and the racially-influenced circumstances surrounding their leadership. A similar overview of female principals across the United States is also provided in the chapter, with a brief description of gender-based influences that impact their leadership. The methodology for the literature search is then provided, stating the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of literature and identifying the limitations of the literature review. Throughout the chapter, literature is critiqued through a Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought lens, and a review of the theoretical frameworks is provided. Last, the chapter concludes with a review of dissertations on African American female principals of predominantly Black and predominantly White schools and how this dissertation distinguishes itself from other studies.

Historical Perspective

Although slavery prohibited the education of African Americans, some Christian slave-owners, abolitionists, and ministers educated slaves; and those slaves taught other slaves how to read and write (Alston, 2005; Shakeshaft, 1987). After the Emancipation Proclamation, former slaves sought their right to formal education and were successful through schools established by the Freeman's Bureau (Tillman, 2004). These Black

schools were known as “freedom schools” and were often subject to violence from Whites, who were opposed to educating freed slaves. Eventually, these “freedom schools” lost their funding, and some schools continued only through private financial contributions (Pollard, 1997). These Black schools were then led by highly respected leaders in the Black community or former ministers (Brown, 2005). These African American principals acted as liaisons for White school boards and superintendents, but because the White school leaders had a lack of interest in Black schools, African American principals had the power to make the ultimate decision in hiring and curriculum choice. This “invaluable presence of African Americans as education leaders was crucial for the academic success of the children and the economic and social development of the African American community” (Brown, 2005, p. 9). Principals chose to teach academics along with manual labor skills; and, as a result, the U.S. Census survey of 1940 showed that 1,000 lawyers, 3,500 medical doctors, 17,000 ministers, and 63,000 teachers made up Black professionals (Brown & Beckett, 2007; Fairclough, 2001). These data show that “despite school segregation and harassment from the White population, the African American population of the United States made one of the greatest education advances in the history of education” after emancipation (Spring, 2004, p. 191).

The successes of several African American professionals from segregated Black schools, however, did not excuse the fact that the education received by African Americans was not equal to the education provided to White Americans. According to Critical Race Theory, the education system in America was controlled by the majority; thus, the permanence of racism was manifested by providing African Americans with

poor quality learning conditions and limited education resources (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; McCray et al., 2007). Although the 1954 ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* affirmed that segregated schools were not “separate but equal,” the U.S. Supreme Court mandated desegregation because “separate education facilities are inherently unequal” and to separate African American students from White students “of similar age qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority” (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954). Essentially, the U.S. Supreme Court justified that an integrated school, with a diverse student body, was more beneficial for students of color than a segregated school. The 1964 Civil Rights Act further forced integration by applying a financial consequence of no federal funding for any school that refused to desegregate (Brown, 2005). Despite these legislative attempts to make education more equitable through integration, racism still influenced the education systems and African Americans still felt subordinate to the majority White race (Smith & Lemasters, 2010).

When desegregation occurred, inadequate African American schools were shut down and Black students had to attend predominantly White schools. There was also “the flight of White students and teachers from the public schools to private White segregationist academies” (Karpinski, 2006, p. 259). Subsequently, the enrollment in predominantly White and African American schools decreased and the leadership of African American principals, both male and female, was greatly affected (Foster, 2004; Haney, 1978; Karpinski, 2006; Tillman, 2004). “In one southeastern state, there was a 99% decrease in the number of African American principals between 1963 and 1973. More specifically, in the same state, the number of African American principals went from 209 individuals to 3” (Holloway, 2011, p. 5). According to Critical Race Theory,

this drastic reduction of African American principals was a result of widespread racism and interest convergence (McCray et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004). White school districts had the power to displace Black principals with uncertified and inexperienced White candidates and were given the right to dismiss Black educators “with or without cause . . . hearing and . . . appeal” (Karpinski, 2006, p. 245). Some African American principals were even demoted to assistant principals, teachers, coaches, office clerks, or janitors (Holloway, 2011; Karpinski, 2006; Tillman, 2004; Toppo, 2004). If an African American principal was fortunate enough to keep his or her job, the principal’s leadership ability due to his or her race was still called into question (Pettigrew, Jemmott, & Johnson, 1984). For example, in Bonner’s (1982) *A Black Principal’s Struggle To Survive*, Bonner references a school handbook that stated, “In the absence of the superintendent, all decisions made on Shurling campus should be discussed with the White principal, who would act as the superintendent” (p. 49).

Not only did African American principals lose their leadership role, status, and authoritarian power, this loss also translated to a loss of advocates for African American students (Tillman, 2004). According to Loder (2005), African American students were victims of discrimination, and Black families felt that the newly integrated schools “disenfranchised, ignored, over-disciplined, resegregated, and undereducated African American children” (Reed & Evans, 2008, p. 489). Although integration on the surface provided African American students an opportunity to a quality education, Critical Race Theory’s critique of liberalism reveals that integration was still controlled by the majority and that African American students and teachers who attended integrated schools were still treated unfairly and did not have a Black education leader to address the racial issues

that disrupted their learning experiences (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Haney, 1978; Smith & Lemasters, 2010).

Despite Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, and ethnicity in professional staffing in public schools receiving federal funds and U.S. Executive Order 11246 (1965) requiring organizations receiving federal funds to take affirmative action in their hiring practices, the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Education Association (NEA) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) joined forces in 1971 to advocate against the illegal displacement of Black principals in the desegregated school districts to the Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity of the U. S. Senate (Brown, 2011; Karpinski, 2006). By bringing legislative attention to the racist practices of many school districts, African American principals were largely reappointed to their leadership positions during the late 1970s; however, the majority race still controlled hiring practices, and African Americans were mostly given principal positions in predominantly, urban African American schools (Brown & Beckett, 2007; Delpit, 1995; Franklin, 1994; Jones, 2002; McCray et al., 2007).

Race Influences in Education Leadership

Forty years after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, data from the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) suggest that the Critical Race Theory component of permanence of racism is still in place when hiring African American principals (Holloway, 2011). The report indicates that African American principals have a higher percentage of aspiring principal programs and administrative internships as well as trainings in evaluation and supervision and management techniques than their White

counterparts; yet the number of African American principals leading schools are significantly below the number of practicing White principals (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, from 1980-1981, there were 85,982 public schools in the United States; and African American principals represented 7.7% or 3,320 principals nationwide (Brown, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Seven year later, from 1987 to 1988, there were 77,890 public school principals; and 67,460 of those principals were White, while only 6,655 principals were African American. During the 1990–1991 academic year, there were 78,890 public school principals; 67,794 were White principals, and 6,770 were African American. In 1993-1994, there were 79,618 public school principals; and the number of African American principals dramatically increased to 8,018, while the number of White principals decreased to 67,081 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Ten years later, the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) further indicated that in 2003-2004, there were 87,620 public schools in the United States; and 72,200 of the principals were White, while 9,250 were African American. “During the same time period, 3,830 public schools were added to the education landscape in the United States; however, the data show that the total number of African American principals during the same time only increased by ten” from three years prior (Holloway, 2011, p. 28).

Looking more closely at the National Center for Education Statistics’ data from 1993-1994, 19,027 principals were working in urban school districts; and 24.3% were African American principals, compared to 65.4% who were White principals. The percentage of African American principals in suburban school districts was only 8.8% compared to

84.9% for White principals. Within the same year, 93.1% of White principals served in rural towns, with 3.8% of Black principals in the same type of community (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Fourteen years later, for the 2007–2008 academic year, the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) reported 21,560 principals working in urban public schools; 21.1% were African American principals, and 62.9% were White principals, while 10% of Black principals were now working in suburban settings, with 81.7% of White principals remaining in the suburban districts. Black principals in towns were 7.2%; and 5.1% of Black principals worked in rural areas, with 86.7% and 90.6% of White principals working in the town and rural communities, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Regardless of the year and community type, African American principals are still highly underrepresented across the nation. “The shortage of African American leaders can be directly linked to several factors including shortages of African American teachers who will enter the leadership pipeline, a lack of mentoring of African American teachers for leadership positions, [lack of] recruitment and retention of African Americans into leadership preparation programs, and [lack of] the preparation and appointment of African American leaders” (Brown, 2005, p. 586). Some African Americans may be dissuaded from entering the principal profession because they see the majority of African American principals being placed at schools in “large, urban school districts that are underfunded, have sparse resources, significant numbers of uncertified teachers, and student underachievement” (F. Brown, 2005, p. 587).

Although some researchers have found that African American principals should be leading predominantly African American schools because they understand Black family

life, foster community relationships, act as role models for African Americans students, and present a unique perspective for the teaching staff, they also face a number of challenges that, according to Critical Race Theory, are explained by the permanence of racism and Whiteness as property concepts (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Brown, 2005; Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Lomotey, 1993; Mack, 2010; McCray et al., 2007; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Pollard, 1997; Tillman, 2004). As the data from the National Center for Education Statistics show, White Americans are still controlling education; and White principals are not only leading predominantly White suburban and rural schools, they are also leading predominantly African American urban schools and thus perpetuating the idea that African American principals cannot effectively lead schools (McCray et al., 2007). If African American principals are given the opportunity to lead, they are mostly given predominantly African American urban schools, where the students often perform poorly on standardized tests and their schools are not adequately funded (McCray et al., 2007). However, in order “to promote equality and justice today, Black principals, more than any other group of Black Americans with elite status according to mainstream definitions, need to reject these assumptions and contend that all blacks deserve equal opportunity and respect within American society” (Vinzant, 2009, p. 29).

If African Americans are hired as school principals, especially of predominantly White schools, they will be presented with additional challenges such as “lack of peer acceptance, being subjected to both subtle and overt acts of racism, subordinates’ challenging their authority, limitations of decision-making responsibilities, subjection to higher performance-level criteria, and a lack of role models” (Brown, 2005, p. 31).

African American principals of predominantly White schools face even more race-related

issues than Black principals of predominantly Black schools. Vinzant (2009) explains that African American principals of predominantly White schools have to “simultaneously lead their schools toward education excellence while reconciling their interpretations of others’ perceptions of their leadership” (p. 7). His findings also supported DuBois’ (1903) concept of “double consciousness,” in which African Americans identify with the Black world, but have to work within a White world and carefully balance the two worlds without creating an overt favoritism for either one (Vinzant, 2009). As Jones (1983) explains, African American principals must remember that “. . . they must . . . be smart but not too smart, confident but not too confident, honest and trusted by both minority and majority colleagues, and courageous about racial issues, but not too threatening to the majority” (as cited in Bell, 2004, p. 20). Ultimately, Holloway (2011) found in his study that African American principals of predominantly White schools were aware of the Critical Race Theory of Whiteness as property and understood that their White counterparts have rights and privileges because of their skin color; but as African Americans, “Every action and every decision was analyzed under a microscope of racism” (p. 148).

Gender Influences in Education Leadership

According to Flexner & Fitzpatrick (1996), there was a shift in the 1900s when women went from being housewives to full-time employees; and they attributed this shift to national financial crises and world wars that impacted the entire household, women receiving the right to choose to bear children, kitchens becoming more modernized, and ultimately a new heightened desire among women to leave their traditional home-bound roles (Bansuelos, 2008). Similarly, when women were given the right to vote in 1920, it

was “a critical step for women to gain human dignity and the recognition that women had the facility to think, the ability to make logical judgments, and had skill for social responsibility and effective action” (Bansuelos, 2008, p. 22). Although the Nineteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendment Acts of 1972 were passed in order to give women an equal opportunity in employment and education, legislation could not curtail the discrimination experienced by female school leaders.

In the 1980s and 1990s, several researchers found that women were still not seen as leaders of schools, but rather still as teachers in schools (Brown, 2011; Campbell, 2010; Colbert, 2009; Smith, 2010). This is also shown in the National Center of Education Statistics (2009) where, in 1986, 69% of the teachers were female; and within ten years, the number rose to 74%. However, this drastic rise is only seen at the classroom level; in 1988, the percentage of female principals went from 41.2% to only 43.8% in 2000. Similarly, according to the National Center of Education Statistics (2006), female superintendents were at the height of their profession, with 18% representation nationwide.

Restine (1993) attributes these statistics to the discriminatory hiring practices against females and found that female school leaders were “placed in dead-end positions such as elementary principal, supervisor, and director or assistant superintendent of special programs where discipline is assumed not to be a major problem” (as cited in Colbert, 2009, p. 25). Logan (1989) also found that women were more likely to be hired as elementary-school principals than as secondary-school principals and seldom filled the superintendent positions because they were thought to lack the assertiveness needed for

these leadership positions (Brown, 2011; Campbell, 2010; Colbert, 2009; Smith, 2010). These sexist beliefs then led education researchers to explore the actual leadership differences between women and men (Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

For example, Shakeshaft (1989) found that women utilized an inclusive participatory style in decision-making, while men used a more authoritarian, top-down approach. Gilligan (1993) also reported that men tend to view work in a logical, task-oriented fashion, while women viewed work within the context of building relationships. According to Shakeshaft et al. (2007), "These studies compared female and male administrative styles and behavior and were undertaken in an effort to accumulate a knowledge base that would document female capability as equal to or better than male capability" (p. 105). However, when education researchers started using theoretical frameworks from a feminist perspective, the research was no longer comparative between the genders but widened the understanding of female leadership by validating the experiences of female education leaders. Subsequently, it is through this research that more female educators will be hired to lead schools because as Brown and Irby (2005) explain, "the more we know about women in leadership roles, how they obtain their positions, and how they have become successful, the greater the likelihood of increasing the numbers in the field" (as cited in Shakeshaft et al., 2007, p. 105).

Review Methods

In order to review literature about African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, the researcher used the ProQuest, ERIC, JSTOR, National Center for Education Statistics online databases; SetonCat (the general resource catalog at Seton Hall University's Walsh Library), and print and online editions

of education journals. When articles could not be retrieved in full-text format from any of the above online databases or when articles of interest were listed in the references of other literature and were not available in the Walsh Library collection, the researcher used Google searches to find copies and purchased the electronic and hard copies. The researcher also used the following keywords: *predominantly White schools, school principals, education leaders, school administrators, Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Thought, Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology, female, women, and leadership*, which were entered in multiple combinations with an AND Boolean Operator and the terms *minority, African American, African American, OR Black* to locate literature in the databases listed previously.

Theoretical Framework

After locating and reading articles and dissertations on African Americans female principals, the researcher noticed that Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought emerged as common theoretical frameworks in the literature. With further studying, the researcher found that Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced the Critical Race Theory to the world of education research in order to expose the social inequalities from the overt and covert racism in education. Since Critical Race Theory “implies that race should be the center focus and charges researchers to critique school practices and policies” in order to bring about social change, most education researchers use counter-storytelling as a qualitative methodology to identify the permanence of racism in education (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 30). Counter-storytelling, usually presented through interviews, authenticates the racist education experiences of African Americans; however, the other Critical Race Theory concepts, such as Whiteness as property, interest

convergence, and critique of liberalism, must also be used in order to thoroughly evaluate the actual education practices and policies that benefit the White majority race and oppress the Black minority race (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, & Parker, 2002; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Tate, 1997).

Black Feminist Thought developed because research failed to acknowledge that the “work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African American women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female” (Collins, 1989, p. 747). Prior to Black Feminist Thought, researchers deemed the experiences of African American women as inferior to the experiences of the majority, dominant groups of White males, White females, and African American males (Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Hooks, 2001; Taylor, 2004; Walker, 1983). Like Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Thought as a theoretical framework is intended to empower social change by presenting the experiences of African American women and identifying the race, gender, and class oppressions of African American women (Barnes, 2003; Collins, 2000; Taylor, 2004).

Limitations of the Review

Two years ago, when the researcher considered researching the topic of female African American education leaders of predominantly White schools, the ProQuest online search revealed articles and dissertations about female African American higher education presidents of predominantly White universities. The researcher further specified the search to school principals and found mostly articles and dissertations on African American female principals of predominantly Black schools. In the research sections of these studies, many of the researchers suggested replicating their studies with

African American female principals of predominantly White schools and this researcher's literature search over the next two years had that topic in mind. Two years later, more dissertations about African American female principals of predominantly White schools appeared, and more dissertations will continue to appear after the publication of this dissertation; however, this researcher decided to distinguish her dissertation by limiting the literature review with the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Literature

In conducting this literature review, the following literature was included:

- Peer-reviewed studies from education research journals
- Evidence-based commentary in peer-reviewed journals
- Books and book chapters on race and education
- Books and book chapters on gender and education
- Books and book chapters on African American education leadership
- Books and book chapters on Critical Race Theory
- Books and book chapters on qualitative research
- Peer-reviewed journal articles on Black Feminist Thought
- Government reports on education
- Evidence-based commentary from focus groups
- Dissertations

Although most of the literature was published in peer-reviewed journals or dissertations within twelve years of this dissertation, the researcher chose to include some literature from thirty-five years ago in order to establish the legacy of the historical social

and political constructs of African Americans, female school leaders, and Black female principals that influences the current status of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools. The researcher excluded literature about other minority principals of predominantly White schools and African American female education leaders in higher education or in superintendent positions in order to keep the review relevant to the purpose of the study.

Examination of Current Literature

As the literature indicates, African American principals and female principals are dealing with various social difficulties while ascending the metaphorical leadership ladder and hit the “glass ceiling” of gender inequalities and racial bias (Campbell, 2010; Falk, 2011; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Recently, however, some researchers have found that Black female administrators experience additional social injustices and the glass ceiling is now referred to as the “concrete ceiling” (Campbell, 2010; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Gewertz (2006) illustrates the conflicts that African American female leaders often find themselves in when he states, “She must double-think every situation and every word she says. Are you going to be viewed as, ‘Oh, you’re only doing this because it involves Black folks?’ or ‘Are you exhibiting the right amount of strength on this issue, because if not, it’s because you’re a woman’” (para. 46). Gewertz (2006) found that the decisions of African American female education leaders were constantly questioned due to their gender or claims of alleged favoritism of the Black race by White stakeholders and alleged favoritism of the White race by Black stakeholders. Similarly, African American female principals were being assigned to tough, predominantly Black elementary schools, where they did not have appropriate resources or support, but were

set to higher expectations of performance in comparison to other administrators (Bridges, 2010). Despite these incidents of being constantly questioned and placed into schools where support systems and resources are limited or not even offered, African American female principals somehow find a way to demonstrate resilience and successful leadership (Alston, 2005; Daye, 2007; Holloway, 2011; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Johnson, 2012).

According to Black Feminist Thought, African American female principals understand that “mistakes and failure are never just that, but always potentially confirm the broader racial inferiority they are suspected of” and as a result, they feel they have to work twice as hard as their colleagues. One participant in Holloway’s (2011) study said it best:

It is important that I stay at the table to make sure a district such as this with millions of dollars to spend on education resources is providing the resources to me as well. I must keep my skills sharp. And so I seek those opportunities to learn more. Thus, as an African American leader, I have to go well beyond being the Black ‘momma’ at the school who makes kids behave. I have to go beyond the person who makes staff feel good and provides staff with snacks at meetings. I must know the content, and thus I study the content (p. 147).

Black Feminist Thought explains that African American women feel it is important that “self-valuation, self-definition, and knowledge validation” from experiences replace the stereotypical images that have often oppressed them (Smith, 2008, p. 5). As a result, according to the National Center of Education Statistics (2011), from 1976 to 2010,

African American females earned more advanced degrees, from bachelor's to doctorates, than African American males, Hispanic males, Asian females, and Hispanic females. However, despite these credentials, African American females are still not hired for principal positions at the same rate as White and African American males or White females (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

According to Black Feminist Thought, if an African American woman earns a principal position, not only is she mindful that her actions are not only representative of her race and gender, but they also determine the future legacy of African American female principals. Holloway (2011) confirms this Black Feminist Thought in which "African American leaders carry the heavy burden that their actions, failure, or success will have a great impact on those individuals of color who may seek to follow in their footsteps" (p. 133). As one Black female education leader in the Gewertz (2006) article states, "You're always trying to represent your race to White people . . . and represent well for your own people, and think about the legacy you leave, especially if you're the first. You just don't have the margin for screw-ups." (para. 20). This pressure is also most evident when African American principals are hired to lead predominantly White schools. Holloway (2011) explains in his study of African American principals of predominantly White schools that when a district takes a risk to hire African American principals, these principals "believe they must prove themselves so that future African American education leaders wanting to pursue a career in a predominantly White school will not be denied the opportunity" (p. 146).

Ultimately, following Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Theory, African American female principals of predominantly White schools understand their current

work is a continuation of a legacy of racial and gender struggles; but if they do well in their positions, they will not only combat racial and gender inequalities, they will empower others to take on similar challenges, and success can be achieved through the knowledge that they are not alone.

Other Dissertations

Scinto's (2006) dissertation entitled *African American Women Leaders in Predominately Caucasian Schools* studied the experiences of African American female administrators of predominantly White schools or districts in the Southwest region of the United States. Scinto used a purposeful sampling to establish a case study of seven African American female administrators who lead or have led predominantly White schools in this southwest region. After conducting semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the seven administrators, she observed their school campuses and conducted member checks with two focus groups of African American male administrators of predominantly White schools. She then compared her findings to her literature review. She found that the majority of the female administrators were content in their positions, although they also acknowledged facing obstacles of racial and gender bias when they were hired. The male administrators did not acknowledge experiencing any racial or gender biases. Both female and male administrators acknowledged the existence of a glass ceiling for women leaders and a rock ceiling for Black women leaders, but the participants then expressed that the rock ceiling could be broken if an African American woman had a certain amount of education, experience, and personality.

In Scinto's (2006) study, Scinto did not have a theoretical framework in which she analyzed her data. She simply summarized her findings and presented

recommendations based on the recommendations given from female administrators in the interviews. If Scinto had used a theoretical framework such as Critical Race Theory or Black Feminist Thought, which considers the unique experiences of African American women, she could have provided an in-depth comparative analysis between the perspectives of the African American female and male administrators and validated the recommendations from the African American female administrators. Furthermore, by not providing a theoretical framework founded in racial or gender understanding, Scinto's research is limited to individuals' regional experiences, and her methodology of providing member checks with African American male administrators rather than other female administrators is inappropriate.

Three years after Scinto's (2006) study, Beckford-Bennett (2009) investigated the experiences of six Black female principals of predominantly White elementary and middle schools in the northeastern region of the United States. Beckford-Bennett based her research on the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory, Racial Identity Theory, Phenomenological Variant Ecological Systems Theory, and Resiliency. She used interviews, writing prompts, document analysis, and the Cross Race Identity Scale to identify the unique challenges related to race and identity that African American female principals face when leading predominantly White schools. Beckford-Bennett also included in her study how these principals are resilient leaders due their implementation of specific coping mechanisms.

Beckford-Bennett's (2009) data analysis of these Black female principals identified "that the majority of the challenges faced were race-related intertwined with issues of equity, diversity, and cultural appreciation and understanding. These challenges

posed risks to their overall psychological functioning and racial identity development. The women mediated these challenges through exercising reactive developmental coping skills” (p. 182). For example, these principals chose to address racial challenges openly as education leaders but also on behalf of other minorities who may lead or attend their predominantly White schools.

In examining Beckford-Bennett’s (2009) study more closely, her findings are not surprising as her research purpose, questions, and design stemmed from her own biases. Although Beckford-Bennett intended to study experiences related to the participants’ racial and gender identities, she personally found it difficult as a Black woman to separate experiences based solely on race or gender and as a result, focused her study on race. Beckford-Bennett acknowledges this bias as a limitation to her study and recommends that her study be replicated, but with a focus on gender. If Beckford-Bennett had not allowed her bias to dictate her research design, she could have included gender identity questions in her interview protocol and participants could have consciously considered how gender influences their leadership experiences.

Finally, Holloway’s (2011) dissertation entitled *Education’s Anomaly: African American Principals of Predominantly White Schools* investigates “how race impacts and shapes the experiences and sense-making of African American principals in predominantly White schools” (p. 11). Holloway also used Critical Race Theory and Social Justice Theory as theoretical frameworks to study the experiences of 14 African American male and female principals of predominantly White elementary, middle, and high schools in the northern, southern, mid-western and western regions of the United States. The principals varied in years of experience and were obtained through snowball

sampling and internet search. Holloway administered a survey to establish biographical information and conducted two 90-minute, face-to-face interviews with the principals.

In his data analysis, Holloway (2011) noted that the majority of his participants did not see any advantages to being an African American principal in a predominantly White school. In fact, all the participants identified additional professional responsibilities to ensure academic excellence, social equity, and social justice for minority students and future minority education leaders. Holloway's participants also acknowledged their various identities as Black principals in predominantly White Schools similar to the participants in the Beckford-Bennett's (2009) study. Holloway, like Beckford-Bennett, focused on racial identities rather than gender, even though his participants included African American male and female principals and his literature review stated the different identity challenges faced by African American male and female principals.

Ultimately, this dissertation will distinguish itself from previous work on African American female principals of predominantly White schools because it not only focuses on how race influences education leadership but includes gender influence as well. By researching the influences of race and gender on the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, the researcher contributes to previous race-based findings, expands on gender-based findings, and further explores the interaction of gender and race on education leadership experiences.

Summary

Chapter II contained a relevant literature review on the historical perspective of African Americans in education leadership as well as a literature review, through a

Critical Race and Black Feminist theoretical perspective, on the influences of race, gender, and the combination of the two on the leadership of African American principals, female principals, and African American female principals. The methodology for the literature search was explained, stating the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of literature and identifying the limitations of the literature review. The chapter also included a review of articles and dissertations on the influence of race and gender in the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly Black and predominantly White schools. Last, since this dissertation distinguishes itself from other studies by applying Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, a review of the theoretical frameworks was provided.

Chapter III provides the research design, the sampling of participants, the data collection method as related to the research questions, interview questions as related to the Critical Race and Black Feminist theoretical frameworks, and the data analysis methods used to produce valid and reliable findings. Chapter III also includes an explanation of the limitations and delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the extent to which race and gender influences the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools. African American females in education leadership positions in predominantly White schools work with students, parents, and staff of a different background and have unique challenges because of their race and gender; however, they are underrepresented in education research (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006). By bringing more awareness of race and gender-related issues to the education research field, education administration programs, schools districts, and individual administrators can better support and encourage African American women to lead all types of schools, regardless of the racial background of the students (Campbell, 2010; DeJarnette 1992; Germany, 2005; Jean-Marie et al., 2009).

By researching how race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools, strategies are identified to better prepare future education leaders, assist current principals who struggle with similar circumstances, and add to the discourse about race and gender in education leadership (Alton, 2000; Germany, 2005; Kowalski & Stouder, 1999). Similarly, research methodology that has been traditionally used with White male and female leaders are broadened to include culturally sensitive research methodology (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006).

Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that qualitative research “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question and adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (p. 5). As a result, in order to explore how race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, this study used a qualitative design.

“Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Qualitative research, through interviews, provides the depth needed to describe and understand the meaning of these experiences. By using a qualitative research design, detailed descriptions of the principals’ experiences as African American female education leaders of predominantly White elementary school can be provided. Qualitative research, especially if interviews are used as a form of data collection, “makes it possible for readers to grasp a situation from the inside, as a participant might” (Weiss, 1995, p. 21). Unlike qualitative research, a quantitative research design requires variables to be measured and a hypothesis to be tested. These principals’ experiences cannot be quantified in a statistical analysis; however, a more holistic understanding of how race and gender influence leadership can be shown through qualitative methods such as interviews with the principals and a review of the existing literature.

For this study, the researcher used semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. “The questions on a semi-structured interview guide are preformulated, but the answers to those questions are open-ended; they can be fully expanded at the discretion

of the interviewer and the interviewee” (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 149). The semi-structured interview structure allows the interviewer to predetermine the questions around particular theories and factors, while the open-ended questions allow the participants the opportunity to further explain and deepen their responses (Patton, 2000; Weiss, 1995). By using the semi-structured, open-ended interview guide within the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, the researcher has an opportunity to create an authentic counter-story of African American female principals who work within the constructs of predominantly White elementary schools. Ultimately, using this type of interview guide allowed the researcher to provide detailed descriptions, multiple perspectives, and varied interpretations of how race and gender influence education leadership.

Participants

According to researchers, very few African American principals are leading predominantly White schools (Brown, 2005; Holloway, 2011; McCray et al., 2007; Tillman, 2004). As a result, this qualitative study used a purposeful, unique snowball sampling in order to obtain female African American principals of predominantly White elementary schools for the semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Merriam (2009) explains that "a unique sample is based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 78). In snowball sampling, the researcher asks "a number of people who else to talk with, and the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (Patton, 2000, p. 237). As a result of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools being underrepresented on a national level for education leadership, this researcher felt a unique

snowball sampling of her professional affiliations in the Northeast would identify potential participants for her study. The researcher sent out sixteen letters of solicitation to current and former principals fitting the following population criteria:

- Was or is a female African American principal
- Served as an education leader for at least three full school years
- Had served or is presently serving in the capacity of a principal of a predominantly White elementary school in the northeast region of the United States

Six out of the sixteen education leaders who received a request to participate in the study agreed to be interviewed. Due to the sample size of the principals interviewed for the study and the geographic locations of the predominantly White elementary schools, the findings cannot be generalized to African American female principals of predominantly White elementary, middle, or high schools in other geographic locations in the United States. This researcher also used pseudonyms for the participants' names, the participants' school and the district to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms were determined by the researcher.

The first participant interviewed for the study was Dr. Adams. Dr. Adams held a high-ranking position in her state's department of education. Her position was then cut and she was recommended for a principal position of a K-8 elementary school in a predominantly White district. She was the only African American in the Quinton district. Dr. Adams received tenure as a principal in the district but then left for a central office position in another district.

The second participant interviewed was Dr. Jefferson. Dr. Jefferson grew up and still lives in Louisville, a predominantly White school district in a Northeast state. She began her administrative career as an assistant principal and then became the principal of a predominantly White elementary school. She is now a central office administrator in Louisville.

The third participant interviewed for the study was Ms. Lincoln. Ms. Lincoln worked as an assistant principal at the high school and middle school level. She was then appointed to a principal position of a predominantly White elementary school in Louisville. She worked at this elementary school for nine years and recently retired after serving for more than twenty-one years as a building and district education leader.

Ms. Jackson was the fourth participant interviewed for the study. Ms. Jackson entered the education field through her state's alternate route process. After becoming an elementary school teacher in an urban school district and earning her administrative certification, she worked as an assistant principal in Oaks Bluff, a racially diverse, suburban school district. She then took an assistant principal position in Kingston, a predominantly White school district and was later appointed as the principal of one of the elementary schools.

Ms. Washington was the fifth participant interviewed for the study. Ms. Washington was hired as an elementary school teacher in Edgar County, a predominantly White school district in a Northeast state. She later became an assistant principal and then principal of one of the elementary schools. She is one of three African American female elementary school principals in the district.

Ms. King was the sixth participant interviewed for the study. Ms. King grew up in Edgar County but began her administrative career in the southern region of the United States. She returned to Edgar County as an assistant principal in the school district and was later appointed as principal of one of the district's "inner city" schools. She then became the principal of a predominantly White elementary school, where she is one of two African American staff members.

Table 1

Summary of Study Participants' Demographics

Name	Age (years in range)	District	As Principal of PWES (years in range)	As Building/District Education Leader (years in range)
Dr. Adams				
Dr. Jefferson				
Ms. Lincoln				
Ms. Jackson				
Ms. Washington				
Ms. King				

Measures

By conducting semi-structured, open-ended interviews with African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in the Northeast region of the United States and detailing their personal, educational, and professional backgrounds and experiences that influence their leadership, the researcher analyzed their responses through the lens of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought. Creswell (2003)

explains that when researchers use theoretical perspectives, they can easily identify “what issues are important to examine (e.g. marginalization, empowerment) and the people that need to be studied” (p. 113). These analyses, based on Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, help identify how race and gender influences the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools.

Using Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, the following open-ended questions have been identified under three major categories: leadership, race, and gender. The questions were given in a semi-structured format with questions ranging from generic, background-setting to more specific questions about the influence of race and gender on education leadership. The researcher deviated from the exact wording of the questions and structure of the guide in order to make the interview more conversational with the participants and to explore related issues brought up by participants (Merriam, 2009; Weiss, 1995).

Table 2

Interview Questions Based on Theoretical Framework

Leadership	
<p>Tell me how you came into your current or former role as an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal History – education, family influences • Professional History – skills, positions, networks 	<p>Critical Race Theory – counter-storytelling, permanence of racism</p> <p>Black Feminist Thought – alternative social construct, commitment against race and gender inequality, recognition of struggle, empowerment</p>
<p>Tell me about your most successful and most challenging experiences in leading a predominantly White elementary school as an African-American female principal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the building level? • At the district level? 	<p>Critical Race Theory – counter-storytelling, permanence of racism, interest convergence, critique of liberalism</p> <p>Black Feminist Thought – alternative social construct, commitment against race and gender inequality, recognition of struggle</p>
Race	
<p>How does your race influence your leadership experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does it play at the building level? • What role does it play at the district level? 	<p>Critical Race Theory – counter-storytelling, permanence of racism, interest convergence, critique of liberalism</p> <p>Black Feminist Thought – alternative social construct, commitment against race and gender inequality, recognition of struggle</p>
Gender	
<p>How does your gender influence your leadership experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does it play at the building level? • What role does it play at the district level? 	<p>Black Feminist Thought – alternative social construct, commitment against race and gender inequality, recognition of struggle</p>

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through interviews and a review of the existing literature. The interview process supported the counter-storytelling within Critical Race Theory and gave the participants an opportunity to communicate their own experiences in their own words as well as provide coding for issues to be further explored through the literature (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ultimately, the data collected from the interviews and the literature review, under Black Feminist Thought, gave African American female principals a voice to publicly recognize how race and gender influence their leadership in predominantly White schools. The following table provides an overview of the procedures that were used to collect data.

Table 3

Overview Procedures Used to Collect Data

Research Question	Data Source(s)	Objective(s)
What are the challenges faced by African-American female principals who lead predominantly White schools?	Interviews with principals; literature review	To understand the lived experiences of the African-American female principals of predominantly White schools

Interviews

This researcher conducted two pilot interviews with non-participating principals. The researcher used the actual interview questions with the non-participating principals in order to determine the validity of the interview questions. By piloting the interview, the questions were clarified to ensure that they were addressing the research questions and ultimately the purpose of the study (Weiss, 1995). Once the questions were validated by the pilot interviews, the researcher met each participant individually at her office or the public library. Locations and times were determined by the participants. All participants were given informed consent forms to read. Five out of the six participants agreed to the researcher recording and taking notes of the interview. One participant declined the recording of the interviewing but agreed that the researcher could take notes of the interview. Each interview lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour. For five out of

the six interviews, the researcher used a digital recorder for reliability. The digital recordings and the researcher's notes were then transcribed to ease interpretation and analysis of the participants' responses (Weiss, 1995). This researcher used pseudonyms for the participants' names, and the participants' school and district to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms were determined by the researcher. Last, to ensure "descriptive validity" (Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2009), the researcher used member checking (Creswell, 2003) and gave the study participants an opportunity to review their own interview transcript and verify the data for accuracy.

Data Analysis

This researcher used directed content analysis to code themes from the data because "the goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought served as coding categories for the initial coding of the data. In keeping with the directed content analysis approach, statements from the interviews were highlighted as categories from Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, while statements that could not be coded under the theoretical categories were coded with new categories and later analyzed as either refuting or supporting the theories. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005) state, "The main strength of a directed approach to content analysis is that existing theory can be supported and extended," but "newly identified categories either offer a contradictory view of the phenomenon or might further refine, extend, and enrich the theory" (p. 1283).

Table 4

Content Analysis Codes

Critical Theory	Race Codes
Interest Convergence	IC

Black Feminist Thought	Codes
Commitment Against Race and Gender Inequality	RGI
Exclusion	EX

Newly Constructed Themes	Code
Obligation to the Race	OR
Race- and Gender-less	RGL
Self-Empowerment	SE

Validity and Reliability

Since this research was conducted through the frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought, the researcher maintained the authentic “voice” of the participants and ensured their stories were accurately portrayed regarding what the participants know as their life experiences. As Merriam (1998) advises, “Rigor in a qualitative research derives from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description (p. 151, as cited in Peters, 2003). The credibility

and accuracy of the data were checked for validity by piloting the interview questions with non-participating principals, and the researcher adjusted the questions for greater specificity towards the purpose of the study. Reliability was ensured by establishing an audit trail, in which the researcher maintained careful records of procedures used throughout the research process, and by verifying the information through member-checking, the participants' review of the interview transcripts (Creswell, 2003; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009).

After conducting the pilot interviews, the researcher adjusted the interview questions to maintain the focus of the study on race and gender influences and to specify the questions for the participants' particular life experiences. For example, one of the original interview questions asked the participants to tell how they came into their current position, but the pilot interviews revealed a need to specify the question for former principals participating in the study. As a result, the question became "Tell me how you came into your current or former role as an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school?" In addition, questions about the participants' most successful and most difficult experiences in leading a predominantly White elementary school were originally two separate questions; but after the pilot interviews, it was found that combining the questions into one question led to a better conversation with the participants. "Would you do anything differently to prepare yourself to lead a predominantly White elementary school?" was developed because the pilot interview participants felt their preparation to lead could be a challenge faced by African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, but the other interview questions did not allow the participants to speak to this if it was indeed a challenge to

their leadership. In addition, the question could lend specific information to one of the study's purposes of supporting and encouraging African American women to take more education leadership roles. Last, "Do you think you can separate your race and your gender and be just an African American or be just a woman?" was developed by the researcher upon hearing the pilot interview responses and reading literature review findings that indicate African American women's inability to separate gender and race (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006).

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to the sample size of the principals interviewed for the study and the geographic locations of the predominantly White elementary schools, the findings cannot be generalized to African American female principals of predominantly White elementary, middle, or high schools in other geographic locations in the United States. Similarly, by using interviews, further limitations include observed external behaviors being influenced by the presence of the researcher and interview responses being distorted by "personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness" of the participants (Patton, 2000, p. 306).

In order to provide a more intimate connection with the participants through face-to-face interviews, the researcher has delimited the study to African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools within a three and a half hour travel time of the researcher's residence in the northeast region of the United States. Similarly, interviewing principals who have served as education leaders for at least three full school years increases the likelihood that the principals understand how race and gender influence their relationships and decision-making at the building and district level.

Last, this qualitative research study was delimited to Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought due to the need to analyze the findings through culturally specific theoretical frameworks that accurately support the participants' experiences.

Summary

Chapter III provided the research design, the sampling of participants, the data collection method as related to the research questions, interview questions as related to the theoretical frameworks, and the data analysis methods used to produce valid and reliable findings. Chapter III also included an explanation of the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to research the extent to which race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White schools. African American females in education leadership positions in predominantly White schools are underrepresented in education research, although they face leadership challenges unique to their race and gender (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006). By bringing more awareness of race and gender-related issues to the education research field, education administration programs, schools districts, and individual administrators can better support and encourage African American women to lead all types of schools, regardless of the racial background of the students (Campbell, 2010; DeJarnette, 1992; Germany, 2005; Jean-Marie et al., 2009).

In this chapter, the findings of the interviews are presented in accordance with the following research questions:

1. How do African American female principals perceive race and gender influences on their leadership of predominantly White schools?
2. What are the challenges faced by African American female principals who lead predominantly White schools?
3. How do African American female principals address race and gender challenges in predominantly White schools?

Each research question was addressed through seven major emergent themes revealed from a qualitative coding process. The researcher used descriptive coding during

the first cycle of coding the transcripts; and the second cycle of coding implemented values coding, which identified the participants' perspectives on the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought. The third cycle of coding revealed the seven major themes of the African American female principals' leadership experience within predominantly White elementary schools.

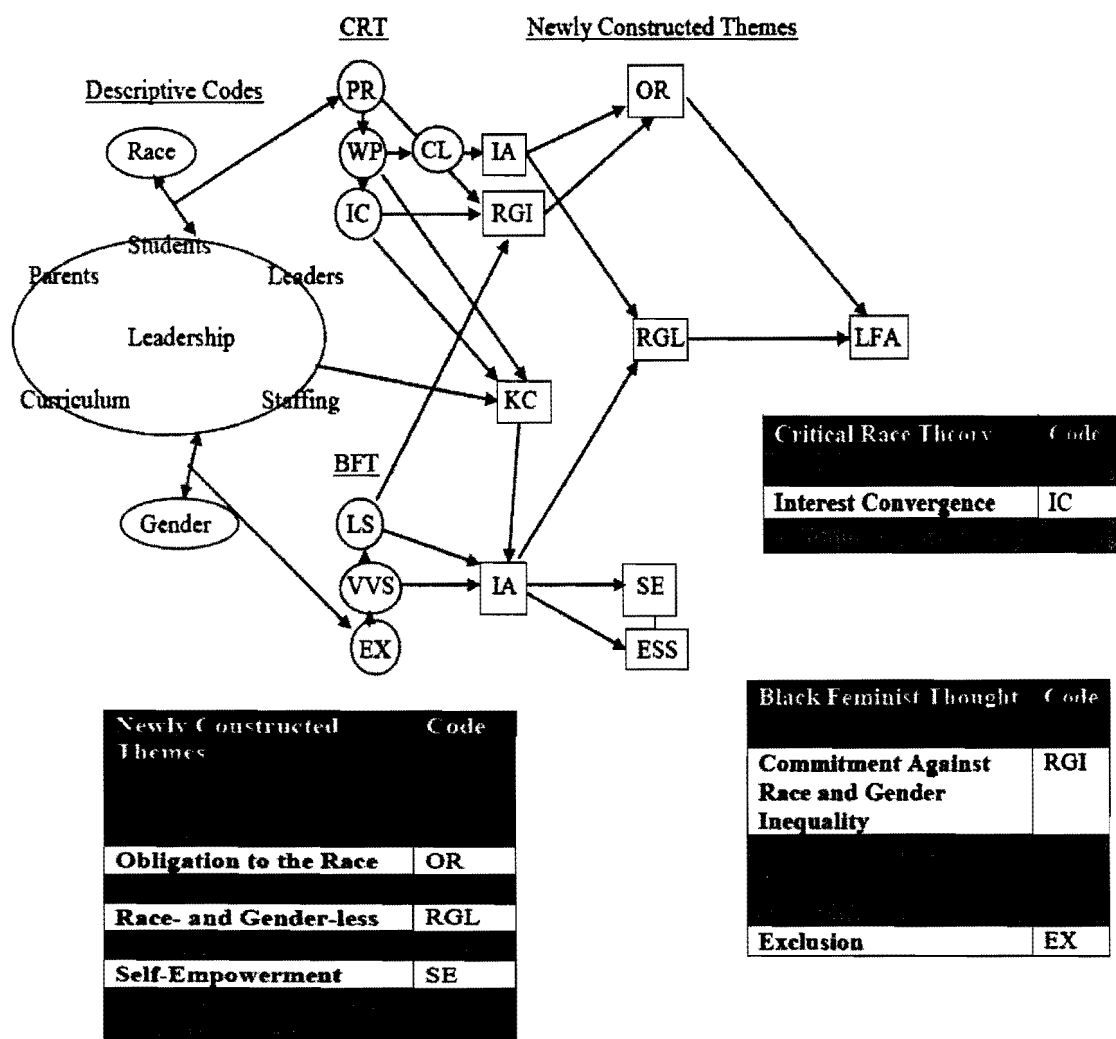


Figure 1. Coding Process

Table 5

Coding Analysis

Research Question	Data Source(s)	Code(s)
What are the challenges faced by African-American female principals who lead predominantly White elementary schools?	Interviews with principals; literature review	KC, RGI, OR, IA, RGL, LFA

Similarly, the findings within each theme were validated or challenged in the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought. Again, Delgado and Stefancic (2001), Critical Race theorists, identify that “racism is endemic in U.S. society. It is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically and reinforces traditional ways of thinking and being, which omit the experiences of people of color” and, as a result, they advocate that “narrative research in education be utilized to prove comparable insights into the education system” (p. 235). Similarly, Collins (2000) theorized Black Feminist Thought in order to define African American females beyond the terms of their oppressors. Through Black Feminist Thought, African American women are empowered to identify, redefine, explain, and share experiences of racism and

sexism that may be unique to their experiences (Collins, 2000; Smith, 2008; Taylor, 2004).

Emergent Themes

From the study participants' counter-stories, seven themes were revealed from the experiences of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools. Although some of these themes appear to address only race influences of their leadership, most of the themes are a result of the participants being both Black and female. When analyzing their counter-stories through Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought lenses, race or gender may have been magnified in certain experiences; but the race and gender connection cannot be severed due to the historical significance of being both Black and female in America.

Knowing the Predominantly White Community

Getting to know the predominantly White community they worked in was one of the first major themes that connected the race and gender influences within the leadership of the African American female principals. Their counter-stories revealed that knowing the predominantly White community included identifying the values of their building community as well as the local community. This important concept is also in Jones' (2002) study of African American principals of predominantly White schools, where the principals were found to have limited referent power with their White teachers and community members. According to Jones (2002), the White teachers and community members had different values for their Black education leaders than if their principals were White. For example, the White teachers and community members valued more

community involvement for their Black principals than for their White principals and the counter-stories of the study participants confirmed this finding as well (Jones, 2002).

In Dr. Adams' counter-story of not recommending the renewal of a particular staff member, who lived in the community and had children in the school system, the theme of knowing the predominantly White community was brought to her attention by her superintendent.

I was asked by the superintendent to change my recommendation, but I did not. There was an uproar with some staff and parents, and a brouhaha. The superintendent made a comment, during a meeting I scheduled with him to address my appointment, advising me that he was not sure of my status. He said that "If it was put to a vote by the board, it would not be favorable." He added, "You knew this was a lily white community when you came here." (Dr. Adams, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

Although Dr. Adams had the common leadership challenge of not rehiring a staff member who was a member of the community, as an African American principal, this challenge was complicated by the superintendent's comment that the community's race justified their lack of support of her decision (personal communication, January 8, 2013). The superintendent's comment that she should have known that she was working in "a lily-white community" not only demonstrates how important it is for African American female principals to know the values of their predominantly White community, but it also supports the Critical Race Theory's tenets of Whiteness as property and interest convergence (personal communication, January 8, 2013).

According to Critical Race Theory's Whiteness of property component, White people have historically received privileges and rights because of their race, and Critical Race Theory's interest convergence is further based on the whiteness of property concept (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). According to interest convergence, the interest of the majority converges with the interest of the minority in order to establish some type of equity, but the majority still has the power to negotiate how much of the equity is achieved and how resources are distributed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). The superintendent in Dr. Adams' counter-story reminded Dr. Adams that her appointment would not be favorable if it was put to a board vote because she did not follow the interest of the majority (personal communication, January 8, 2013). The superintendent's comment also supports the findings of Jones' (2002) study in which White teachers stated "that they felt uncomfortable discussing cultural or racial issues with Black principals and tended to avoid talking about personal or controversial issues"; thus, they focused more on their African American principals' "awards, professional degrees, and community standing" (as cited in Campbell, 2010). The superintendent's comment on the race of the community only supports that he valued Dr. Adams' standing with the board and the community rather than that he felt she was making the right staffing decision for her building and ultimately the district.

Similarly, in Ms. Washington's interview, she felt that she would have been better prepared to lead her predominantly White elementary school if she had "more social interactions" with her "White colleagues" and got to know her predominantly White community (personal communication, January 18, 2013). Again, her statement supports the importance of knowing the values of the predominantly White community and is

confirmed by Dr. Jefferson and Ms. King, who both grew up in the predominantly White school districts they work in and used their familiarity with their communities' values to leverage their leadership effectiveness in their predominantly White elementary schools.

In Dr. Jefferson's counter-story, she also stresses the importance of knowing the predominantly White community.

Because I grew up in Louisville, I knew the culture of Louisville. So I was able to relate to the issues that were part of the experience in Louisville. I knew that there were pockets of the community that were predominately White; I knew that there were pockets of the community that were predominately African American.... So I think anyone coming into this type of experience would need to know the community they are coming into. So before they come into the community, they would need to do their research to understand what are the dynamics of the community. I think a lot of times administrators know the curriculum piece, but they don't know the other components of the community. (Dr. Jefferson personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Dr. Jefferson considers herself an effective education leader, and she attributes some of her success to knowing the interests of the community. For example, later in her interview, she continues to describe how the community influenced the way she made building and district decisions:

This community is predominantly White, and there's almost an entitlement, an entitlement to be involved in decisions that matter at the school. That is true of all decisions, all layers, from what curriculum is

adopted to what the lunch program looks like to how long their kids are on the bus. And so, it's not bad or good. It's just a part of the culture you need to understand. (Dr. Jefferson, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Like Dr. Adams' counter-story, the Critical Race Theory components of Whiteness as property and interest convergence are revealed in Dr. Jefferson's counter-story as well. Dr. Jefferson recognized that her community had particular interests because their race granted certain privileges; and as an African American female principal within that community, she needed to understand those privileges and address them accordingly.

Ms. Lincoln, who worked in the same district as Dr. Jefferson, validates the same sense of entitlement within the community and explains how it impacted her leadership as an African American female principal:

The other thing that I've noticed is that because the district is so close to New York, after 9/11 there was a huge influx of people from the cities such as Hoboken. They were different. Now that I'm thinking about it, they were very different than the old community who valued the integrated school district. These people were like "I want what I want, and I don't care about integration, history, or any of that. I can afford to live here, I'm paying high taxes, and this is what I want," and so I probably felt it more recently that they were looking at me as a woman of color. I've never put it in these words before, but now that's what we're

talking about. That was pretty different than in the early years. (Ms.

Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013).

Dr. Adams', Dr. Jefferson's, and Ms. Lincoln's counter-stories convey the Whiteness as property and interest convergence challenges of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools when predominantly White communities have hired an African American female principal, but the decision-making power actually lies with the White community and thus their interests should be served (Dr. Adams, personal communication on January, 8, 2013; Dr. Jefferson, personal communication on January 9 2013; Ms. Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013). Again, according to Critical Race Theory, White people have certain privileges and rights because of the power associated with the color of their skin; and when their interests converge with non-Whites, White people still actually have the control and power to make sure they receive more benefits than non-Whites (Ladson-Billings, 1999). For example, with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) case, Bell (1980) argues that the decision was based more on preventing communism from spreading in the United States than making sure African American students received a quality education equal to White students (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011).

Although knowing the community is a common theme in any principal's leadership, proactively knowing their predominantly White communities and understanding their values is a significant factor in the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools because of the tenets of Critical Race Theory. African Americans have not historically had a sense of entitlement

due to their skin color, but rather have been associated with negative images of inferiority. As a result, they must get to know the experiences, expectations, and values of the predominantly White communities, within and outside of their buildings, in order to prove that they can act within the interest of the communities. However, the challenge to the principals comes when they know their communities' values and must decide whether they will lead according to the interests of the majority and at the expense of acknowledging and addressing issues pertaining to minorities.

Commitment against Race and Gender Inequalities

The second theme revealed from the counter-stories of the African American female principals was their commitment against race and gender inequalities. This theme suggested that African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools are aware of racial and gendered inequalities in their building and in the district but struggle with taking the necessary actions to address these inequalities.

Ms. Washington, who was recruited by her predominantly White district, shared a counter-story in which she noticed that her minority students were underperforming her White students on standardized tests. She decided to interview some of her minority students and found that they wanted to read books about children who looked like them. In order to receive a parent-teacher association grant to purchase reading books with more minority characters, she had to acknowledge the curricular inequalities with her minority students without isolating or negating the needs of her majority students. As a result, her presentation had to explain how the books would benefit her building as a whole and not just her minority students. Ultimately, her district then asked Ms. Washington to present a professional development workshop on diversity and reading, a

more inclusive topic. In preparation for the workshop, Ms. Washington asked her staff to go to the local toy store and take pictures of non-white baby dolls. Her staff returned with only two pictures. She then used the pictures and the student interviews to explain to the workshop attendees that if students were not seeing diversity represented in the community, they should at least be able to see diversity in their reading books (personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Ms. King also shares in her counter-story the challenge of addressing the lack of minority representation in her staff:

At the former school that I just left, I had [counting] one, two, three, four, five with my office staff because I hired an African American secretary, which I thought was important. There were five African American teachers and [counting on her fingers and thinking] one, two, three. I've got to think about this one. Four male teachers and they weren't all PE teachers obviously because they had to be in many grades. As a matter of fact, one was a kindergarten teacher, one was a second grade teacher, one was a third grade teacher, and one was a fourth grade teacher. Here I'm working on that. So far there are only two African Americans here: a first grade teacher and me. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Ms. King has been successful in hiring African Americans as staff members in her predominantly White elementary schools because she intentionally searches for African Americans.

One of the things I've tried to do in the schools that I've been in as an African American female principal is provide opportunities for African Americans and males, something I strongly believe in at the elementary school in terms of interviewing and also in terms of actually securing positions, not only just teaching positions but also opportunities for instruction leadership. I think that is something that I've been very effective at doing . . . I do think for our students it's very important that they see African Americans, African American women, in positions that they can aspire to. One of the things that I've always prided myself on is trying to provide good leadership and good role models for kids, even down to dress and appearance and mannerisms. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Like Ms. Washington, Ms. King sees the importance of her minority students seeing, on a daily basis, positive images of diversity. More specifically, she wants them to see African Americans males and females who are educated, dress professionally, speak well, and have successfully assimilated into the predominantly White community (personal communication, January 18, 2013). Ms. King also takes a similar approach to intentionally seeking out minority representation in her parent-teacher associations in order to ensure that the needs of minority families are addressed.

It's not easy and it is a challenge. There's no doubt about it--just getting representation from other families in the PTA. I know in my former school I was very disappointed last year because we tried and there was an undermining current from one of the minority parents that we did get in

the PTA. Not that she was even African American; she was Asian, but she, I don't think, felt supported by the board and after two meetings, she no longer participated. I was very successful with a former school though; I did have a male president, which was certainly something new and different. But here I don't have a lot of representation from minority parents in my PTA. So I've been talking to some of those parents, encouraging them to come. I know one lady I spoke to just yesterday evening. She missed the last meeting so I told her I'm looking forward to seeing her at the next meeting. But we certainly don't have any African American parents in leadership roles so that is one of my goals. I think with the challenge of making sure that the PTA is more representative of a whole community is one that I've had at all of my schools. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

According to Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000), Ms. Washington's and Ms. King's commitment to address race and gender inequalities in their curriculum, staff, and parent/teacher organizations is important because African American women have historically experienced a legacy of struggle and oppression due to their race, gender, and class. Collins (2000) explains that Black Feminist Thought came about because African American women had to challenge racism and sexism as well as classism due to the feminist movement's focus on the issues of White middle-class women. According to Black Feminist Thought, African American women have faced oppression due to their race, gender, and class; and thus, when they obtain a position in which they can influence social change, they identify race, gender, and class issues in order to attempt to redefine

reality and subsequently their identity (Reddick-Smack, 2011). In other words, Ms. Washington and Ms. King, as African American women, can acknowledge the race and gender inequalities in their curriculum, staff, and parent/teacher organization and then use their leadership position to balance those inequalities with positive images of diversity beyond themselves.

However, according to Critical Race Theory, these principals can only minimally influence social changes with their predominantly White elementary schools because education still operates within Critical Race Theory's critique of liberalism. According to critique of liberalism, the lack of minority representation in curriculum or staffing cannot be aggressively addressed by these principals because liberalism supports a system of color-blindness (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The study participants' counter-stories illustrate a value of acknowledging diversity in predominantly White schools because diversity not only benefits minority students and White students and staff members, but the principals still have the challenge of identifying and addressing race and gender inequalities in their buildings while maintaining the image that they are the principal for all students, staff members, and families (Ms. Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013; Ms. Washington, personal communication, January 18, 2013; Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Obligation to the Race

When analyzing the coding of the participants' counter-stories, the theme of commitment to race and gender inequalities was closely associated with the theme of obligation to the race. The theme of obligation to the race was seen when the participants felt that they were obligated to speak and act on behalf of their race at building and

district meetings. For example, in Ms. Jackson's counter-story, she shared her commitment to advocate for the African American families in her district because she felt that, as an African American, she understood what they were experiencing.

I do remember speaking a lot about my race in meetings, trying to have people understand how an African American student feels because we have a small population in our district. And how it might be different depending on where you grew up or what district you came from. If you were an African American moving here, I knew what that would be like (Ms. Jackson, personal communication, January 17, 2013).

Ms. Jackson continued to share that as a woman, she also empathizes with her female teachers but felt her male assistant principal also empathized with their female staff members because of the number of years he had worked with them. However, she intentionally seeks out African American families, advocates for them at meetings, and maintains connections even after their children have left her building.

Some of them have called me or they'll come back and say, "What do you advise me to do? My child had this incident up at the high school" or what have you. I tell them to go to the principal because he's really supportive. Or I'll tell them to think this way about things. (Ms. Jackson, personal communication, January 17, 2013).

Again, Black Feminist Thought supports Ms. Jackson's commitment to African American families because of the historical struggle of keeping African American families together. Collins (2000) explains that during slavery, African American families were separated and sold to different plantations; but even after slavery, Black families

still struggled to stay together because Black men were underpaid and Black women had to work in order to sustain a standard of living. Acknowledging this struggle is a component of Black Feminist Thought, and Ms. Jackson advocates for African American families in her predominantly White school district as an African American female principal who understands and addresses the inequalities that Black families may face in a predominantly White school district.

In Dr. Adams's counter-story of her professional journey to assistant superintendent of a wealthy school district, the theme of obligation to the race was also revealed when someone shared with the superintendent that she was "not sensitive to the needs of poor Black people."

They did not know that I grew up in the Fifth Avenue projects of a city in a northeastern state. African Americans must be careful that we don't compromise our own. I do not believe that I should have different standards/expectations just because I am Black. What are the implications? Should I cut Black children slack? No, I should be sensitive and supportive and guide them, but I will not compromise standards. (Dr. Adams, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

The community member who accused Dr. Adams of being insensitive to the needs of poor African Americans assumed that since Dr. Adams was African American, she had an obligation to meet the needs of other African Americans. Dr. Adams does not deny this obligation but supports the meeting of her district's expectations of African American students through her sensitivity of the African American family struggle, not through the changing or the lowering of standards for African American children.

Again, this theme of obligation to the race stems from Black Feminist Thought, where Black women historically felt a responsibility to keep the Black family together and uplift the Black race (Collins, 2000). By getting educated and obtaining positions in which they could fight injustices and inequalities, African American women attempt to make changes to racist and sexist institutions; however, Black Feminist Thought also indicates the unique challenges associated with this obligation. African American women have to act within the dual identities of being Black and being a woman and “the discrimination and prejudice that comes with both” (Reddick-Smack, 2011, p.35). Similarly, as African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, the study participants confirm an additional challenge of having an obligation to their race but also having a obligation to be the leader of all students, staff members, and families.

Leadership for All

Despite race- and gender-influenced challenges, all the study participants attributed their leadership successes at their predominantly White elementary schools to building relationships and serving all students and families. As a result, the theme of leadership for all emerged from their counter-stories. For example, Ms. Washington reminds African American female school leaders of predominantly White elementary schools that their purpose is to serve the students:

I would say for anyone in a leadership position, especially an African American female, to really dig deep and to think, “How can I do this?” And not be defeated. And not even look at your community as the White community but look at it as “I serve the students”. And if you look at it as

"I serve the students," then it's going to overcome all of the other things.

(Ms. Washington, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Even though knowing values of the predominantly White community and being committed to addressing race and gender inequalities were prominent themes in all the counter-stories, Ms. Washington's counter-story acknowledges that the ultimate purpose of an education leader is to help all students, regardless of the presence of racism or sexism.

Ms. King also emphasizes the importance of overcoming race- and gender-influenced challenges by building relationships with all staff members and families.

I would say build your relationships because that's important. Those relationships shouldn't be built on gender or ethnicities. They should be built on sincere caring, honesty, and openness for whomever you're working with . . . It's not necessarily about where we are but where we want to be in the future because in schools, we're talking about the future because they're our kids. It's not necessarily where they are today but where they're going to be. So one of the things I enjoy is just seeing my kids that I worked with, knowing they're being successful, and it doesn't matter whether they're White or Black, male or female. I think ultimately it's in your heart what you do in that role that will make a difference. The challenges are there, sweetheart, though. I'm sure there are parents who think, "She's just doing that because she's African American." There might be teachers who think that you're making those same decisions as well; but I think as you involve them in decision-making process, which is

very much part of my leadership style, they can begin to see that those aren't criteria that you use in terms of making decisions. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Although Ms. King recognizes her identity as an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school, she, like the other study participants, feels she needs to be a leader to everyone. Ms. King's counter-story supports the Critical Race Theory of critique of liberalism because she wants her school community to see her as an African American female administrator who takes into account the differences in her school population, but more importantly, she wants to encourage others not to be color-blind and to celebrate diversity.

One of those challenges I'm facing here is getting the communities to acknowledge the diversity in the community as well as to recognize the needs of the families without being the voice of me as an African American individual . . . We need to meet the needs of all of our children and acknowledge that diversity . . . This community too has had an increase in the percentage of families eligible for free and reduced meals and is very likely going to be identified as a Title 1 school next year . . . I think one of my purposes in being here is to prepare the community and the staff for the kind of transition that's going to happen. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

When Ms. King shows her building staff and families the different financial circumstances that will impact the school, she is doing it because it is her responsibility

as the principal within that community, not because she is an African American female principal.

Ms. Lincoln also acknowledges an additional challenge within the theme of being a leader for all in her description of writing a parent bulletin:

Being an African American principal, I think you have to always be very, very conscious of it. As I said, I have to think about these two very different populations; going back to thinking about the challenge, a little bit, was even writing a parent bulletin. Do you write the parent bulletin on the level of your upwardly mobile parents so they know you have a brain? Then your other parents will have no idea what you're talking about. I was always very conscious of that communication and making sure everybody was comfortable. (Ms. Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013).

Ms. Lincoln illustrates the importance of making sure she represented all populations in her school, but the challenge appears when the theme of being a leader for all intersects with the other themes of knowing the predominantly White community and being obligated to the race. Through an administrative task of writing a parent bulletin, Ms. Lincoln had to demonstrate her intelligence to her wealthy, mostly White parents and meet her obligation to make sure her undereducated parents, who were mostly African Americans, understood what was going on in school. Ms. Lincoln's parent bulletin also supports Ms. King's claim that African American female principals of predominantly White schools have to assimilate their language and behavior to an image of authority that is in accordance with the values of their predominantly White communities.

Image of Authority

Ms. King summarizes the race and gender-influenced circumstances of the theme of an image of authority when she states, “Well, because there are more female than male principals at the elementary level, there’s more of a sense of ‘We’re all in this together because we’re all females,” but these gender-based circumstances become more complicated when race is added (personal communication, January 18, 2013). Ms. King continues, “Unfortunately, I think in education, we still do have a ‘good old boy’ system. And being a female and then if you add to that a ‘good old boy’ White system, being African American, those can be obstacles. I don’t think they’re absolute hindrances, but they’re obstacles.” (personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Although the study participants are female education leaders and their gender is representative of the growing number of female principals leading elementary schools, their image of authority is really being an African American female principal and that image, statistically, is not found in large numbers in the Northeast region of the United States or even across the country (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). As a result, African American female principals must try to align their language, behavior, and even appearance to the predominantly White community’s values; but as the study participants’ counter-stories reveal, there is no guarantee that their image of authority will not be questioned.

In Dr. Adams’ counter-story of being the education leader of her building, her position of being the principal of the building was questioned by a parent:

I remember my first open house. The floors were shining and you could eat on the floors. There was an Asian parent looking for directions, and I

was standing in the middle of the hallway. I gave them to him and he said, "That's not right." I then told him, "I'm the principal, Dr. Adams," and I suddenly got [makes a bowing gesture]. (Dr. Adams, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

Although a seemingly minor misunderstanding, this incident does suggest that although most elementary school principals are female, African American females are not typically seen in a position of authority in the predominantly White field of education. Dr. Adams continues to describe another incident with a guest speaker who addressed her White male assistant principal with her name and called her by his name (personal communication, January 8, 2013). Ms. Jackson also acknowledged a similar counter-story to Dr. Adams.

Ms. Jackson described a time when she was managing the safety of her building and firemen had to come to her school:

I went out to talk to them, and they were like right here [points in front of her] and their eyes, like, went right there [points behind her at a higher level]. And they talked to him. Sometimes I'll jump in and say, "Hi, I'm the principal," or I'll listen. It depends on what type of mood I'm in and I'd be like, "Did you see that? Did you notice how they just looked right over me or looked right at you and they assumed." (Ms. Jackson, personal communication, January 17, 2013).

Ms. Jackson has worked with her White male assistant principal since 2003 and developed a good working relationship, where they are aware of gender biases in leadership. Although Ms. Jackson often takes incidents where her authority is not

acknowledged in stride, her assistant principal chooses to address and correct the misidentification.

A lot of times he'll make an effort and say, "This is my boss, or this is the principal," or "I'm the vice principal; this is the principal." You know, "She's in charge." (Ms. Jackson, personal communication, January 17, 2013).

Although most females are elementary school principals, in the case of Dr. Adams' and Ms. Jackson's counter-stories, the image of authority for a predominantly White elementary school was given to the White assistant principal, not the Black female principal. African American females are not generally the image of authority for predominantly White elementary schools because of the Critical Race Theory of Whiteness as property. According to the theory, the power of authority within a predominantly White elementary school should belong to the White person of authority, regardless of the gender.

The theme of image of authority is also seen when the participants reflect on how their perceived image influences their leadership. Ms. King notes in her interview that when leading a predominantly White school, there is a need for assimilation.

Certainly, your experiences may be a little different and your culture may be a little different, but you have a certain knowledge set that will allow you, if it wasn't a predominantly White school, to understand where parents are coming from. But, as far as going to a White school, it's assimilation. And we all assimilate because we know that's what contributes to our success. Assimilation, integration--whatever you want

to call it. You use proper English; you write the best you can. You put forth your best foot” (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

According to her counter-story, Ms. King attempts in the work she does, through her language and behavior, to align herself to the values of the community and become an acceptable image of authority for the community.

Similarly, Ms. Washington states in her counter-story that one of her challenges as an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school is her physical appearance.

This person coming in their building doesn’t look like them. My hair doesn’t look like theirs. I wear braids, which is not usually seen. Most African American women they have seen have straight hair, and, you know, have that facade. I do wear that sometimes, but for the most part my hair is usually in braids. And I think that’s an obstacle too because they think a little bit different of me. They think, “Is she really able to do her job but she has these (runs her fingers through her braids). You know, she kind of looks like a rapper girl or something with the hair”. So I think that sometimes these [runs her fingers through her braids] lead people to question that even though I could come in a suit and be well dressed, the way my hair is plays a lot into that. (Ms. Washington, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

Ms. Washington feels people perceive her braided hair as being against the image of authority for a predominantly White elementary school. In fact, braids were the subject

of the *Rogers v. American Airlines* (1981) case in which Renee Rogers lost her discrimination case against American Airlines, who prohibited employees from wearing “all-braided” hairstyles and asked Rogers to camouflage her hair with a wig. Caldwell (1991) states, “I resented the implication that I could not be trusted to choose standards appropriate for the workplace and that my right to work could be conditioned on my disassociation with my race, gender, and culture” (p. 276). According to Critical Race theorists like Caldwell (1991), the *Rogers* opinion represented the challenges that only African American women face when race and gender interact. Although corporations have since revised their style policy, Ms. Washington’s counter-story confirms how even wearing a particular hairstyle is a challenge for an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school because it may not match the community’s image of authority (Campbell, 2010; Patton, 2006).

Ultimately, African American female principals intentionally make sure that their language, behavior, and even appearance support the predominantly White community’s values so they can have a respected image of authority within the community. This conscious awareness of their image stems from Black Feminist Thought in which the majority race and gender, White males, define the Black woman’s identity (Collins, 1989). Historically, the identity of the Black woman has had a negative connotation until African American women felt empowered to take control of their own identity and redefine their image.

Being Race- and Gender-less

In Ms. Lincoln’s counter-story on being the first person of color in her building, she shares how she knew that her race and gender contradicted the previous image of

authority of being White and male. As a result, she came into her position with purposeful intent not to allow her race or gender to be seen as a hindrance to her leadership.

So to go in and not to be popular and loved, but to be respected and, if anything, to be admired for my leadership, was my goal. As a female, I think we get a bad rap. Because I think everyone thinks we're going to be highly emotional. On a good day, it's a good emotion and on a bad day, you never know what you're going to get. So I've always worked really, really hard at trying to be even every day. Really balanced and not having these swings . . . But I must say that I was well accepted, respected. I could get parents to do anything I wanted them to do, staff as well. We improved test scores because I think it was all those factors. They kind of blurred the race and the gender over time. (Ms. Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013).

Since Ms. Lincoln wanted to be seen as an effective principal, not the Black principal or the female principal, but just an effective principal, she became aware of how she acted and made sure she did not succumb to the negative stereotypes of her race or gender.

According to Ms. Lincoln's description of her leadership, she contradicts the Black Feminist Thought that African American women must work within the dual identities of being Black and being a woman (Collins, 2000). Even though she still experienced challenges because of her race and gender, Ms. Lincoln wanted to define her own image of authority for a predominantly White elementary school as race- and gender-less; and ideally speaking, other study participants said if they could separate their

race and gender identities, they would. In fact, the three former principals felt that in a perfect leadership experience, they would have a race- and gender-less image, in which they would not want to be identified as either African American or as female but just as an effective education leader. For instance, in Dr. Jefferson's interview she states, "Ideally, I would like to be just their leader. Not woman, not female, not African American" (personal communication, January 9, 2013). Similar sentiments are expressed in Dr. Adams's interview where she states, "A good administrator is a good administrator across all demographics" (personal communication, January 8, 2013). Although these study participants felt being race-and gender-less is preferred when leading a predominantly White elementary school, some researchers (DeJarnette, 1992; Fordham, 1988) have identified being race- and gender-less as "a coping strategy to gain acceptance or upward mobility" for African Americans, while White people see African Americans being race- and gender-less as "another way of not acknowledging their presence" (as cited in Scinto, 2006, p. 21). The race- and gender-less theme also contradicts the components of Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Theory.

First, Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Theory are grounded in the belief that race and gender are part of society and thus are a part of society's institutions, including education and the legal system. As a result, they cannot be removed and, in effect, have a direct influence and impact on how these institutions work (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Although society has recently taken a liberal approach to race and gender and being color-blind is seen as being politically correct, looking at this theme of being race- and gender-less through a Critical Race Theory lens "stands in the way of taking account of difference in order to help those in need" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

From a Critical Race Theory perspective, acknowledging race and gender is necessary in order to identify the inequalities between groups. This is especially seen in the counter-stories of the current sitting principals who feel they can serve their school communities without compromising their race and gender identities. This is also supported by the Black Feminist Thought that educated African American women can be successful in predominantly White settings “without surrendering their racial identity and cultural identity” when they have other supports, like empowerment from mentors, in place (Reid-Merritt, 1996, p. 82).

Self-Empowerment and Empowerment through a Support System

When the study participants were asked to share their journeys to becoming African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, the theme of empowerment was identified in all of their counter-stories. Dr. Adams said it best when she stated, “Experiences will be different because you are an African American female. It will take on a different tenor, but with that you need to be confident and sure. You need to have a support system” (personal communication, January 8, 2013). The other study participants’ counter-stories also attributed their ascension into education leadership and continuation in the principal position of a predominantly White elementary school to self-empowerment or empowerment through a support system. For instance, Ms. King shares the following counter-story:

So when I returned to Edgar County to begin my teaching career, those of us who were in leadership of minority races were limited. I was fortunate enough to be placed in an area that was predominantly White, although there was an African American administrator in that school, Although, he

was very fair-complected and to look at him, you might not think that he was African American. He certainly took me under his wing. Guided and directed me, encouraged me in terms of administration. He, along with my mom, who was an influence even though she never went beyond two years of college; she was very supportive in terms of what my goals were and had wanted to be a teacher at one time herself. And then other women have been very instrumental as well. My significant other's mother is an educator as well and has been supportive and encouraging in my career as I moved to a city in a southern state . . . There were several other African American women there in positions of authority who were associate superintendents of schools who took personal interest in me as well as other African American principals in that area who were very supportive too. So all of those people have contributed in many ways to where I am today and why I continue to pursue my role as an African American administrator. (Ms. King, personal communication, January 18, 2013).

For Ms. King, her support system was comprised of other African American female administrators or teachers, African American male education leaders, and White male and female school leaders, who empowered and encouraged her to pursue endeavors in education leadership. Her counter-story is similar to the other study participants who found their ability to lead a predominantly White elementary school from the collective empowerment of their support system. They then transferred that empowerment to self-empowerment as they became sitting principals.

In Dr. Jefferson's counter-story, she explains how she empowered herself to find her voice as an instructional leader who was comparable to her male counterparts:

Sometimes I feel, sitting around the table, that I'll have an idea and I'll articulate the idea and I'll get blank stares and the conversation will move on. And in my opinion someone else, normally a male, Black or White, will say the same thing that I said, maybe in slightly different words, and someone will go, "Oh, great idea." You know? So when I notice that I'm now more vocal, not in a confrontational way, but I'm more vocal in a way like, "What did you hear me say just now?" or "When I just was just speaking about this concept a few minutes ago, what did you interpret it as?" So I'm more challenging, not threatening, but I'm more challenging in how I approach things now. I'll go back to something that I was talking about. We were saying the same thing; they may have said it differently or more eloquently than I did, but I want them to understand. It's important for me as a leader that they see me as a leader, that other leaders see me as a leader. I've changed my style whereas before I may have sat back and not say anything. I've changed my style to be more aggressive and be more a part of the conversation. (Dr. Jefferson, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

According to the theoretical framework of Black Feminist Thought, African American females address incidents of social injustice, such as Dr. Jefferson's exclusion from the leadership discussions, through empowerment. African American women's empowerment occurs when they collectively or individually change their consciousness,

speak up for themselves and define themselves on their own terms as seen through Dr. Jefferson's counter-story (Collins, 2000).

Dr. Adams further illustrates this individual empowerment through her advice to African American women pursuing leadership roles in predominantly White elementary schools:

Fundamentally, you need to be well prepared in your area of expertise. You need to know leadership, curriculum, and have strong interpersonal skills. You need to be smart. The other piece is to be confident and secure in your own skin. You need to know that you are good. Be good. Be confident, not arrogant though. Be secure. Don't be intimidated by challenges. (Dr. Adams, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

Similar to Dr. Adams' advice to emerging African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, Ms. Lincoln advises African American women seeking leadership in a predominantly White elementary school to empower themselves by knowing who they are.

Be very clear in who you are as a leader so that you're not going into a situation where you've got to make changes to meet this group's needs and this group's needs. So you've really got to have a lot of self-confidence. (Ms. Lincoln, personal communication, January 16, 2013).

Ms. Lincoln explains in her interview that White males, Black males, and White females rank above being an African American female on the preferred list of leadership (personal communication, January 16, 2013). As a result, African American female principals need to be secure in themselves as effective leaders.

Ms. Lincoln's and Dr. Adams' advice acknowledges that African American female leaders of predominantly White elementary schools are going to face challenges because of their race and gender; however, by making sure their self-confidence is high and that they have a strong skill set, they will be empowered to conquer these challenges rather than run away from them.

Dr. Jefferson and Ms. Jackson also indicated in their interviews that African American women seeking leadership roles in predominantly White elementary schools should empower themselves by broadening their leadership experiences. In her interview, Dr. Jefferson discussed the following:

Get experience when you're going through your training program. Come outside of your comfort zone and make sure you have vast experiences, different experiences . . . Now in the whole principal certification program there's 200 hours, then 50 hours in the summer; make sure that one of those experiences is in a district that is predominantly White. Make sure one of those experiences is predominantly African American. Maybe make sure another experience is at a board meeting or whatever you do is in an environment that is racially balanced. That would be the ideal . . . All administrators would do well to have a variety of experiences, but I think African Americans would do better to have those experiences. I think there's always going to be challenges in being an African American and a woman. Ideally, in my ideal world, that wouldn't present a challenge; you would be judged based on your skill set. (Dr. Jefferson, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Dr. Jefferson acknowledges that in an ideal situation, one's race and gender would not have to be considered as a deficit to one's ability to lead; but since the education system is not ideal, she advises future African American principals to build their expertise through other leadership experiences so that they can compete with other education leaders who may have an advantage because of their race and gender. Similarly, Ms. Jackson feels that African American women should build their experiences professionally and educationally so that they will stand out from other candidates.

I would encourage them early on to take on leadership roles of any kind. Do whatever you can to have something on your resume that helps you stand out among others just in case somebody is looking at you twice or looking at you funny. You have all the other things behind you that show that you are equally qualified . . . You know, you do want to broaden your horizons so that you could use good experiences wherever you go and have experiences with all kinds of people and all kinds of settings and learn about different things . . . It just makes you so much more well rounded and prepared. And educate yourself as much as possible. (Ms. Jackson, personal communication, January 17, 2013).

The advice from Ms. Jackson, Ms. Lincoln, and Dr. Adams is based on the discrimination or challenges that African American women pursuing leadership roles in education might face because of their race and gender. Again, due to the Critical Race Theory of Whiteness as property, White males or females do not necessarily have the feeling that they need to prove their intelligence or qualification because of their race.

The study participant's advice to future African American female principals may be grounded in Black Feminist Thought, where advice to Black women in the 1960s was to "encourage Black daughters to develop skills to confront oppressive conditions . . . and that education . . . [was] seen as [one of the] ways of enhancing positive self-definitions and self-valuations in Black girls" (Collins, 2000, p. 184). These African American female principals were the Black daughters of the 1960s and are now in their forties, fifties, and sixties, still holding onto the belief that education and experience can offset discrimination and support their success in their predominantly White communities. For example, Ms. Washington reflects on her preparation to lead her predominantly White elementary school and states, "So I would say certainly being able to put myself out there more to committees, which I've done, helps me be more successful as well" (personal communication, January 18, 2013). The study participants shared how they used their education and broaden their professional experiences in order to develop their visibility and voice of being an effective leader of a predominantly White elementary school; and, as a result, advise future African American female principals to follow suit.

Ultimately, through their interviews, the study participants illustrated that there are race and gender influences in their leadership of these predominantly White elementary schools. Whether they shared counter-stories of hiring practices, supporting African American families, wearing certain hairstyles, or exerting their authority as principal, they supported or refuted Black Feminist Thought and the Critical Race Theory. Similarly, their counter-stories also helped answer the research questions through the following seven emergent themes: (1) knowing the community, (2) commitment against race and gender inequalities, (3) obligation to the race, (4) image of authority, (5)

self-empowerment and empowerment through a support system, (6) race- and gender-less, and (7) leadership for all.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

How do African American female principals perceive race and gender influences on their leadership of predominantly White schools?

Although Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought are based on the premise that racism and sexism are prevalent in various institutionalized systems, including education, none of the participants used the words *racism* or *sexism*, in their interviews. From their counter-stories, they revealed how race and gender influenced their leadership experiences at the community, building, and district level. All six participants shared how race influenced their interactions with the community, especially when it came to staffing and curricular or financial decisions about their buildings. One participant shared how gender influenced her voice being heard at district level meetings, while two other participants perceived their gender contradicted the community's image of authority at the building level. Three participants also acknowledged race as influencing their hiring practices, curriculum changes, and advocacy for African American families. Last, when asked if their race and gender identity could be separated, four participants felt that their race and gender identity could be separated, especially if circumstances addressed only race or gender issues.

Research Question 2

What are the challenges faced by African American female principals who lead predominantly White schools?

Through their counter-stories, all the participants presented challenges that were unique to their community and district needs; however, three participants in three separate school districts identified the challenge of getting their respective building and community to accept demographic changes, like an increase of lower socioeconomic students to the school building. In addition, one participant identified the challenge of making a staff decision that contradicted the preference of the building, district, and community, while another participant identified the challenge of having an image that was not aligned with the community's image of authority.

Again, the participants never associated these counter-stories as being a result of racism or sexism, but tenets of Critical Race Theory, such as Whiteness as property and interest convergence, and the components of Black Feminist Thought, legacy of struggle and exclusion, mostly supported the participants' perceptions of their challenges. For example, when participants shared counter-stories where knowing the community's interests influenced their decision-making and where the community's image of authority at the building level may have been identified with being White, Critical Race Theory of whiteness as property and interest convergence supports why the leadership was challenged. When one participant tells the counter-story of her voice not being heard at district level, Black Feminist Thought also reveals a challenge of being purposely excluded. Similarly, when three participants share counter-stories of identifying race and gender inequalities in staffing, curriculum, or interactions with African American families, Black Feminist Thought reveals a challenge of being committed against these inequalities and feeling obligated to their race.

Research Question 3

How do African American female principals address race and gender challenges in predominantly White schools?

All six participants address race and gender challenges through self-empowerment and empowerment from a support system, which also appears in Black Feminist Thought. Their support systems range from other African American female administrators or teachers, African American male education leaders, White male and female school leaders, to their own family members, who encouraged them to pursue their leadership positions and continue to support them as they encounter other opportunities in education leadership. Similarly, the participants also describe incidents of self-empowerment through advanced education and multiple leadership experiences. The themes of self-empowerment and empowerment through a support system is seen in Black Feminist Thought, where historically African American females were denied education opportunities and employment, but through collective empowerment, they gained equal rights and access to education and work. They then learned to transfer that collective empowerment to self-empowerment in order to maintain their positions in these opportunities (Collins, 2000).

The three former principals' counter-stories also address race and gender challenges by presenting a race- and gender-less image of authority and focusing on being a leader for all students, staff, and families. Although this theme of being race- and gender-less refutes the Critical Race Theory component of critique of liberalism, the participants felt color-blindness, at times, helped them meet the needs of all students, staff, and families and have an image of authority that is more aligned to the values of the

community. The remaining study participants, the current sitting principals, felt obligated to address the race and gender inequalities in their building as well as the needs of various other groups. Ultimately, all six participants felt that being a leader to all students, staff, and families is essential to their success as African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools.

This study confirmed that the race and gender of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools do influence their leadership responsibilities such as staffing, building relationships with the community, and making curricular decisions. They do not historically share the same rights and privileges as their predominantly White community and have to balance feeling obligated to address race and gender inequalities with being a leader to all students, staff, and families. Similarly, since African American female principals visually contradict or challenge their communities' image of authority, they have the additional challenge of making sure their hair, behavior, and language are aligned to their communities' image of authority so their decisions and actions are not second guessed or perceived as favoring minorities. Last, African American female principals of predominantly White schools feel they must be the best of the best, highly educated about curriculum as well as knowledgeable about the needs of the community because they represent their race and gender and cannot afford to make any mistakes.

Summary

In Chapter IV, this researcher presented the study's findings as emergent themes from the participants' counter-stories about race and gender influences on their leadership of predominantly White elementary schools. Themes such as knowing the community,

commitment against race and gender inequalities, obligation to the race, image of authority, self-empowerment and empowerment through a support system, and leadership for all supported or refuted the Critical Race Theory concepts of Whiteness as property, interest convergence, and critique of liberalism as well as Black Feminist Thought concepts such as commitment against race and gender inequalities, legacy of struggle, and empowerment through visibility, voice, and self-definition. These themes also revealed that there are race and gender influences at the district, building, and community level for African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools; and these influences manifest into challenges and successes within their leadership. In Chapter V, there is further discussion of findings as they apply to current practice and future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter expands upon the findings of the study and discusses how the current practices of education administration programs, school districts, and education leaders are affected by the race and gender influences of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools. This chapter also offers recommendations for education policies and for future research on race and gender influences in education leadership.

Summary of Findings

Although the National Center of Education Statistics (2011) reported that African American females are earning more advanced degrees, from bachelor's to doctorates, than African American males, Hispanic males, Asian females, and Hispanic females, they are still not being hired for principal positions at the same rate as White and African American males or White females. Similarly, research supports that diversity and multiculturalism benefits all students; but when African American females are being hired for principal positions, they are often led to urban, predominantly minority school districts (Holloway, 2011; McCray et al., 2007). Conversely, when African American females are hired as principals of predominantly White schools, they promote the idea of diversity through being a role model to students and recruiting minority staff members (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Lewis, 2001; Mumin, 2008). However, as an African American female possibly seeking a principal position, this researcher wanted to know if there were other race and gender influences when leading a predominantly White school.

When researching this topic, the researcher found literature on African Americans in education leadership, as it pertained mostly to race and Critical Race Theory. When the researcher continued to study African American females in education leadership, the literature review again focused mostly on race, but gender finally appeared through discussions on Black Feminist Thought. Ultimately, very little literature on the leadership of African American females of predominantly White schools focused on both race and gender. Hence, the researcher decided that the purpose of this study would be to research the extent to which race and gender influences the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools.

The researcher found that race and gender influences may still permeate education leadership fifty-nine years after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) and forty-one years after Title IX of the Education Amendment Acts (1972), when African American females are given the opportunity to lead predominantly White elementary schools. From this study, it is clear that there are other race and gender influences that are not thoroughly discussed in education administration programs or widely examined in the body of education research but are revealed through the telling of the principals' stories.

The researcher also decided to continue with the conceptual frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought since those were the dominant theories in the studies about African Americans female education leaders. However, for this qualitative study of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, the theories were at times supported and at other times refuted since African American female principals of predominantly White schools have not been

studied using both theories. For instance, most of the study participants' counter-stories supported the Critical Race Theory's Whiteness as property and interest convergence components when they described their predominantly White communities and their values. However, the Critical Race Theory's critique of liberalism and Black Feminist Thought's identity of Black women were refuted when the participants considered their leadership of all students, staff members, and families.

For this study, sixteen requests for study participation were sent to principals and superintendents of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in the Northeast region of the United States. Three current and three former African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools agreed to be interviewed. The study participants' age varied from 41 to 60 years old, and from 12 to more than 21 years in education leadership experience. All their elementary schools included classes between kindergarten and fifth grade and had more than 40% of the student body and staff identified with the United States Census Bureau's term White, non-Hispanic. Interviews lasted 45 minutes to an hour and were conducted in the participants' office or at a public library. The interview protocol was semi-structured, and participants were provided the interview questions before they signed the informed consent. With the exception of one participant who did not want to be recorded, all the study participants were recorded by a digital recorder, and all interviews were then transcribed. The study participants were also given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, but only the participant who did not want to be recorded sent back her transcript with revisions. The participants were also e-mailed to provide additional information for the study.

Research Questions

Through their interviews, the study participants answered the following research questions on how race and gender influenced their leadership:

Research Question 1

How do African American female principals perceive race and gender influences on their leadership of predominantly White schools?

From their counter-stories, the study participants shared, as African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, that race and gender influenced their interactions with the building and local communities, especially when it came to their image of authority, their obligation to support African American students and families, and their staffing and curricular decisions. In particular, the study participants perceived that race and gender influenced their leadership of their predominantly White elementary schools when they had to get to know their building and local communities and when their race and gender did not align with the communities' image of authority. As a result, they felt that they already had challenges against them because of the historical associations with their race and gender and the predominant race of their communities.

According to Black Feminist Thought, African American women have a dual identity of being Black and female and, as a result, experience race, gender, and class discriminations and prejudices that White males, White females, and Black males do not face (Collins, 2000). Historically, African American women have been the caretakers of White and Black families and have had negative, subservient images associated with their race and gender. Even though Black women have increasingly earned advanced degrees

to move from being domestics to leaders, African American women are still not hired as principals at the same rate as their counterparts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Subsequently, most of the study participants' interviews revealed a perception that African American females are the least preferred education leader; thus, if a Black woman is interested in pursuing a principal position, particularly in a predominantly White community, she must be the best of the best so she can compete with White males, White females, and even African American males. Similarly, they stressed that if an African American woman is given the opportunity to lead, she must have the confidence to face the seemingly inevitable challenges due to her race and gender identity.

Research Question 2

What are the challenges faced by African American female principals who lead predominantly White schools?

Through their counter-stories, the study participants presented the challenge of being an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school in which they have the responsibility to lead everyone by getting to know the needs of their communities and identifying their values, even though their identity differs from their community's perceived preferred image of authority. As a result, some of the African American female principals expressed the challenge of intentionally making sure that their language, behavior, and even physical appearance supported the predominantly White community's values so that their image of authority could be acceptable to the community.

Once the principals were able to establish their image of authority within the communities, they had the additional challenge of getting their respective building and community to accept demographic changes that were often associated with a race other than the majority. The challenge is exacerbated for African American female principals of predominantly White schools because historically and culturally, as Black women, they feel the obligation to acknowledge and address issues pertaining to minorities; but as education leaders, they have a responsibility to lead according to the interests of the majority.

Again, the participants never associated these counter-stories as being a result of racism or sexism, but tenets of Critical Race Theory and the components of Black Feminist Thought mostly supported the study participants' perceptions of their challenges. For example, one participant told the counter-story of her voice not being heard at district level, and Black Feminist Thought explains that the participant's counter-story is an example of purposeful exclusion of the Black female due to the historical race, gender, and class discrimination against Black women. Similarly, other counter-stories from the study participants can be grounded in Critical Race Theory, which explains that White people have historically been given rights and privileges to dominant resources; and thus the feeling of entitlement is present in the study participants' predominantly White communities. However, some of the African American female principals feel the challenge of acknowledging the predominantly White community's needs as well as addressing race and gender inequalities within their buildings. For example, one of the principals shared that she advocates for African American families because she understands how the families feel, while another principal actively searches and hires

African American staff members to give her students more positive minority role models. Both study participants felt that they identify inequalities because their identity is not aligned with the majority, and thus they are able to acknowledge the importance of addressing the inequality.

The current sitting principals also expressed that an additional challenge for an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school is to be sure that her actions do not solely favor her race, but that she is seen as an education leader for all students, staff members, and families. Some of the participants, the former principals, stated that in an ideal situation it would be best if they were race- and gender-less so they could be seen just as effective principals, who address all issues without favoring one community over another and act in the best interests of their entire building. It is also important to note that according to Critical Race Theory, even choosing to be race- and gender-less would present its own challenges because acknowledging race and gender differences identifies the inequalities between groups.

Ultimately, these challenges confirm that African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools are not like other education leaders. Although they have leadership responsibilities such as staffing, building relationships with the community, and making curricular decisions, their race and gender influence their leadership experiences.

Research Question 3

How do African American female principals address race and gender challenges in predominantly White schools?

Despite the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought validating some of the race and gender challenges of the study participants, all six participants self-identified successes in their leadership and strategies in overcoming these challenges. First, through self-empowerment and empowerment from a support system, the study participants have built confidence to face the challenges of being African American and a female leader of a predominantly White school. Their support systems ranged from other African American female administrators or teachers, African American male education leaders, and White male and female school leaders to their own family members, who encouraged them to pursue their leadership positions and continue to support them as they encounter other opportunities in education leadership. The participants further described incidents of self-empowerment through advanced education achievements, multiple leadership experiences, and even defining their own identity as a race- and gender-less leader for all. Through this empowerment, the study participants have developed their visibility and voice as African American women so that their ideas are acknowledged and heard by the majority at meetings. Similarly, they have empowered minority families and staff members so that they too become visible to the predominantly White community and inequalities and injustices can be addressed. Some of the principals also presented an image of being race- and gender-less so that they could show to their predominantly White communities that they could be a leader for all students, staff members, and families.

Finally, these findings may not only broaden the understanding of how race and gender influence education leadership in predominantly White school districts, they may also inform curricular decisions in education administration programs and better prepare

future African American female principals. Similarly, it is the researcher's hope that these findings add to the findings of other education researchers who have explored this underrepresented group so that the literature on race and gender in education leadership can be inclusive of a group that has its own unique leadership challenges (Beckford-Bennett, 2009, Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006).

Recommendations for Current Practice

Although none of the six participants felt that their education administration programs or school districts could have better prepared them to lead a predominantly White elementary school, their advice to future African American females seeking education leadership experiences counseled attention to particular practices such as internships within education leadership programs and induction activities in school districts.

Education Administration Programs

Many education administration programs discuss cultural diversity as it relates to implementing a multicultural curriculum and the integration of public schools because of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) decision. However, the principal preparation programs may not address how race and gender differences still influence education (Rusch, 2004, as cited in Beckford-Bennett, 2009). This study revealed that there may still be race and gender inequalities in education; and principals, regardless of race and gender, need to acknowledge and address these inequalities. As a result, all leaders should learn how to handle race and gender inequalities; these race and gender discussions can occur through case studies or with guest speakers while aspiring school leaders are still in their principal preparation programs.

Similarly, education administration programs could require a portion of the practicum hours to be completed in a district other than the aspiring school leaders' district, and the education administration students could be exposed to different district and community needs before assuming a leadership position. This recommendation would also support the study participants' advice to future African American female principals to get more leadership exposure to various types of communities and get a better understanding of different communities' needs and values.

Last, during these internships, education administration students could build support systems that could empower and encourage them once they assume a leadership position. According to the study participants, this support system is essential for African American female principals of predominantly White schools since they may feel isolated while serving their leadership roles.

Predominantly White School Districts

As documented in other literature, when predominantly White school districts hire African American principals, they feel they are promoting the idea of diversity since the principals can serve as role models for the students and they can recruit more minority staff members; however, school districts must be careful not to use the principal as the only symbol of diversity (Lewis, 2001; Mumin, 2008, Beckford-Bennett, 2009). For example, as seen in some of the study participants' interviews, some of the school districts supported their principals by incorporating diversity in their curriculum and openly addressing racial and gender inequalities. As a result, the principal felt empowered to address race and gender inequalities and still be seen as a leader for all students, staff members, and families.

Similarly, predominantly White school districts should not hire African Americans or any minority because they want to be seen as being a diverse community. They should hire the best principal candidate. If the prospective candidate happens to belong to a race and gender that is different than the community's image of authority, the school district has an obligation to prepare the candidate and openly discuss potential race- and gender-influenced challenges. As with all newly hired principals, the school district should provide the principal with opportunities to get to know the community and build relationships with the staff, families, and other administrators, such as through meet-and-greets. These efforts may increase acceptance in the community and help the principal develop a support system within the district.

Future African American Female Principals

As previously stated, African American women are earning advanced degrees, but they are not being hired as principals at the same rate as White males, white females, or Black males (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). As a result, the researcher felt it was imperative to ask the study participants for advice for future African American females pursuing an education leadership position in predominantly White school districts. All six study participants consistently advised the women to use education opportunities to learn as much as they could and to get as much leadership experience as they could in various types of communities. Similarly, they advised future African American principals to be as confident as possible because they will be compared to other male and female aspiring leaders and inevitably face challenges due to their race and gender. As a result, African American females who seek leadership positions in predominantly White communities must be knowledgeable in curriculum, confident in decision making, and

understand the needs and values of the community so they can stand out from the rest and stand up to any challenges that might arise because of their identity. Last, according to Black Feminist Thought, future African American female principals should have a strong support system that can encourage and collectively empower them when they do face challenges such as exclusion or questioning of authority (Collins, 2000).

Once African American females obtain the leadership position of principal in a predominantly White school community, they will face race and gender challenges in which their image of authority may be questioned by the community or even ignored by their colleagues. As a result, they must be cognizant of their language, physical appearance, and behavior when addressing race and gender inequalities. If Black female principals choose to advocate for themselves and their race, they still have to be aware that they are hired to be a leader for all students, staff members, and families and have to establish a balance in meeting the needs of the majority and the minority. Similarly, once hired as a principal of a predominantly White school, African American women may not be in the position to make radical changes to eradicate race and gender injustices; the changes may be subtle or involve a small section of the education system, such as diversifying the primary reading curriculum or encouraging African American parents to join the parent teacher association.

Recommendations for Policy

In order to further understand how race and gender influence the leadership of African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools, researchers, educators, and community members could use Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought to analyze policies at the district and governmental levels.

Governmental Policies

On the governmental level, one of the major policies affecting the leadership of African American females of predominantly White elementary schools is No Child Left Behind (2001). No Child Left Behind was intended to close the achievement gap, but, if scrutinized through the Critical Race Theory lens, may reveal a critique of liberalism which African American female principals may need to address in order to implement particular programs and resources in their predominantly White schools (Cameron, 2011).

School Districts' Board of Education Policies

Similarly, there may be board policies on curriculum and discipline within predominantly White school districts which appear to ensure equity among all students but, after closer analysis, actually perpetuates Whiteness as property and interest convergence tenets (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ultimately, these board policies influence how African American female principals make decisions in their schools and can determine who benefits and who is hindered by the policies (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004).

Recommendations for Future Research

The existing literature about African American female principals of predominantly White schools is limited (Beckford-Bennett, 2009; Holloway, 2011; Scinto, 2006). Most education leadership literature focuses on the leadership differences between White males and White females, White males and African American males, or African American males and African American females of predominantly urban, African

American schools. This study adds another layer to race and gender influences in education leadership; yet, more research is needed in the field.

Variation in Grade Level or Geographic Region

While the researcher focused the study on African American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools in the northeastern United States because most female African American principals at the elementary level are found in this region, the study contained a small sample of an already small population. It would be informative to the education research field to have the study replicated using a larger sample involving middle and high school principals or even be conducted in a different region. These variations in sampling could provide greater insight on how grade level or region influences the experiences of African American female principals in predominantly White schools.

Former Principals of Predominantly White Schools

In response to a recommendation in the Beckford-Bennett (2009) dissertation, the researcher decided to include sitting and former elementary school principals in the study in order to broaden the perspective and insight of race- and gender-influenced challenges. Although the former elementary school principals expressed more of a color-blind approach in order to be a leader for all students, staff members, and families, the current sitting principals also valued being a leader for all while maintaining their identity as African American women. Future researchers could further consider widening the sampling of former and current principals to see if this perception is consistently represented.

Inclusion of Males and Other Ethnic Groups

Although this study focused on the African American female leadership experience in predominantly White school districts because this particular group is not widely represented in education research, future researchers could compare this group's racial and gendered perspectives to African American male principals or to another ethnic group, such as Hispanic males or females, who work in predominantly White school districts (Trujillo-Ball, 2003). By cross-analyzing other races' and genders' experiences in predominantly White school districts, researchers may reveal additional challenges that will contribute to the race and gender discourses in education leadership.

Inclusion of Predominantly White School Districts' Perspective

The counter-stories of the participants in this study indicated that their predominantly White school districts hired them because they were the best candidates for their positions; however, several of the participants also jokingly alluded to districts' purposefully hiring Black principals in order to check off certain race and gender boxes and diversify their districts' demographic makeup. Future researchers could further this study by including staff members and district leaders of predominantly White school districts and explore their perception of race and gender influence in their predominantly White school districts. This potential study could confirm or refute the race and gender challenges of African American female principals in predominantly White school districts.

Ultimately, extensions to this study are limitless as society becomes more demographically diverse, but education research about race and gender can also be limited when discussions about race and gender are seen as controversial and

uncomfortable. If any race or gender is to be seen as an acceptable image of authority to communities and school districts, the challenges experienced by all types of educational leaders must be identified, explored, and addressed

won't you celebrate with me
what i have shaped into
a kind of life? i had no model.
born in babylon
both nonwhite and woman
what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between
starshine and clay,
my one hand holding tight
to my other hand; come celebrate
with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me
and has failed.

-- Lucille Clifton

As I complete this dissertation and earn my doctorate in education, I share my celebration with these women, who, despite the challenges they faced because of their race and gender, continue to lead, inspire, and support. These women have empowered me to find my voice as an African American female education leader, and I have an obligation to speak for everyone, including my race and my gender. As an African American woman, I must address the race and gender inequalities so that Black girls can grow up to become Black women who will lead and not have their authority questioned or challenged.

These women have helped me understand that race- and gender-influenced challenges are part of the journey and I do not need to compromise my racial and cultural identity in order to be successful. They have shown me that African American women can be leaders to all students, staff members, and families because we have a rich history of supporting everyone else and ourselves. As a result, we will face any challenge and not falter.

References

- Alston, J. A. (2005). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 675-688.
- Bansuelos, M. V. (2008). *Gender bias experienced by women superintendents in California*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3301959)
- Banton, M. (2000) The idiom of race: A critique of presentism. In L. Back & J. Solomos (Eds.), *Theories of race and racism: A reader* (pp. 51-63). London, England: Routledge.
- Barnes, R. (1990). Race consciousness: The thematic content of racial distinctiveness in critical race scholarship. *Harvard Law Review*, 103, 1864-1871.
- Barnes, S. (2003). *Black American feminism: A multidisciplinary bibliography*. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California.
- Battle, D., & Gruber, K. (2009). *Characteristics of public, private, and bureau of Indian education elementary and secondary school principals in the United States: Results from the 2007–2008 schools and staffing survey* (NCES 2009-323). National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Beckford-Bennett, K. V. (2009). *Visible now: Black female principals leading in predominantly white schools*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3354346)
- Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Bell, E. L. J., & Nkomo, S. M. (2001). *Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bloom, C. M., & Erlandson, D. A. (2003). African American women principals in urban schools: Realities, (re)constructions, and resolutions. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 339-369.
- Bonner, C. L. (1982). *A Black Principal's Struggle to Survive*. New York, NY: Vantage Press.
- Bridges, V. H. (2010). *African American female high school principals: Their pathways and perceptions of the position*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3442549)
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
- Brown, A. (2011). *The freedom to be: African American women as public school superintendents*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3490549)
- Brown, D. M. (2005). *Teacher perceptions of African-American principal leadership*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3175813)
- Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and school leadership: An introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 585- 590.
- Brown, G., & Irby, B. J. (2005). *Increasing gender equity in educational leadership*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

- Brown, L. H., & Beckett, K. S. (2007). Building community in an urban school district: A case study of African American educational leadership. *The School Community Journal*, 17(1), 7-32.
- Caldwell, P. M. A hair piece: Perspectives on the intersection of race and gender. In R. Delgado and J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: An introduction* (pp. 275-285). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Cameron, M. L. (2011). No Child Left Behind: A review from a critical race theory lens. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Campbell, S. B. (2010). A comparative study of educational leadership behavior by gender and race. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3397566)
- Catalyst (2004). *Advancing African-American women in the workplace: What managers need to know*. New York, NY: Author.
- Colbert, D. J. (2009). *Gender and racial experiences in executive school leadership: Perceptions of African American female superintendents*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3367682)
- Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs*, 14(4), 745-773.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Daye, T. J. (2007). *Black female superintendents and resiliency: Self-perceptions of gender and race-related constraints from a resilient reintegration perspective*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- DeCuir, J. T., & Dixon, A. D. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researchers*, 26-37.
- DeJarnette, P. M. (1992). *A case study of the leadership styles, perceptions, and relationships of three African American female principals*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (9302098)
- Delgado, R., and Stefanie, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children*. New York, NY: New Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B.. (1903, 1989). *The souls of black folks*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Fairclough, A. (2001). *Teaching equality: Black schools in the age of Jim Crow* [Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures No. 43]. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Falk, C. (2011). *Hispanic women leaders in K-12 public education: Overcoming barriers to success*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3486476)
- Flexner, E. & Fitzpatrick, E. (1996). *Century of struggle*. (3rd ed.). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Fordham, S. (1988). Racelessness as a factor in Black students' success: Pragmatic strategy or pyrrhic victory? *Harvard Educational Review*, 58 (1), 54-85.

- Foster, L. (2004). Administrator and teacher recruitment and selection post-Brown: Issues, challenges and strategies. *Journal of School Public Relations*, 25(2), 220–232.
- Franklin, V. P. (1994). *Living our stories, telling our truths: Autobiography and the making of the African American intellectual tradition*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Gardiner, M. E., Enomoto, E., & Grogan, M. (2000). *Coloring outside the lines: Mentoring women into school leadership*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Gates, S. M., (2004). *The careers of public school administrators: Policy implications from an analysis of state-level data*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Gay, L. R., Airasian, G. E., & Mills, P. W. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. New York, NY: Merrill Pearson.
- Germany, C. D. (2005). *African American women in educational leadership: An examination of their characteristics, attitudes, leadership styles, self-images, and perceptions*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3151314)
- Gewertz, C. (2006, February 17). Race, gender, and the superintendency. *Education Week*, pp. 1, 24, 25.
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Guy-Sheftall, B. (1995). *Words of fire: An anthology of African American Feminist Thought*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Haney, J. E. (1978). The effects of the Brown decision on Black educators. *Journal of Negro Education*, 47(1), 88-95.

- Harris, C. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review* 106(8), 1707-1791.
- Holloway, K. J. (2011). *Education's anomaly: Voices of African American principals in predominantly white schools*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3493585.)
- Hooks, B. (2001). The imperialism of patriarchy. In K. Wright (Ed.), *The African American Archive*, (pp. 685-686). New York, NY: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers.
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Jean-Marie, G., Williams, V. A., & Sherman, S. L. (2009). Black women's leadership experiences: Examining the intersectionality of race and gender. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5), 562-581.
- Johnson, B. (2012). *African American female superintendents: Resilient school leaders*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3494659)
- Jones, C. (2002). Teachers' perceptions of African American principals. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 77(1), 7-34.
- Jones, E. (1983). *Black school administrators: A review of their early history, trends in recruitment, problems and needs*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators Press.
- Karpinski, C. F. (2006, November). Bearing the burden of desegregation: Black principals and *Brown*. *Urban Education*, 41, 237-76.
- Kowalski, T. J., & Stouder, J. (1999). Female experiences related to becoming a superintendent. *Contemporary Education*, 70(4), 32-40.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1999). Just what is critical race theory, and what's it doing in a nice field like education? In L. Parker D. Deyhle, and S. Villenas (Eds.), *Race is...race isn't: Critical race theory and qualitative studies in education* (pp. 7-30). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.
- Larson, C., & Murtadha, K. (2002). Leadership for social justice. In J. Murphy (Ed.), *The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the 21st century* (pp. 134-161). Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Loder, T. (2005). African-American women principals' reflections on social change, community, othermothering, and Chicago Public School reform. *Urban Education*, 40(3), 298-320.
- Logan, C. B. M. (1989). *Black and white leader perception of school culture*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY.
- Lomotey, K. (1993). African American principals: Bureaucrat/administrators and ethnohumanists. *Urban Education*, 27(4), 395-412.
- Lynn, M., Yosso, T. J., Solórzano, D. G., & Parker, L. (2002). Critical race theory and education: Qualitative research in the new millennium. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 3-6.
- Mack, Y. S. (2010). *Leading school improvement: African American women principals in urban educational settings*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3419979)
- McCray, C. R., Wright, J. V., & Beachum, F. D. (2007). Beyond *Brown*: Examining the

- perplexing plight of African American principals. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34(4), 247-255.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milner, H. R. (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(4), 332-346.
- Murtadha, K., & Watts, D. (2005). Linking the struggle for education and social justice: Historical perspectives of African American leadership in schools. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 591-608.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1997). *Public and private school principals in the United States: A statistical profile, 1987-1988 to 1993-1994*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/97455.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Characteristics of schools, districts, teachers, principals, and school libraries in the United States 2003-04*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006313.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *Characteristics of public school districts in the United States: Results from the 2007-2008 schools and staffing survey*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009320/index.asp>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011033.pdf>

- Parker, L., & Villalpando, O. (2007). A race(cialized) perspective on education leadership: Critical race theory in educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(5), 519-524.
- Parker, P. S. (2005). *Race, gender, and leadership: Re-envisioning organizational leadership from the perspectives of African American women executives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Patton, M. Q. (2000). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peters, A. L. (2003). *A case study of an African American female principal participating in an administrative leadership academy*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3124386)
- Peters, S., Kinsey, P., & Malloy, T. (2004). Gender and leadership perceptions among African Americans. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 26(1), 93-101.
- Pettigrew, T. F., Jemmott, J. B. & Johnson, J. T. (1984). *Race and the questioner effect: Testing the ultimate attribution error*. Santa Cruz, CA: University of California.
- Pollard, D. S. (1997). Race, gender, and educational leadership: Perspectives from African-American principals. *Educational Policy*, 11(3), 353-375.
- Reddick-Smack, S. J. (2011). *Our history, our society, our culture: The perception of Black females on how history, society, and culture affect their decision to become educational leaders*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3467939)
- Reed, L., & Evans, A. E. (2008). "What you see is [not always] what you get!": Dispelling

- race and gender leadership assumptions. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21(5), 487-499.
- Reid-Merritt, P. (1996). *How phenomenal Black women are rising to the top*. New York, NY: J. Wiley.
- Restine, L. N. (1993). *Women in administration: Facilitators for change*. Newbury, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Rolle, K. A., Davies, T. G., and Banning, J. H. (2010). African American administrators' experiences in predominantly white colleges and universities. *Community College Journal Research and Practice*, 24(2), 79-94.
- Schensul, J. J., LeCompte, M. D., Nastasi, B. K., & Borgatti, S. P. (1999). Enhanced ethnographic methods: Audiovisual techniques, focused group interviews, and elicitation techniques. In M. D. LeCompte & J. J. Schensul (Eds.), *Ethnographer's toolkit* (Vol. 3, pp. 134-167). Walnut Creek, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scinto, M. E. (2006). *African American women leaders in predominately Caucasian schools*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3210208)
- Shakeshaft, C., (1989). *Women in educational administration*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Shakeshaft, C., Brown, G., Irby, B. J., Grogan, M., & Ballenger, J. (2007). Increasing gender equity in educational leadership. *Handbook for achieving gender equity through education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sherman, R. L. (1993). *The rock ceiling: A study of African-American women managers'*

experiences and perceptions of barriers restricting advancement in the corporation. Santa Barbara, CA: The Fielding Institute.

- Smith, A. M. (2008). *Race and gender in the leadership experiences of three female African American high school principals: A multiple case study.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA.
- Smith, B. (2010). *On the inside looking out, here I stand: A study of African American female public school superintendents.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3424986)
- Smith, M., & Lemasters, L. (2010). What happened to all the Black principals after Brown? *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation.* 5(4), Retrieved from <http://cnx.org/content/m35854/1.1/>
- Spring, J. (2004). *The American School: 1642-2004. (6th ed.).* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory and implications. In M. W. Apple (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol. 22, pp. 191–243). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Taylor, C. R. (2004). *An inquiry into the experiences of the African American principal: Critical race theory and black feminist perspectives.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3164796)
- Tillman, L. C. (2004). Chapter 4: African American principals and the legacy of Brown. *Review of Research in Education,* 28(1), 101-146.
- Toppo, G. (2004). Thousands of black lost jobs. *USA Today*, Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-04-28-brown-side2_x.htm
- Tyack, D., & Hansot, E., (1982). *Managers of virtue: public school leadership in*

America, 1820-1980. New York, NY: Basic Books.

United States Code Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI).

United States Executive Order 11246 (1965).

Walker, A. (1983). *In search of our mother's gardens.* New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interviewing.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Vinzant, J. (2009). *Black principals' perceptions of how their racial, cultural, personal, and professional identities affect their leadership.* (Doctoral dissertation).

Retrieved from ProQuest database. (3360295)

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research project. I am here to learn about your experiences as an African-American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school. The purpose of this study is to research the extent to which race and gender influence the leadership of African-American female principals of predominantly White schools. Over the course of this interview, I will ask you questions about race, gender, and your leadership. I am not here to alter your perceptions or opinions in any way or to pass judgment on you; rather, my goal is to truly understand your experiences, actions, and perceptions. At any time you feel uncomfortable with the interview, you may excuse yourself from the interview and decide not to participate in this study. Do you have any questions about the procedures? Okay, let's begin the interview.

1. Tell me how you came into your current or former role as an African American female principal of a predominantly White elementary school.
 - Personal History – age, education, family influences
 - Professional History – skills, positions, networks
2. Reflecting on these experiences, would you do anything differently to prepare yourself to lead a predominantly White elementary school?
 - Such as pursue a certain leadership position, take a particular course, or anything else you feel would have helped you in this particular leadership role?
3. Tell me about your most successful and most challenging experiences in leading a predominantly White elementary school as an African-American female principal?
 - At the building level?
 - At the district level?
4. Do you feel your race influences (or influenced) these leadership experiences?
 - What role does (or did) it play at the building level?
 - What role does (or did) it play at the district level?
5. Do you feel your gender influences (or influenced) these leadership experiences?
 - What role does (or did) it play at the building level?
 - What role does (or did) it play at the district level?
6. What advice would you give to African-American women pursuing leadership roles in predominantly White elementary schools?

DEC 13 2012

Informed Consent for African-American Female Principals of Predominantly White Elementary Schools

Approval Date

Researcher's Affiliation

The researcher's name is Shauna Angelina Carter and she is currently completing her doctoral dissertation in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services on the influences of race and gender in educational leadership. The title of her study is "Celebrate With Me: The Influences of Race and Gender on the Leadership of African-American Female Principals of Predominantly White Elementary Schools."

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to research the extent to which race and gender influence the leadership of African-American female principals of predominantly White schools. She is hopeful that this study will broaden the overall understanding of how race and gender influence educational leadership, identify strategies that could assist current African-American female principals and better prepare future educational leaders. The interview will use open-ended questions and will last approximately forty-five minutes. The interview questions will explore how principals perceive the influence of race and gender on their leadership and how they address race and gender-related obstacles or challenges in their administration.

Procedures

The interviews will be held in the principal's school or at a mutually convenient place and time for the principal. The researcher will take notes and use a digital recorder, pending the principal's permission to record the interview.

Instruments

She will use the following open-ended questions in the interview:

1. Tell me how you came into your current position
 - Personal History – education, family influences
 - Professional History – skills, positions, networks
2. Tell me about your most successful experience in leading a predominantly White school as an African-American female principal?
 - At the building level?
 - At the district level?
3. Tell me about your most difficult experience in leading a predominantly White school as an African-American female principal?
 - At the building level?
 - At the district level?

Expiration Date

DEC 13 2013

4. How does race influence your leadership experiences?
 - What role does it play at the building level?
 - What role does it play at the district level?
5. How does gender influence leadership experiences?
 - What role does it play at the building level?
 - What role does it play at the district level?
6. What advice would you give to future African-American female principals of predominantly White elementary schools?

Voluntary Nature

The principal's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Before the principal decides to participate in the study, the principal can talk to anyone she feels comfortable with about the research and she can contact the researcher with any questions. If a principal agrees to participate in the study and feels uncomfortable during the interview, she can say so and the researcher will move on to the next question. If the principal decides not to continue her participation in the study, after the interview has started, she can ask the researcher to stop and the study will end without penalty to the principal. If the principal has any questions after the study, she can ask the researcher and the researcher will answer her questions.

Anonymity

The researcher and the principal will be the only ones present during the interview, unless the principal would like to have someone else there. No one else except the researcher will have access to the information documented during the interviews. The entire interview will be recorded using a digital recorder and a field notes journal. No one will be identified by name on the recorder or in the journal. The researcher will use pseudonyms for the principal's name, the principal's school and district to ensure anonymity.

Confidentiality

The information recorded on the digital recorder and in the journal is confidential and no one else except the researcher will have access to the recordings and the notes. All notes and recordings will be transcribed, saved on a USB thumb drive, and then secured under lock and key by the researcher. For security reasons, no information will be stored electronically on hard drives of laptop or desktop computers.

Expiration Date
DEC 13 2013

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

DEC 13 2012

Approval Date