

2022

## Retention of African American Male Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Marla West

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Walden University

2022

Abstract

Retention of African American Male Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools

by

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MA, Western Maryland College, 2001

BS, Virginia State University, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2022

## Abstract

The representation of African American male teachers in elementary urban schools has decreased. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate administrators' and African American male teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in the focus urban school district. Social, cognitive, and transformational leadership theories were used as a framework to guide the study. Research questions addressed how administrators perceive the ways they support the retention of African American male teachers and how African American male teachers perceive that support. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit eleven African American male teachers and eight administrators to participate in this study. Data were collected using semi structured interviews and thematic analysis. The interview responses were transcribed and examined through thematic analysis, which identified codes and themes derived from the transcripts. The three key findings that emerged from the data were (a) climate and culture, (b) developing strong relationships and collaboration, and (c) support and professional development. The findings identified leadership practices that supported challenges influenced by student achievement, professional growth, and African American teacher retention. Further recommendations include the findings from this study may contribute to a positive social change of African American male teachers' presence in school settings and improve effective leadership supports provided for African American male teachers in urban schools.

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## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to give thanks and praise to Jesus Christ my Savior for guiding me through this doctoral journey and accomplishment. This journey was overwhelming at times but I persevered with prayer and the support of many people in my life. A sincere thanks to my Committee Chairs Dr. Mary Hallums and Dr. Robert Flanders for their feedback, knowledge, guidance and encouragement through this doctoral process. I sincerely appreciate both of you! I want to thank my loving mother Cynthia for being my prayer warrior, supportive and reminding me of various scriptures to encourage me to reach my goals. With all my heart, I want to thank Garvey, Cole, family and friends for your love, advice, encouraging words and supporting me through this educational journey. My dog Houston for being my companion sitting by my side late evenings while I worked on my dissertation. Words cannot express how I love and appreciate you all. I am grateful and thankful for my family and friends.

Philippians 4:13 has been my motivational verse and a significant part of my purpose driven life. By faith and grace I accomplished my goal. I will continue to contribute to the educational field my knowledge and educational leadership skills. I anticipate to continue to prepare lifelong learners and developing productive citizens of society to implement positive social change for all.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Conceptual Framework for the Study.....	9
Nature of the Study.....	11
Definitions.....	13
Assumptions.....	15
Scope and Delimitations.....	15
Limitations.....	16
Significance.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20
Literature Search Strategy.....	22
Conceptual Framework.....	23
Social Cognitive Theory.....	24
Transformational Leadership.....	26
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable.....	30
African American Male Teachers.....	30
Diversity of Male Teachers in the Teaching Profession.....	32

Teacher Retention .....	34
School Climate and Culture .....	37
Diversity in Urban School Settings.....	39
Teacher Turnover in Public Urban Schools.....	40
Student Academic Success .....	42
Summary and Conclusions .....	43
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	45
Research Design and Rationale .....	46
Narrative Inquiry.....	47
Ethnography .....	47
Phenomenology.....	48
Grounded Theory .....	48
Case Study .....	49
Role of the Researcher .....	50
Methodology .....	52
Participant Selection .....	53
Instrumentation (Qualitative).....	54
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection .....	56
Data Analysis Plan.....	58
Coding.....	59
Trustworthiness.....	61
Credibility .....	61
Transferability.....	62



Dependability.....	62
Confirmability.....	63
Ethical Procedures .....	63
Summary.....	64
Chapter 4: Results.....	65
Setting.....	65
Demographics .....	66
Data Collection .....	67
Semi Structured Interview Process.....	68
Data Analysis .....	69
Coding.....	70
Discrepant Cases.....	77
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	78
Summary.....	80
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	82
Interpretation of the Findings.....	83
Key Finding 1: Climate and Culture.....	84
Key Finding 2: Developing Strong Relationships and Collaboration .....	84
Key Finding 3: Support and Professional Development.....	85
Review of the Conceptual Framework .....	86
Limitations of the Study.....	87
Recommendations.....	88
Implications.....	89

Positive Social Change at the Organizational Level.....	89
Methodological Implications .....	90
Recommendation for Practice.....	91
Recommendations for Further Study .....	92
Conclusion .....	93
References.....	96

## List of Tables

Table 1. Local Teacher Population and African American Male Teachers.....	5
Table 2. Research and Interview Questions.....	55
Table 3. Demographics of the Participants.....	66
Table 4. Challenges Administrators Experience when Supporting the Retention of African American Male Teachers.....	72
Table 5. Research Questions Alignment with Themes.....	77

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are around 3.1 million public school teachers in the United States. An estimated 2% (approximately 60,000) of those teachers are African American males (US Department of Education, 2018). The student K-12 population continues to become more diverse and reflective of diverse teachers, specifically African American males who are minimal in urban school districts (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Underwood et al., 2020). According to Wallace and Gagen (2020), African American, Asian American, Native American, and non-white Hispanic educators only comprise 18 % of the national teaching population. Male teachers of color are non-existent in many public schools throughout the United States (Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Research relevant to principal leadership qualities that emphasized teacher retention helped inform educators and district policy makers as they implement overwhelming strategies to increase teacher retention data (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2018).

According to Will (2018), research has shown that effective school leadership is an essential predictor of teacher retention in urban school districts. How principals engage their teachers is relevant to whether teachers will remain or leave education (Will, 2018). Teacher retention rates seem to decrease in school environments where teachers experience a lack of leadership (Johnson, 2022). The importance of ensuring students are provided opportunities for learning experiences from teachers of similar ethnic and racial backgrounds is significant to the global community (Walker et al., 2019).

This basic qualitative study may provide insight on how leadership practices can inform policies and strategic educational programs to increase teacher retention of African American males and diversify the school climate. Further research is needed to increase teacher retention of African American male teachers in urban school districts and to address issues that determine the decision to leave education. School administrators are the connection that determines whether African American male teachers remain in schools (Walker et al., 2019).

### **Background**

Teacher retention is a persistent challenge in education in the United States and is a problem, specifically, in elementary and middle public schools (Dahlkamp et al., 2017; Glazer, 2018; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Teachers tend to leave the profession during the initial years in the position and close to retirement (Zhang & Robertson-Kraft, 2018). According to Ingersoll et al. (2019), between 20% and 40% of all teachers depart the profession during the initial five years of teaching. Teachers expressed that a lack of support from the school administration (Reitman & Karge, 2019) influenced the choice to leave. The teacher retention rate of 13.8% in the local setting exceeded the focus state average of 10% in Grades K-12 (Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Silvera, 2017). The problem of teacher retention contributes to challenges for school administrators in urban schools (Viano, et al., 2021).

There is a decreased presence of African American male teachers in classrooms in the United States. Based on Bristol and Goings (2019), only 2% of K-12 teachers are African American males. Administrators are unsure how to retain African American male

teachers (Reitman & Karge, 2019). Growing evidence of having instructors of the same race and similar gender can contribute to improving the learning outcomes for African American students (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). According to Milner (2018), African American male teachers often develop curriculum and instructional practices that align with the interests and academic needs of their African American male students during learning. African American male children receiving special education have limited engagement with African American male teachers and as a result, must navigate learning, behavioral, and social issues without culturally experienced minority role models (Sandles, 2020).

The study was needed because administrator leadership may influence African American male teachers' decisions to remain at or leave a school, contribute to student achievement, school climate, and teacher retention. Effective leadership has been a consistent research topic as a component essential for school organizational success (Dou et al., 2107). Dicke et al. (2019) expressed the structure of and relationship between a teacher's job satisfaction and administrators' leadership resulted in student achievement and school environment satisfaction. Therefore, it was important to investigate how administrator leadership supports may influence African American male teachers in urban elementary and middle schools. African American male teachers in the classroom have been correlated with improved student achievement of African American male students (Gist, 2018). According to Jeter and Melendez (2022), despite the national need to increase the number of African American male teachers in the classroom, educators also need to establish culturally relevant pedagogies, cultural abilities and promote

academic student achievement. The importance of the school environment for teacher self-efficacy, productivity, and job satisfaction influenced by administration support links to a positive school climate and retention of teachers (Dixon et al., 2019). The gap in the practice is school practices that may influence the decision of African American male teachers to stay or leave (Wallace & Gagen, 2020).

### **Problem Statement**

The local problem of the study is administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. In this local setting, there are 135,962 total students, more than 55 % of the students are African American, and 28% are African American males (Northeastern State Department of Education, 2019). According to the Northeastern State Department of Education where this school district is located, there are approximately 60,740 teachers of which 2,445 are African American males and 9,818 are Caucasian male teachers. Carothers et al., (2019) provided evidence regarding teacher retention within public educational institutions nationwide. Based on research data, Carothers et al. (2019) suggested a national discussion about teacher retention and innovative responses to address the issue in high-need urban schools. More than 8 % of teachers leave education annually in the United States (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Teachers leaving the profession cite a lack of administrative support as the top five priority reasons for teacher retention (Abitabile, 2020). According to Kramrath and Bradford (2020) research on the teacher, retention emphasizes it can lead to issues in urban schools, teachers, administrators, and the students. African American male teachers

have been complaining to senior district administrators that some school principals are not implementing instructional leadership practices to support the retention of teachers at their schools (Senior District Administrator, personal communication, April 27, 2020).

Table 1 outlines the information on the total teacher population and African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in a northeastern urban school district. This table provides data that shows the retention of African American male teachers. It is important to note that these numbers may reflect teachers who exited as well as new teachers who were hired. These numbers provide evidence to the problem being addressed in this study.

**Table 1**

*Local Teacher Population and African American Male Teachers*

Year	Total Number of Teachers	African American Male Teachers
2017	9,226	684
2018	9,334	715
2019	9,315	736

*Note:* Adopted from the State Publicschool.org. Professional staff by assignment, Race/Ethnicity, and gender in public schools.

The table displays from 2017-2019 the number of African American male teachers increased slightly yearly but remain at approximately 7% of the total number of teachers.

According to Will (2018), effective school leadership is among the strongest predictors of teacher retention. African American male teachers are leaving the school district every academic year (Associate Superintendent of Schools, personal communication, April 29, 2020). According to documents found in the local district



board minutes between 2015 and 2019, African American male teachers have complained that school administrators struggle as instructional leaders to support them (District Board Minutes 2019). Senior district administrators such as associate superintendents and area directors decided in 2016 to support the leadership capacity of the school principals by visiting the school sites every month to help administrators better implement instructional leadership practices to support the retention of African American male teachers (Senior District Administrator, personal communication, November 12, 2019). Effective leadership practices can keep teachers from leaving schools and the profession (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). The associate superintendents and area directors found that between 2016 and 2018 many school principals did not know how to apply their instructional leadership practices to support African American male teachers (School Administrator of Schools, personal communication, January 31, 2020).

Although associate superintendents provided monthly feedback to school administrators, district administrators reported to the county superintendent that administrators continue to struggle to support African American male teachers (Administrator of Schools, personal communication, Dec. 11, 2019). School administrators reported to area directors that they are struggling to support and retain African American male teachers (Senior District Administrator, personal communication, September 27, 2019). The gap in the literature is how administrators influence the retention of African American male teachers who may decide to leave or remain in teaching. Urban school administrators are tasked with issues from hiring and retaining teachers from diverse backgrounds (Walker et al., 2019). According to Walley (2018),

there is a lack of sufficient literature that addresses teacher preparation and hiring practices of African American males in K-8 educational settings. Although previous research on the topic of new teacher employment and retaining teachers in urban schools exist, previously conducted research shows no significant ways to address the problem (Wronowski, 2018).

The underlying issue that led to this qualitative study is the retention rate of African American male teachers. There is a gap in practice and literature in how the leadership practices of elementary and middle school administrators support the retention of African American male teachers. The problem to be addressed is how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study investigated administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Teacher retention of African American male teachers can be challenging based on teacher preparation programs that may influence building professional capacity and adequately prepare for obtaining certification based on state requirements. Additionally, hindrances may occur because of the lack of availability of school-based budget resources and the monitoring of student discipline practices school-wide (School Administrator, 2020). This current study conducted research about the lessening presence of African American male teachers and the possible administrator

supports that may contribute to the academic success of student learning in schools (see Walley, 2018).

To investigate the research problem, a basic qualitative research method was conducted to develop an understanding of administrator mentoring as it relates to the retention of African American males at the elementary and middle schools within the local school system. In 2017, teacher attrition rates were calculated at 7.7% nationwide (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2018), ranking the northeastern region below the 16% national norm (Abt, 2019; Janulis, 2017). Based on research, policymakers focused on teacher turnover, since findings show increased evidence of influences that hinder teacher retention in public school systems (McQueen & Ronfeldt, 2017; Vagi et al., 2019). There are gaps in the literature exploring how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban district. This study explored administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

### **Research Questions**

The local problem of the study is administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The problem of this basic qualitative study was aligned to the purpose and addressed the research questions.

RQ1. How do administrators perceive they support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in a local urban school district?

RQ2. How do African American male teachers perceive administrators support their retention in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district?

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study was social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, human behavior is emphasized as an interaction of an individual's characteristics, the environment, and behavior which derives from cognitive elements of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994, 1997). Bandura's social cognitive theory is aligned with the self-efficacy of teachers. Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory relates to the leadership styles of principals.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are related to job stress, teacher burnout, and job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997). Influences of work relations, and job responsibilities can contribute to teachers' perspectives on self-efficacy. According to Wang et al. (2020), teacher self-efficacy is related to the chances that teachers remain in the teaching profession and are influenced by teacher empowerment, school resources, and principal support (Wang et al., 2020). An individual's relationships derive from personal perspectives, and skilled cognitive capabilities previously created can be influenced by the factors of an individual's surroundings (Bandura, 1994,1997). The frameworks used

to guide this basic qualitative study and a more detailed explanation of the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study will be discussed in chapter 2.

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to accomplish a common goal (Northouse, 2018). Burns (1978) introduced transformational leadership theory as leaders demonstrating transformational leadership engages individuals to a higher level of motivation. According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership theory demonstrates leadership behaviors that influence and lead committed individuals to develop their leadership skills and capacity. Bass and Avolio (1994) presented transformational leadership as a multidimensional construct identified in four components: charisma inspired motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Transformational leaders as defined have the potential to lead teachers and students through established visions, values, and long-term goals with the result to establish a positive and achievement-oriented school environment (Bass, 1990).

The social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory grounded the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study. The conceptual framework established the development of the research questions, interview questions instrument to explore the participants' experiences. The frameworks are relevant to the basic qualitative study focused on the administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the teacher retention of African American male teachers. The experiences of African American male teachers and administrators provided narratives of lived experiences of administrator's supports (Donner et al., 2018). The conceptual frameworks of the theory of social cognitive and transformational leadership theory are

relevant to explore the problem in this study. Detailed explanations of the key elements of the conceptual framework are described in chapter 2. These concepts may provide information for a better understanding of the participants' perception of administrators' supports for the teacher retention of African American male teachers. Educational administrators can gain insight from the research and create recruitment expectations by outlining the advantages African American male educators can offer to the K-12 educational field (Walley, 2018). In this basic qualitative study, I explored the problem using semistructured interviews aligned to address the research questions.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was a basic qualitative methodology study in a local urban school district. According to Yin (2018), a qualitative study is one study where the researcher investigates a phenomenon. Various sources of data were used to support an understanding of the teacher's and principal's perceptions, experiences, and beliefs (Yin, 2018). The research is appropriate for a basic qualitative study to gain an understanding of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Participants formulate, interpret the meaning of and experience the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In this study, I explored the administrator's perception of their leadership, support, self-efficacy, and the influence these have on retaining African American male teachers in a local urban school district. The primary data source for a basic qualitative study is an in-depth interview. The basic qualitative approach supported the analysis of the data received from these sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The researcher investigates participants' perceptions to address the research problem and purpose (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I used a basic qualitative approach to explore how administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested the purpose of this basic qualitative approach is to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences. In a basic qualitative study, the participants formulate and interpret the meaning of a phenomenon while experiencing the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), researchers use the qualitative method approach like phenomenology when variables of the study are unknown. Phenomenology draws on the experiences of a group of people who are expected to share similar experiences during the research process. The quantitative methodology will not be conducted in this study because the investigation will not test hypotheses or analyze the statistical significance of variables' correlational relationships. For the study, the basic qualitative approach was appropriate to use.

This research I explored how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States and, what they have in common as they experience a phenomenon. A basic qualitative study approach was used to collect data, and an analysis of the participants' experiences is provided for this study. An investigation was conducted and data was gathered from administrators and African

American male teachers who were participants in semi structured interviews using open-ended questions. Based on Stake's (2010) ideas, the purpose of qualitative research is to examine perception and understanding. Perceptions and educational experiences of the participants will be the nature of the study focusing on teachers' self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and the influence it may have on the retention of African American male teachers. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Themes in the data reflect important concepts in the data set (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Definitions**

*Attrition:* Refers to the reduction in the teaching profession workforce due to teachers' decisions to leave the school organization employed by or the profession of education (Harris et al., 2016; Farmer, 2020).

*Culture:* The norms of behavior in organizations, a set of beliefs, behaviors, values, food, music, and religious beliefs of a specific group of people (Stauffer & Maxwell, 2020).

*Instructional leadership:* Is the style of leadership involving the collaboration of the principal and the schools' stakeholders. The principal focuses on planning, curriculum, teaching practices, learning goals, and evaluations (Acton, 2021; Day et al., 2016; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

*Mentoring:* Is defined as the act of providing instructional support, coaching, lesson planning support, and collaborative decision-making with teachers (Gray, 2018; Spooner-Lane, 2017).



*Pedagogy*: The method of instruction a teacher or administrator uses to facilitate the curriculum to the student population. Teacher self-reflection of their pedagogical practices increases awareness of what is evident in the classroom (Gilliand, 2019).

*Positive School Climate*: A component in which a school environment promotes an increase in student academic achievement, reduced teacher retention, positive relationships, collaboration, and positive leadership (McCarley et al., 2016; Kurland, 2018).

*Retention*: Teacher turnover, staff reduction, and mobility from school districts and education profession based on factors that may influence teacher's professional development (Harris et al., 2016; Farmer, 2020).

*Self-Efficacy*: Self-efficacy is a concept that represents an individual's perspective, belief's in their abilities to organize and implement the tasks of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997).

*Teacher Retention*: When a teacher remains in the profession. Teacher retention at the school level is when a teacher remains in teaching in the same school environment every school year. (Ingersoll et al., 2019)

*Teacher Self-efficacy*: A teacher's self-confidence, the concept of ability and competence to stimulate learning, and the ability to accomplish the task with external behaviors which may inhibit student participation and motivation to learning (Bandura, 1994; Shaukat & Iqbal, 2012).

*Transformational Leadership*: Traits instructional leaders demonstrate to encourage mentoring, provide resources and supports to improve the educational school

environment for stakeholders. Transformational leadership is a form of leadership characterized by mutual support in which the instructional leader and follower share a common purpose (Burns, 1978).

*Urban district:* An urban public school district that provides K-12 education and learning outcomes to students who live in large demographic areas often with higher community poverty rates, high teacher attrition, and limited fiscal resources (Dolph, 2017; Hopper et al., 2022).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are based on reflective feedback and making inferences on educational experiences (Alt & Raichel, 2020). The researcher assumes facts to be true, but is unable to prove the validity (Babbie, 2021). An assumption of the proposed study is that school administrators will honestly respond to the research questions. Another assumption is that administrators try to retain African American male teachers in their schools. Another assumption is that school administrators work to create a conducive learning environment that assists with developing meaningful professional relationships. Finally, I assume the participants in this study were truthful and shared relevant experiences in response to the interview questions.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this study was the perceptions of K-8 male educators and administrators who hold state certification licenses, with a sample of 6-8 administrators and 10-12 African American male teachers employed in the northeastern urban school district of this study. The scope was a clear definition of the extent of content covered in

the study to reach logical conclusions and provide conclusive responses to address the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Delimitations set the boundaries of the research study and define the scope (Babbie, 2021). A delimitation was this study will only include elementary and middle schools from the local urban district excluding high school administrators and teachers. The participants are currently working in an urban school. The analysis conducted in this study and the research is limited to focus on African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools of an urban school district in the local area. I choose administrators and teachers to participate from different elementary and middle schools in an urban school district. I used semistructured interviews to investigate the basic qualitative study. The study excluded female teachers in the school district. Teacher retention may vary from the school's selected based on demographics within the school district; the delimitation of the boundary set for the research may influence the results.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are potential incidents that occur during the study out of the researcher's control (Babbie, 2021; Bernard, 2013). A limitation was the administrators varying in years in an educational leadership position. A limitation of the study was conducting virtual interviews and the accessibility to interview the participants in person and not in their school setting based on the current hybrid distance learning model. Another limitation of this basic qualitative study was that teacher and principal experiences for this school year will be virtual and may not reflect normal school happenings. Another limitation was the short time frame allotted for interviews and the

time availability of the participants. Data is limited to the honesty and openness of responses from the participants. Another limitation is based on possible researcher biases. I maintained a neutral and objective perspective to prevent any biases of administrators' responses I believe to be leadership qualities. To address the biases and limitations, as the researcher I ensured thick rich descriptions of the participants' responses to establish transferability (Guest et al., 2020). Transferability is a way in which qualitative research can be applied or transferable to broader contexts while maintaining context-specific descriptions of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

### **Significance**

This proposed research study addressed a gap in the literature by examining how administrators support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in urban school districts. This basic qualitative study contributed to the understanding of how administrative supports may influence African American male teachers' decision to remain or leave the teaching profession. The significance of this study informed educators how leadership supports by the administration may help retain African American male teachers based on the experiences of the participants. Administration supports is the factor most consistently associated with teachers' decisions to stay or leave a school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). This study will contribute to a better understanding of why African American male teachers leave the teaching profession.

The findings from this research may contribute to the research gap in peer-reviewed research on teacher retention of African American males in elementary and

middle schools in urban school districts and promote a positive social change of African-American male teachers' presence in school settings. The diversity of teachers, students, training supports for school administrators to recruit, hire, and retain diverse, qualified teachers are evident in urban school districts to ensure the closing of equity gaps.

Identifying the experiences and influences of African American males in public schools could influence districts to create appropriate reforms for teachers. The findings of the current study may provide evidence for school district administrators to make decisions to implement research-based supports in schools and to retain African American male teachers. Based on data analysis of teacher and principal perception data and teacher retention data, this research study's findings may contribute to generating an understanding of teacher retention. The long-term goal may inform professional development for principals supporting African American male teachers. Educational administrators can gain insight from the research and create recruitment expectations by outlining the advantages African American male educators can offer to the K-12 educational field (Walley, 2018).

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 includes the research study, the key components, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, defining terms, and the significance of the study. The purpose of this research was to investigate how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. To investigate the research problem, a basic qualitative research method

was conducted. Chapter 2 I included a description of the current literature about the research problem, along with the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem I addressed in this basic qualitative study was how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

A gap in the literature existed because little is known about how administrators and teachers perceive the retention of African American male teachers. Additional exploration is needed of administrators' and teachers' perspectives on how to retain African American male teachers who may decide to leave teaching that which is described in the research literature review. This study addressed the gap in the literature by examining how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) stated that within the first five years, 30%-50% of teachers new to the profession leave year after year. Wronowski (2018) outlined several factors that are important in the decision-making factor when leaving a school, which includes a combination of school culture, leadership, and collegial relationships. When remaining at a school, factors for staying were motivated by school leadership, mentor programs, and professional development within the school (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018).

Gaps in the literature exist about the potential influence of gender roles, negative stereotypes, and societal expectations of African American males who decide to teach and remain in the teaching profession (Wallace & Gagen, 2020). This research may assist school district leaders in making informed decisions on educational policy to address African American male teacher retention from the northeastern urban local school district. By understanding the root causes that affect the teachers' option to stay or quit, school systems will design effective schools and higher-level learning conditions (Sun, 2018). The prospective research findings may contribute to positive social change by capacity building urban school administrators, creating positive school climates, and establishing school environments that provide leadership for professional development, hiring, and retention of African American male teachers.

According to Underwood et al. (2020), recruiting and retaining African American male teachers in classrooms across all school levels has been a long-standing challenge in the field of education; Previous researchers investigated why few African American males became teachers and were retained in the schools. In addition to the national need to increase the 2% of African American male teachers in classrooms, the focus also needs to be on culturally relevant pedagogy, support cultural competence, and how to promote academic student success (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Underwood et al., 2020). According to Yan (2020), improving school leadership to maintain effective working conditions that promote student learning and lower teacher attrition is significant to this study to pursue further research in the field of education. Transformational Leadership Theory provides insights to explore administrators' efforts to support the retention of African American



male teachers in elementary and middle schools in a northeastern urban school district. Capacity building in school leadership to ensure support for diversity and inclusion within the school is fundamental to improve teacher working conditions and, as a result, increase teacher retention (Stohmann et al., 2020). Social cognitive and Transformational Leadership Theory provides a perspective through which to explore how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban district. Developing an understanding of these influences of African American male teacher retention, district leaders and educational policy makers can use the findings of this study to create structures aligned to leadership support, teacher retention, and school improvement (Ford et al., 2019).

In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature on social cognitive, transformational leadership theories, self-efficacy, and teacher retention. Chapter 2 also includes a review of the characteristics and theories that influence the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in urban school districts. The literature search strategy includes a list of the key search terms, search engines, and databases I use for this study. Based on the literature in this chapter, I provided analyzed research methodologies to provide an overview of the basic qualitative method selected for this research.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Literature for this basic qualitative research study was obtained using the following research databases: ProQuest Central, Google Scholar, SAGE Journals, School system media services, Emerald Insight, Walden, and EBSCOhost. I used government

websites to reference which consist of the National Center for Education Statistics, the state Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Education. Key terms, which were used individually and in combination, relating to the research topic are teacher retention, attrition, teacher turnover, school leadership supports, African American male teachers, leadership, transformational leadership, school culture, school climate, urban school systems, self-efficacy, and professional development. The key terms I used to conduct searches are teacher retention of African American males, urban school district, attrition, school climate, culture, self- efficacy, student achievement, diversity, teacher shortage, transformational leadership, and school leadership support led to peer-reviewed literature searches to include literature published within the last five years. The literature is relevant to the research topic and provides essential background information aligned to the research problem statement, the purpose of the study, and research questions. The research conducted analyzes the major themes addressed in this study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study is social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. Self-efficacy was defined by Bandura (1977) during his studies on social cognitive theory in which his theoretical framework was established as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Berkant & Baysal, 2018, p. 165; Bandura, 1977). Studies on transformational leadership increased and reached a peak in the 1990s (Gumus et al., 2018). Pivotal to the accomplishment of principals, students, and schools within the United States, is effective, quality leadership, and positive school climate

(Romero & Krichesky, 2018). Transformational school leaders provide support and establish a safe and orderly school environment that promotes teacher job satisfaction and teacher commitment to remain in the profession. According to Bush (2017, 2021) transformational leadership is among the most enduring of the various educational leadership models. Significant research on teacher retention exists, the storied experiences of teacher leavers provide richness to understanding the decisions behind leaving that need to be heard by the broader research community (Mawhinney & Rinke, 2018).

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory is a psychological perspective on human functioning that emphasizes the critical role influenced by the social environment on motivation, learning, and self-regulation (Usher & Schunk, 2018). There are five distinct social cognitive theories that exist in previous reviews of the literature: self-efficacy theory, self-determination theory, expectancy-value theory, attribution theory, and goal theory (Savolainen, 2018). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) the social cognitive theory has been applicable within psychological disciplines, as well as in the fields of education, health, and business. Earlier perspectives of social cognitive theory, often labeled “social learning theories,” focused on the importance of motivation and social variables in individual behavior (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Bandura’s social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in setting career-related goals (Dickinson et al., 2017; Falco & Shaheed, 2021). Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory provides a perspective of

human functioning in which individuals are neither willingly shaped by environmental factors nor automatically determined by their genetic endowments. Therefore, an individual's behavior, environment, and personal factors are reciprocally influential. According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) Bandura's social cognitive theory contributes to the field of motivation. The social cognitive theory predicts internal compromising processes as self-efficacy, reciprocal relation to behavioral, environmental, goals, and outcome expectations (Maddux & Kleiman, 2018). Social cognitive theory the environment aspects consist of teachers' perceptions of the level of support, restrictions, and requirements established within a social context in both micro and macro environments (Rubenstein et al., 2018).

### ***Teacher Self-Efficacy***

According to self-efficacy theory, performance accomplishments establish the most influential origin of efficacy information (Bandura, 1977). Based on Wu et al. (2019) findings, teaching performance had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' self-efficacy. Developing teachers' confidence in their professional skills to promote student learning presents an essential target variable of leadership in schools (Windlinger et al., 2020). Feng and Sass, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2020) found that more effective teachers are more likely to remain in the teaching workforce. Clark and Newberry (2019) discussed new teachers observing veteran teachers and the reflection of this experience that occurs as they prepare for a classroom of their own. Once the preservice teacher has taken on the role of a new

teacher, many embedded job aspects arise that cannot be viewed through observation, which can influence teacher self-efficacy.

Cwiklinski (2020), developing an understanding of how teachers perceive support being given can make a difference when considering teacher retention. Support from a mentor teacher, administrative team, and colleagues can help new teachers develop a framework for future teaching success. Researchers found that a teacher becomes knowledgeable of what skills they do not possess once they step into a classroom and therefore have a lower level of self-efficacy (Berkant & Baysal, 2018, p. 165; Bandura, 1977). Hasselquist et al. (2018) identified teacher self-efficacy as "the extent they feel competent to compete for their duties as a classroom instructor," which is further explained to influence increased classroom performance and professional persistence. Bebas (n.d.) recognized how self-efficacy is strongly influenced by the ability to persevere and that higher levels of teacher retention are more likely if the connection between self-efficacy and new teacher training is established in the beginning stages of teacher training (Bebas, n.d., p. 19). The capacity of mentoring programs and administrator support s improve self-efficacy, which can influence teacher retention (Wiens et al., 2019). One of the most important factors in reaching the goal of the learning-teaching process successfully is that the school administrators' instructional leadership behaviors a affect teacher self-efficacy (Ozdemir et al., 2020).

### **Transformational Leadership**

According to Bush (2017, 2021) transformational leadership offers a normative approach to school leadership, which focuses primarily on the process by which

administrators influence staff and stakeholders to become committed to schoolwide goals. Transformational leadership is the most widely studied form of school administration leadership (Sun & Henderson, 2017; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021). According to Stohmann et al. (2020) support from the school, leadership is critical for retaining teachers of color and diverse ethnicity. In educational settings, transformational leadership shows mostly consistent relationships with student achievement with significant but small effects on average achievement (Windlinger et al., 2020). Meyers and Sadler (2018) research analysis indicated that effective administrative leadership includes a combination of leadership styles and behaviors, and noted leadership training for educators within struggling schools who may need support and training that is different from those at other schools. Effective mentoring can consist of other instructional leaders appointed by the administrative team (Boyce & Bowers, 2017; Agasisti et al., 2019).

According to Dixon et al. (2019), professional relationships among teachers, administrative leadership, and support play a role in teacher retention. Indeed, effective leadership is key to teacher retention, specifically, if teachers are provided with timely support, mentors, and professional development (Dixon et al., 2019). According to Walker et al. (2019) the rationale of diversifying the teaching workforce, especially African American males, is a consistent education issue. School principals play a crucial role in creating a positive perception of teaching and establishing a school setting in which African American male teachers can succeed. Research related to principal leadership qualities that focuses on teacher retention informs educators and policymakers

as they struggle to reduce high teacher turnover rates (Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2018).

According to Walker et al. (2019) school administrators have been given more autonomy to make critical decisions of staff recruitment, budgeting, funding, allocation, and revamping the school culture. The pivotal role school climate plays in teacher retention of African American male preservice teachers is based on perceptions of isolation and being misunderstood (Walker et al., 2019). African American preservice teachers experience different than other teacher experiences; therefore, urban school administration should consider adopting structures that embrace diversity to assist teachers of various educational background experiences (Bristol & Goings, 2019). Khalifa et al. (2019) propose effective school leaders implement practices that are aligned with teachers, students, and school community needs. Administration from urban schools that adhere to Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) components is more likely to acknowledge the essential contributions African American male preservice teachers bring to their school environment (Walker et al., 2019).

Transformational leadership is the most widely studied form of school administration leadership (Sun et al., 2017; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021). According to Stohmann et al. (2020) support from the school, leadership is critical for the retention of teachers of color and diverse ethnicity. Administrators must implement research-based approaches to decrease teacher attrition and nullify the root causes of teacher retention and turnover (Podolsky et al., 2019).

According to Cwiklinski (2020), if effective mentoring programs and administrative supports were in place, it is possible that many teachers could be retained. Retaining diverse teachers requires school leaders to be intentionally inclusive in their leadership and practice, provide adequate training and support, and actively appreciate/reward the additional mentoring and support work that diverse teachers do, particularly for student diversity (Andrews et al., 2019). Research addressed effective school leadership planning of effective programs, and the findings explained a combination of managerial leadership, instructional, and transformational leadership styles and behaviors are contributing factors (Meyers & Sadler, 2018). These components can have positive influences on teacher retention. School administrators solely cannot improve student development or achievement; however, they do provide leadership and support that translate into an environment that results in increased productivity because their relationship with staff connects with learners' accomplishments as well as with the teachers' satisfaction and their retention in the school system (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Leadership no longer depends on the job position or role of an individual but on organized interactions through the establishment of structures or committees to maintain order in the school organization (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Burns (1978) promotes a style of leadership that transforms follower attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to a higher level of motivation, where the leader inspires followers to be motivated to go above and beyond levels of achievement and performance. Transformational leadership can have positive effects on job satisfaction and influence teacher commitment.



### **Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable**

The literature was relevant to the research topic and provides essential background information aligned to the research problem statement, the purpose of the study, and research questions. Therefore, I read research to determine the qualitative approach to identify findings to support the local problem of the study is administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The essential themes relevant to the literature review are described in Chapter 2.

#### **African American Male Teachers**

Only 2% of America's public school teachers are African American males (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). African American teachers in urban schools are underrepresented in school systems (Kohli et al., 2021). Of approximately 3.1 million teachers currently employed in the United States, the number of African American male educators is relatively minuscule with 2% (Nation Center for Education Statistics, 2019). According to Wiggan et al. (2021), when African American men are hired to become teachers, they often leave the profession at a faster rate than their counterparts. According to Milner (2018), African American male teachers often develop curriculum and instructional practices that align with the needs and interests of African American male students they teach. African American male teachers should have the opportunities to work with other experienced African American educators to discuss challenges, potential obstacles, and strategies for improving pedagogy (Sandles, 2020).

### ***Teacher Shortage***

Teacher shortages are a growing problem in the U.S. that affects particular subjects, schools, and districts. Policies to address this problem should focus on improving the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers. According to Wallace and Gagen (2020), nationally, African American males depict approximately 2% of all public school teachers. As a group, U.S. teachers remain overwhelmingly white females, and African American males are the most underrepresented demographic in the teaching profession (Wallace & Gagen, 2020). Teaching is a widely available profession to African American males, yet extreme shortages of this diverse population exist in the completion of teacher preparation programs (Green & Martin, 2018).

Culturally responsive teaching has been suggested in teacher preparation programs to support, retain, and graduate African American males in teacher education (Green & Martin, 2018). The tasks of bringing and retaining African American men into teaching and supporting their development as educators are interlocked (El-Mekki, 2018). African American men face various obstacles to entering and remaining in the teaching profession, as evidenced in an Education Trust report that captured the views of African American teachers discussing their occupational challenges (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Sandles, 2018). Based on Sandles (2018) African American male teachers seek instructional support and opportunities to share their strategies for developing relationships with African American children and not serve as disciplinarians and counselors. According to Underwood et al. (2020), recruiting and retaining African American male teachers to classrooms across all school levels have been a long-standing

challenge in the field of education, and previous researchers investigated why few African American males became and retained as teachers. Despite the national need to increase the 2 % of African American male teachers in classrooms, they also need to be culturally relevant pedagogies cultural competence, and promote academic student success (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Meidl, 2019).

### **Diversity of Male Teachers in the Teaching Profession**

According to Bristol and Goings (2019), increasing the representation of African American males in the teaching profession has been the topic of numerous reports and empirical studies. Literature, media, and scholarly discourse have contended that African American teachers particularly African American males specifically are needed in education as they influence the academic achievement of African American students (Gershenson et al., 2018). Unfortunately, data suggests that African American males represent 2% of the U.S. teacher workforce (Goings et al., 2018). According to Carver-Thomas (2018), research findings show a significant increase of evidence that an increased presence of teachers of color benefits students of diverse backgrounds and specifically those of color. In particular, the goal of increasing the numbers of Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American teachers of color is to establish a teaching workforce that represents the rich diversity of perspectives held by the nation's demographic population (Brown et al., 2018).

In a recent special issue in *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, Woodson and Bristol, (2020) reported on examining expanding research on male teachers of color. In this issue, Young and Young (2020) presented a 10-year quantitative content analysis research

about African American male teachers. This special issue is pertinent given the increased national focus from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on diversifying the teacher workforce (Andrews et al., 2019; Warner & Duncan, 2019). Goings and Lewis, (2020) examined the discourse on increasing the representation of African American male teachers to investigating the best recruitment and retention practices for African American male preservice teachers in urban, rural, and alternative certification teacher education programs. This essential information provides resources for further research, educational policymakers, and K-12 administrators to utilize when determining how to provide support to the success of African American males in the teaching profession. Many African American female teachers find job satisfaction in schools in urban demographics, despite the negative public perception about urban schools, the urban factor, recruitment, or motive to work and or reside in urban school settings (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020).

African American teacher turnover rates are significantly higher than those of other teachers in the U.S. (US Department of Education, 2018). Policy interventions such as teacher residencies, loan forgiveness, mentoring, induction, and principal training programs might have promise for recruitment of African American teachers back into the teaching profession (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017; 2020). Teachers of color emphasize having to prove their qualifications to some parents (Griffin, 2018). These feelings emerge in environmental working conditions where colleagues' views and behaviors lead the teacher of colors to contemplate remaining in their schools and the profession (Andrews et al., 2019). Additional barriers to recruitment and retention consist of a teacher of

colors' displacement from high-needs schools in which they teach and inadequate teacher preparation resulting from entering the profession through alternative certification routes (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

### **Teacher Retention**

According to Farinde-Wu (2018), the initial strategy to ensure that the U.S teaching recruitment mirrors the national student demographics as to teacher recruitment, essentially the recruitment of diverse ethnic teachers, is significant in diversifying the teacher workforce and the retention of African American educators. Studies have focused on the components affecting a teacher's choice to remain or leave, expenses attributed to declining teacher turnover, and the ramifications teacher retention influences the academic outcomes of the learners, district expenditures, and schools (Dahlkamp, et al., 2017, p. 359; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Evidence has been provided by researchers, such as Garcia & Weiss, 2020) regarding teacher shortages within public educational institutions nationwide. In 2016, approximately 3.8 million teachers in the United States, and about 77,900 were comprised of African American males (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). African American male teachers provide various views and understanding of their male students and assist in creating resources in increasing protocols, and expertise in schools to increase instructional proficiency (Ozuna, 2018).

Research have noted teachers are a significant contribution to student learning, so the loss of such teachers is problematic to student achievement, despite public policies developed on the federal and state level for the retention of qualified teachers (Hernandez, 2018). According to Harrell et al. (2019), the U.S. Department of Labor

determined that rates for teacher turnover costs districts 30% of an educator's base earnings, and every teacher who leaves the teaching job costs the school district \$12,546, which contributes to the economic expense of recruiting new teachers. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), reported the national cost of teacher retention exceeds \$2.2 billion annually. School districts face reallocating already constrained budgetary resources toward hiring and retention endeavors of the newly hired school staff (Evans, 2017; Redding & Nguyen, 2020).

Teachers who decide to leave seem to experience a lack of leadership (Qadach et al., 2020). Based on Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2018) teachers leave their teaching positions or the profession based on factors associated with student discipline, lack of motivation to learn, or administration concerns emphasizing lack of recognition and support by school administrators. Staff relations, teacher leadership, and school involvement influence teacher retention (Kramrath & Bradford, 2020). How principals engage and support their teachers matters in reference to whether teachers decide to remain in teaching (Will, 2018). Espinoza et al. (2018) also highlighted the importance of supporting new teachers once they are hired and strengthening school leadership, as well as boosting teacher compensation to create a "strong, effective, and stable teaching profession" (p. 36). Teacher and administrator professional relationships may influence teacher retention.

States, local systems, and schools nationwide strive diligently to recruit qualified teachers in all classrooms, these positions will become challenging to meet based on the recent projection that displays nationally the necessity to recruit 375,000 inexperienced

teachers yearly before the year of 2024 to restore educators who are retiring or resigning early teaching positions and to address the learning prerequisites of the 3.15 million estimated enrollment of students in schools (Floden et al., 2020). Torres (2019) emphasized increased retention levels in urban schools take place based on instructional staff's decision to no longer educate impoverished, minority students, and current findings identify poor working environments in schools' students are enrolled report for a majority of the relationship which exists among characteristics contributing to teacher retention. Reaves and Cozzens (2018) the goal is to establish conducive to learning school cultures, and safe and orderly workplaces that influence all school systems nationwide. As a result, these crucial problems demand a resolution to ensure highly qualified teachers can teach best instructional practices promoting effective student learners (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018).

Understanding the root causes that affect teachers' options to stay or quit, school systems will design effective schools and higher-level learning conditions as resolutions to the root causes (Evans, 2017; McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). When collegial relationships are disorganized by teachers departing schools, learning, and student performance is negatively influenced (Young & Young, 2020). According to Grissom and Bartanen (2019), the teacher attrition pattern and retention influence various components of education. Increased quantity of teacher replacement interrupts the systemic interconnection of work teams within a school institution. As teacher turnover continues and brand-new teachers are employed, the statistical data for years of teaching training continues to reduce in school environments (Evans, 2017; Garcia & Weiss,

2019). Researchers have cited teacher position contentment and dedication as essential arbitrators in the work environment variables and intent to leave written works (Conley & You, 2017; Qadach et al., 2020). Further, the connections between teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness discussed in previous literature may imply connections to teacher attrition since more effective teachers are less likely to leave the workforce (Feng & Sass, 2017; Nguyen, et al., 2020). Research studies have communicated mixed findings in the identification of factors influencing a teacher's decision to leave (Whipp & Geronime, 2017; Howard & Milner, 2021). The New Teacher Project (TNTP) indicated administrators persuade teachers to remain in teaching (TNTP, 2013).

### **School Climate and Culture**

Effective school leadership contributes to the school's climate and culture. According to Romero and Krichesky (2018), the importance of principal leadership can influence the school climate, and, therefore, influence academic student achievement. Principals in a collaborative school climate utilize structure, guidance, mission, consideration, and support (Capp et al., 2021). The expectation is that school leadership can influence workplace conditions, capacity beliefs, and possibly increase the motivation and commitment of school staff which can influence retention and attrition (Dixon et al., 2019). Supportive school administrators are perceived to be nurturing and approachable (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021). According to Hallinger et al. (2018), clear communication of the school's vision, the principal establishes a positive school climate that encourages students to achieve successful academic outcomes. In a school that demonstrates an open climate, staff feels at ease expressing opinions, strategies,



complaints, and improvement methods (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021). Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) build on the same argument, explaining that teacher turnover is reduced in settings that enable greater collaboration, professional development, and engagement in decision-making and where principals have longer tenures.

Ansley et al. (2019) concluded that work environment staff reports are a vital element of the school climate. As the authors explain, teachers who work "cohesively and maintain positive relationships enjoy better quality work experiences" and contribute to a positive school environment (Ansley, et al., 2019, p.5). According to the authors, teachers in a school had to acknowledge intensified scholar learning outcomes along with the ideal directives, placing them at considerable contingency for professional exhaustion and the probability of departing teaching occupations if teacher's do not have sufficient administration, team support, and resources in reach of teaching job-related criteria (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Miller and Youngs (2021), found teachers who reported a better fit with their jobs in terms of relationships with colleagues, teaching assignments, and student populations are more likely to remain in their schools. Findings suggest that alignment between training and workforce experiences is essential for the longer-term stability of the teacher workforce (Goldhaber et al., 2020). Ebner (2018) researched teacher retention occurring among encouragement from other teachers and identified the celebration of positive experiences could exceed challenges that happen to balance the duties within a classroom. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) explained the pivotal role that principals play in the culture and working conditions of their schools, and their behaviors and ideology influence teacher retention.

### **Diversity in Urban School Settings**

Teachers of color and diverse backgrounds are more likely to enter the teaching profession through alternative pathways and, therefore, are more likely to leave urban school settings (Stohmann et al., 2020). State certification requirements may hinder the ability to attract and retain teachers and, therefore, causing staffing challenges in urban high-need schools. The teachers receive Rogers-Ard et al. (2019) explained that students of color are the most affected by the growing teacher shortage and lack of diversity in the teaching workforce based on a diverse student-to-teacher ratio. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) concluded that teacher shortages have been most severe in communities serving low-income students and students of color. This is evidenced in the percentage of uncertified teachers working in schools with a high enrollment of students of color - 4.8% - compared to schools with a low enrollment of students of color - 1.2% (Kini & Saunders, 2020). School systems can implement hiring strategies that contribute to diversifying the teacher workforce, including adjusting the timing of hiring, information in the hiring process, and licensure and pension portability to increase accessibility for teachers of color and diverse backgrounds (Stohmann et al., 2020). School systems can develop partnerships with local colleges and teacher preparation programs (Gist et al., 2019). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2018), school systems can create diversity committees where current teachers of color can shape recruiting, hiring, and induction strategies.

Considering the benefits of having high-quality teachers of color for all students, efforts to address teacher shortages should focus on recruiting and preparing teachers of

color (Stohmann et al., 2020). Additionally, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond affirmed that “recent evidence shows that administrative support is especially critical in improving the retention of teachers of color” (2018, p. 28). Therefore, it is essential to develop district and school-level policies that develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for school administrators to create a school environment that supports teachers of color and diverse backgrounds. This implicates investing in and strengthening principal preparation, recruitment, induction, and development (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2018; Espinoza et al., 2018). Teacher retention is increasingly apparent in high-needs schools, where most students live in low-income situations (Hirn et al., 2018).

### **Teacher Turnover in Public Urban Schools**

Trends in the research of teacher retention in urban school environments include the topic of job satisfaction. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) agreed that teacher retention is an issue specifically in high-poverty schools. Bressman et al. (2018) discussed the necessity for teacher retention within high needs schools but took a different path with their research, addressing a need to retain not only new teachers but veteran teachers who leave the teaching profession due to a lack of support (Bressman et al., 2018). Teachers in low-income urban schools’ express concerns of lack of administrative support more often than from their counterpart affluent school demographics (Kramrath & Bradford, 2020). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), urban teacher turnover negatively affects student learning and academic success in varied ways. Students are more likely to have less effective and less experienced teachers who may not obtain the

required licensure credentials in urban schools with high retention rates, affecting student achievement (Haberman, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Instructional leaders acquiring knowledge on reasons why educators remain or stay in education can improve achievement. Based on the research, instructional leaders need to become aware of why teachers depart teaching, and employing and retaining qualified educators enhances academic success (Young, 2018). An investigation of teacher attrition in sixteen school systems within seven states showed yearly data trends of systemic attrition estimates that differ between 13% and 18% yearly (Papay et al., 2017; Sutchter et al., 2019). Podolsky et al. (2019) reported that public urban school systems are often affected disproportionately by the demands to improve district-level teacher retention rates. Teacher hiring, retention, and increasing turnover rates are an eminent challenge for the urban school system in comparison to their parallel suburban districts (Evans, 2017; Meyers & Sadler, 2018).

Research study results show the estimation of fifty percent of teachers depart the profession of education after five years in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and one-third leave within the initial three years, as a result, teacher turnover shows evidence of increased levels more than other professions (McBrayer & Melton, 2018). Several factors, such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and student performance, have displayed evidence to persuade a teacher's decision to remain in the profession (Harrell et al., 2019).

Administrators play an essential role in demonstrating improvement in teacher retention by implementing training and resources in the following areas (technical, environmental, instructional, and socioemotional) (Ford et al., 2019). Previous research has identified

that lack of administrative assistance is often cited factor for special education teachers to no longer remain in educational positions or to specify their resolutions to leave (Conley & You, 2017; Qadach et al., 2020). The problem of teacher retention is increasingly apparent in high-needs schools, where the majority of students live in low-income situations (Hirn et al., 2018). Teachers in low-income urban schools express concerns of lack of administrative support more often than from their counterpart affluent school demographics (Kramrath & Bradford, 2020).

### **Student Academic Success**

Students' capabilities to learn and the reduced levels of teacher's effectiveness are influenced by the lack of insufficient diverse teachers in urban schools (Rumschlag, 2017; Ford et al., 2019). Teachers migrated to lower minority schools where students performed academically at a higher level (Harrell et al., 2019). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2018) Student academic success is influenced by teachers. Research shows that increased calculations of teacher retention affect the scholar's academic success. Harrell et al. (2019) of specific interest in the United States is the recruitment of educators in high-ranking content area demands such as science and mathematics, where there is an outstanding disproportionate reorganization of science and mathematics teachers. In educational institutions with increased turnover, the unskilled and lack sufficient qualifications, teachers usually employ to meet vacancy positions as well as have an adverse effect on student instruction (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2018). When a new teacher is hired, and obtains employment, a distinct variable of

factors initiates to manipulate a teacher's choice to depart or remain in the profession of teaching (Harrell et al., 2019).

Researchers have found African American teachers to be essential to the academic achievement and well-being of African American students, as African American students perform better academically with African American teachers (Gershenson et al., 2018). African American students are more likely to graduate high school and attend college (Gershenson et al., 2018) when they are taught by African American teachers. African American teachers are essential to the educational experiences of African American students; African American students are approximately 40% less likely to drop out of school when they have an African American teacher (Gershenson et al., 2018). Researchers also found that African American students are significantly less likely to be suspended from school when they have African American teachers (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Williams et al., 2020). According to Sandles (2020), African American teachers reported maintaining high expectations for their students and empowering them with critical knowledge. African American teachers believed they had an unchallenging time developing trusting relationships with African American students and being able to empathize with their out-of-school experiences given certain cultural similarities (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Sandles 2018).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The related research in this literature review emphasizes teacher retention is influenced by various factors consisting of effective leadership, characteristics of urban school environments, teacher self-efficacy, and demographics. The African American

teacher retention is an existing challenge based on the teachers' and school administrator's perspectives on leadership supports and effective retention strategies. Administration leadership is an essential component of teacher performance, student outcomes, and teacher retention (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018).

The current gap in the literature is aligned with the problem statement of this study as administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Various factors have been identified that influence African American male teacher retention. Further exploration of the obstacles to that shared vision and developing an understanding of the issues surrounding teacher retention informs the purpose of the present study (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018). African American male teacher retention remains an existing issue, and the increased costs resulting from teacher attrition are detrimental for school districts, student achievement, and school institution stability (Bastian et al., 2017; Viano et al., 2021).

Effective school administrators help retain quality teachers and influence progress with teaching students and academic achievement (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). It's important to address the factors influencing the retention of African American teachers and the influence on students' academic achievement in the classroom. The targets were to find what essential components African American male teachers need to remain in the teaching profession. Research topics of teacher retention inform the proposed research by developing an understanding of administrator leadership practices in association with hiring and retaining teachers to remain in urban schools (Walker & Kutsyuruba, 2019).

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The local problem of the study is administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The purpose of this research study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. A local school administrator shared that retention of African American males is difficult based on teacher preparation programs to build capacity, meeting certification requirements, school-based resources, and student discipline practices school-wide (personal communication, 2020). The research conducted on the presence of African-American male teachers and the administrator supports which contribute to the academic success of student learning (see Walley, 2018).

To investigate the research problem, a basic qualitative research method was conducted to develop an understanding of how administrators are challenged to support the teacher retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. In Chapter 3, I presented the research methodology procedures which were utilized to conduct the basic qualitative study and are organized into various sections: Research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, participation, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures to analyze the data process.



### **Research Design and Rationale**

RQ1. How do administrators perceive they support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in the local urban school district?

RQ2. How do African American male teachers perceive administrators support their retention in elementary and middle schools in the local urban school district?

The data from this study may assist researchers in developing strategies related to theoretical concepts to address the retention of African American male teachers in urban school districts. The local problem of the study is administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The qualitative methodology included specific research methods the researcher uses to gather data and relate outcomes, processes, theories, and beliefs that inform them (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Qualitative research consists of action research, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, and phenomenology (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The outcome of qualitative inquiry “seeks to explore and describe in narrative reporting what specific individuals do in their daily lives and what their actions represent to them” (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, p.7). Qualitative research is influenced by an individual's subjective interpretations of their own experiences, events, and other inquiry domains (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In a specific environment, researchers investigate to find solutions to specific research problems to be addressed in the literature or gap in practice (Ye, et al., 2020).

Qualitative studies emphasize constructing meaning and the various qualitative research designs have different purposes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Selecting the appropriate research design is based on various elements, for example, kind of research questions, purposeful sampling, and data collection which are essential criteria for choosing a research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There are several qualitative research designs I could have selected for this basic qualitative study. They include the narrative inquiry, ethnography, phenomenology grounded theory, and the case study.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method that can be characterized as gathering the stories and experiences of others (Creswell, 2018). It provides preference to the lived experiences of persons as expressed in their own stories and experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The participants' information is retold or restored by the researcher into a narrative chronology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Narrative inquiry was not selected for this research, because I am not using the participants' interviews to restore information into a narrative chronology.

### **Ethnography**

An ethnography calls for an immersive experience which allows the researchers to become a participant as well (Burkholder et al., 2019). I interviewed and did not conduct observations of the participants. Ethnography design was not chosen because it involves the study of a specific facet of a group's culture, or behavior and the participation of the researcher in that facet of the group's culture or behavior (Hammersley, 2018). Participants of the ethnographic design would not have been

appropriate to use to develop a better understanding of the research problem because I am not researching a group's culture or behavior.

### **Phenomenology**

Phenomenology requires gathering individuals' perceptions according to shared experiences using their own words (Burkholder et al., 2019). Phenomenological research approaches include exploring a phenomenon with a group of individuals through interviews to record their points of view about specific experiences. This would include a special phenomenological interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A phenomenology study is one in which the researcher seeks to infer common themes among a group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher conducts interviews with individuals of a group extended over a wider geographic location and explores for similarities among the shared experiences of members of that group (Burkholder et al., 2019). This method design could have been selected, though I chose not to because this method would be more time-consuming and less feasible.

### **Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory, another type of qualitative research design, is specifically used to formulate theories (Burkholder et al., 2019). The research questions and the problem of this study did not suggest a requirement to formulate a new theory, only to develop an understanding of a phenomenon. Grounded theory is useful in learning more about other research problems. Grounded theory is a research process for gathering and reviewing data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Data from grounded theory research can derive from a variety of sources consisting of interviews, observations, documents, and other

sources (Corbin, 2021). The grounded theory requires that the researcher gather, analyze and examine data from a variety of sources to gain a perspective on the research problem and develop a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is not appropriate for this study based on only using interviews for data collection. The basic qualitative study was the best appropriate fit for this research study.

### **Case Study**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) a case study is an empirical inquiry that explores a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. A case study is a design conducted and analyzed using additional resources of data. Researchers use varied data collection approaches in case studies to develop an understanding of an identified phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The researcher will examine a research topic to develop insights into a new phenomenon (Swedberg, 2018). A case study allows the researcher to conduct interviews and examine archival data resources. I did not choose a case study because I did not explore a new phenomenon nor review additional data resources.

Phenomenology, grounded theory, or narrative inquiry may assist in addressing the research problem of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States, but basic qualitative research was selected because it was appropriate to help me determine the real-life experiences of the participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) using interviews. The research questions ask about the perceptions of administrators and teachers about the support of their retention in an elementary and middle urban school district. The most suitable research design for this

study was a basic qualitative study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (1998) the procedures for the process of designing qualitative research consist of conducting a literature review, constructing a framework, identifying a research problem, research questions, and purposive sampling selection. Qualitative research design is basically, the way the researcher articulates, plans for, and sets up the doing of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Understanding the research design aligns the research questions to the conceptual framework, data collection analysis, and the outcome of the study. I used a basic qualitative study to develop an insightful understanding of administrators' and teachers' educational practices. To investigate the research problem, a basic qualitative research method was conducted to develop an understanding of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The interviews provided me to acquire in-depth information from the participants that other design methods may not produce. In this basic qualitative study, the participant's input assisted me with developing a better understanding of the research problem.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this qualitative research study, the role of the researcher is an observer and participant. The role of the researcher is to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from individuals who have experienced a phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2019). The data collection was not gathered from my immediate school setting. The participants are not individuals I supervise nor perform evaluations in the workplace at this research site. As the researcher, the professional relationship that exists between myself and the

participants is we are educators. I used purposeful sampling to ensure the participants selected are not individuals I supervise. This assisted me by preventing any unfair influences on the participants. The participants selected are not related to me nor have a personal relationship in the research setting. I engaged the qualitative design approaches during the research process to control my personal biases to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Any potential biases can be written in a reflective journal during my research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used semistructured interviews to investigate the basic qualitative study. As the researcher, I discovered themes and gaps in the findings that may contribute to future studies. My role as the researcher in this study was to conduct trustworthy and minimal bias research by facilitating semistructured interviews. As a basic qualitative researcher, I have to maintain awareness of my own background experiences, culture, and biases that could influence the interview process and interpretation of data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

As an interviewer, I remained neutral and demonstrated non-judgmental behavior, to not have any influence on the participants during the interview process (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I did not demonstrate any bias against the potential research participants and respected their viewpoints without imposing any personal biases. Reflexivity assisted me to maintain an objective perspective during the data collection and analysis process. I used purposeful sampling to prevent unfair influences and ensure I do not supervise or evaluate any of the potential participants in this study. Reflexivity involves occurring reflection throughout the duration of the research, examining processes, data collection, analysis, and results (Fusch et al., 2018). I conducted

interviews, recorded the participant's responses, and transcribed the data. The researcher can maintain the responsibility of developing the semistructured interview questions instrument. I guided the participants through the interview process using open-ended questions for the participant's responses and experiences. I used coding and transcribed participants' responses for data analysis of apparent themes in the findings. I analyzed the data and discussed the findings concerning the research literature and the conceptual framework.

The study's purpose and protocols were explained and outlined to participants before the semistructured interviews to address any ethical issues. To address biases my position is not in a supervisory capacity of the participants in this research. No incentives were provided to participants to engage in the interview process. Verbal and written communication of the purpose of the study and interview protocols were provided for participating principals and teachers. To assist interviewees, decide whether or not to participate, as the researcher, I explained who I am, what the purpose of the research is, and what questions I will be asking of the participants and describe any risks which may occur (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). After the completion and approval of this study, the participants will receive a copy of the interview transcripts, confidential aspects of the interview.

### **Methodology**

In this research, I used a basic qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to examine how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the

northeastern United States. The location of the study is in a northeastern state that calculates a 7% teacher retention rate due to the loss of 4,536 of its approximate 60,000 teachers with less than five years of teaching experience (Podolsky et al., 2019). According to Farrell (2020), the objective of the phenomenological research design is to describe the experiences of a lived phenomenon.

### **Participant Selection**

Purposeful sampling was used to select 6-8 administrators and 10-12 African American male teachers from five elementary and five middle schools in the same urban local school system. The purpose of the participants selected were knowledgeable to address the research questions in the study (Creswell, 2018). The criterion was to be an elementary and middle school teachers and administrators from the local urban school district. The participants were selected from the four demographic areas found within the school district. Each area in the school district has a minimum of eight clusters where schools are assigned. Teachers and administrators with educational experiences working in elementary and middle school settings meet the criteria. Semistructured interviews were conducted to obtain data. Qualitative data included written transcripts of the participant's interview responses. Researchers can organize results by data triangulation gathered from research findings. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Hammonds, 2017; Smith, 2018).

Once I receive approval from the local district and Walden University IRB to conduct my study, I will send a Letter of Invitation found in Appendix C to potential participants using my Walden email. Potential participants' email addresses may be



located from the school district's website and google email accounts. The Letter of Invitation will explain the research expectations and request their consent of participation in the study (see Appendix C). The Informed Consent and ethical procedures of the research will be attached. I will send an email to potential participants using my Walden email stating in the subject line an invitation to participate in a research study.

Participants will be given 7 days to respond. I will send a follow-up email to non-responders to maintain the proposed participants' sampling size. Participants who agree to participate will inform me of their availability date and time. I will send a google calendar invite with information of date, time, and Zoom, a virtual link. A calendar alert notification will be sent 3 days before the interview.

### **Instrumentation (Qualitative)**

Creating an interview protocol will assist the participants and researchers through the semistructured interview process (Nathan et al., 2019). In semistructured interviews, the researcher has a specific topic to learn about, creates a limited set of questions in advance, and asks follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p.31). In this basic qualitative study, I used an interview protocol and semistructured interview questions to guide the interview process and address the research questions (see Appendix A and B). The interview protocols will have specific directions, interview and research questions along with defined expectations of the interview process. To make meaning of the participants' perceptions and experiences, I wrote open-ended questions that may be used to engage the interviewees in the discussion. The data collection instruments were appropriate to answer the research questions for this basic qualitative study. The

interview questions are designed to align with the research questions. I asked probing questions and took notes during the interview of biases and thoughts of behaviors I observed during the interview process in a reflective journal. The probing questions, responses, and notes helped to ensure the credibility of the study. Credibility is relevant to the trustworthiness of the research study (Teusner, 2020).

**Table 2**

*Research and Interview Questions*

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do administrators perceive they support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in the urban school district?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How long have you been a principal?</li> <li>2. Describe your administrative professional training.</li> <li>3. In your opinion, what is the reason for teacher retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle urban schools?</li> <li>4. From your perspective, what factors contribute to African American male teacher retention?</li> <li>5. Why do you think African American males leave the field of education?</li> <li>6. Why do African American males stay in the field of education?</li> <li>7. From a personal perspective, how are administrators challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers?</li> <li>8. How have your leadership processes worked to retain African American teachers?</li> <li>9. How do you perceive leadership practices influencing teacher retention in urban schools?</li> <li>10. Describe a difficult mentoring experience of an African American male teacher.</li> <li>11. What supports did you use to assist the African American male teacher?</li> <li>12. Describe how you cultivate positive relationships among teachers.</li> <li>13. Describe an instance where you believe transformational leadership may have been effective?</li> <li>14. Have you had any barriers, challenges, or incidents that have discouraged you or negatively influenced your perception of administration?</li> <li>15. What has been your most rewarding administration experience?</li> <li>16. What steps do you recommend all administrators should take to support the retention of African American male teachers?</li> <li>17. Do you have any additional statements to add to the discussion?</li> </ol>

*(table continues)*

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ2: How do African American male support their retention in elementary and middle schools in the local urban school district?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How long have you been a teacher?</li> <li>2. Who or what inspired or motivated you to become a teacher?</li> <li>3. Why did you specifically choose elementary or middle school educational teacher as a professional career?</li> <li>4. In your opinion, what supports African American male teacher retention most in elementary and middle urban schools?</li> <li>5. From your perspective, what factors contribute to African American male teacher retention? What might influence a teacher to stay in their position?</li> <li>6. Why do you think African American males leave the field of education?</li> <li>7. Why do you think African American males stay in the field of education?</li> <li>8. Have you had any barriers, challenges, or incidents that have discouraged you negatively influenced your perception of teaching?</li> <li>9. What has been your most rewarding teaching experience?</li> <li>10. What type of principal leadership do you find the most helpful? Explain.</li> <li>11. From a personal perspective, how are administrators challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers?</li> <li>12. How do you perceive leadership influencing teacher retention in urban schools?</li> <li>13. Describe a situation from your perspective where you believe administrator support was lacking or inadequate.</li> <li>14. Is collaboration important in your job-related satisfaction?</li> <li>15. Do you have any ideas or strategies on ways to retain more African American male teachers into urban elementary and middle schools?</li> <li>16. What factors influence your decision to remain with the school?</li> <li>17. How does the relationship you have with teachers, parents and students play a vital role in your decision to remain or leave education?</li> <li>18. Do you have any additional statements to add to the discussion?</li> </ol>

*Note:* The research questions aligned to interview questions for administrators and teachers.

## **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

### ***Recruitment***

Purposeful sampling was used to select potential participants. I selected administrators and African American male teachers from elementary and middle schools. Participants were selected by email to participate in the research. The emails were retrieved from the elementary and middle school websites. Based on Walden University's IRB approval, I sent participants an email Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent form explaining the protection of rights and participation expectations. Participants responded via return email response stating whether they were willing to

participate. Participants who consented to participate in the research received an email asking their date and time of availability for the interview. I sent participants a follow-up email response consisting of a Google calendar notification with the time, date, and Zoom link for the interview. Participation in the research was voluntary. The Consent Form document was emailed where participants responded by email saying “I consent” for my documentation purposes. To maintain IRB compliance and research ethics protocols for the data I collected, I submitted a Walden Partnership Agreement form (see Appendix D).

### ***Participation***

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument and responsible for data collection, organizing, and analysis. The data collection for this qualitative study consisted of semistructured interviews with eight administrators and eleven African American male teachers from seven elementary and seven middle schools in the same urban local school system. I created open-ended interview questions with the assistance of my committee chair to ensure appropriate questions aligned to the research questions and the purpose of the study are addressed. Participants followed an interview protocol guide (Appendix A and B), a consent form emailed response saying “I consent” to participate in the study (see form Appendix D), engage in semistructured interviews, and review transcripts of their interview responses.

Semistructured interviews were conducted to obtain data. Participants engaged in the semistructured interview process voluntarily, and no compensation was given during the research process. Interview questions were created using an interview protocol word

documents. Administrators and African American male teacher participants responded to open-ended questions, and responses were captured by audible recording and transcribed using transcription on Zoom software. I conducted the interviews for a 45-60 minutes' session to collect data. I reviewed the consent form during the interview and clarified any questions from the participants. I reminded the participants that the interview was voluntary and withdrawal at any time is an option without any obligation or consequences. After each interview, I uploaded the recordings to the software program to receive a transcript. I reviewed the transcripts while playing the audio recordings to ensure the accuracy of the information.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The purpose of data analysis was to analyze the data and explore the participants' responses in the interviews to address the research questions (Yin, 2018). According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), the process consisted of ensuring a good sampling strategy and establishing methods to record and store data. The information gathered from the interviews was used to address the research questions. I examined the coded data from the software program. Coding assists the researcher to interpret and identify commonalities in the data during the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data was analyzed to determine key themes in the data to address the research problem and purpose. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), coding consists of noting relationships, similarities, and differences in the data.

Smith (2018) indicated researchers could organize results by data triangulation gathered from research findings. I triangulated the data collected from the administrators

and African American male teachers from the different elementary and middle schools. The responses were transcribed using the Transcript application on the Zoom software program to transcribe the responses to written format. The participants' names and identities were kept anonymous. The goal of using triangulation was to ensure I have sufficient data and depth of information to address the research questions (Smith, 2018).

### **Coding**

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), coding is finding and labeling the themes and events transcribed from the interview responses that address the research questions. Analysis of the data involves using coding by transcribing, summarizing, sorting, re-sorting to combine concepts and explain themes generalized from the data. The following steps were taken to conduct data analysis: I transcribed the participant's responses and coded the interview transcripts using an electronic software program to organize and present data. I used the MAXQDA, an electronic software program (see Creswell & Poth, 2018) to transcribe the interview data, then coded the data. The MAXQDA organized and labeled the data. I coded the data and reexamined the interview transcripts using the MAXQDA software coding program to identify patterns and themes from the interview transcripts. The transcripts coding analysis process identified patterns and themes which provided results to address the research questions. I printed out the coded transcripts to perform pattern coding by annotating for additional words or phrases. A researcher conducts pattern coding by grouping similar coded material from the initial coding into broader labels and categories (Saldana, 2021). According to Ellingson and Sotirin (2020), interview transcripts are documents in which the participants' interview

responses can be coded. As the researcher, my journal notes were implemented as data sources to support the thematic analysis of the interview responses and produce a further understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences. Using thematic analysis, I identified, organized, described and explained relevant topics from gathered data (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2021). Data interpretation consisted of displays of responses, theme tables, and narratives to support my findings. I examined the codes to identify patterns, categories of the codes, and themes that represent all of the data.

According to Patton (2016), qualitative analysis involves interpreting interviews, observations, and documents; the coded data from a qualitative study determined meaningful patterns and themes in the data. I used the MAXQDA software program to apply Yin's (2018) five-step process in the data analysis process by (a) compiling data, (b) disassembling data, (c) reassembling data, (d) interpreting data, and (e) concluding data to examine the research findings. Ravitch and Carl (2021) described precoding as a process of reading, questioning, and engaging with the data from the interviews. I used the MAXQDA to code all data by initially organizing the data into manageable chunks of information and patterns (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The MAXQDA program labeled the participants' responses using thematic words, phrases, and statements to support the research data findings. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), the importance of scrutinizing the themes by rechecking your alternative explanations to the data may help to identify misinterpretations of discrepant cases within the reliable data which addresses the purpose of the research. To identify any discrepancy in the data, the plan was to reexamine and triangulate the data to resolve and note discrepancies (Patton, 2016).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness pertains to the confidence level in the research data collection process, analysis, and methods used to ensure the reliability and validity of the research (Adler, 2022). Participant checking is a protocol of having the participants in the study review and validates their responses (Babbie, 2021). Participants reviewing their responses is a method to ensure reliability, validity, and accuracy of the data collection in the study (Stahl & King, 2020). The responses were electronically sent to the participants to review and validate for authenticity. I gathered data from interview responses, transcribed the data, and reviewed interview transcript notes to ensure saturation of data. Qualitative research aims to obtain data saturation to the level where no evidence of new information is revealed (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021).

### **Credibility**

In qualitative research, internal credibility is specifically related to research design, the researcher's instruments, and data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Credibility is achieved by utilizing triangulation of the data sources, member checks, and transcripts of the data. Triangulation involves corroborating evidence from varied sources to identify themes or perspectives from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I established credibility by using journal notes, written transcripts of interview responses on audio recordings, and member checking from the interviews conducted. To increase the credibility of the data, I used member checking by allowing participants to review the findings to provide feedback. Member checking is a process of having the participant review and validates their response (Babbie, 2021). I sent a conclusion of the findings to participants after



analysis for their input and accuracy. I applied reflexivity practices during the interviews by documenting any potential biases, opinions, or personal viewpoints in the interview journal which can influence the findings (Karagiozis, 2018).

### **Transferability**

Transferability is how qualitative research can be transferable and applicable to other settings and still maintain its context-specific richness (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Approaches for achieving transferability consist of detailed descriptions of the data, thick descriptions for readers to make comparisons to other contexts according to information provided (Guba, 1981) and (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). As the researcher, I provided information and explanation on the purpose of the study with the participants to ensure future research can be investigated.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the data's stability and ensuring the data collection is appropriate to answer the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). My reflection notes were recorded in a journal during and after each interview conducted. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, as well as reviewed for accuracy. The same interview protocols were implemented. I asked the same interview and follow-up questions for each participant during the interview process. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stressed that evaluating validity will be based on describing and developing an understanding of the participant's experiences without biases. Dependability intends to ensure the researcher utilizes appropriate and reasonable methods for data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). A comparable study conducted utilizing the same participant sampling, qualitative methods,

and data findings, the research study would be considered dependable (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

### **Confirmability**

According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), the researcher seeks to have confirmable data and reasonable freedom of researcher biases. As the researcher, I must maintain neutrality and demonstrate no evidence of biases in the data findings and data collection process. Methods to achieve confirmability include implementing triangulation strategies and researcher reflexivity processes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). My perspectives and ideas should not influence the note-taking during the interview process. In my position as an assistant principal, my educational pedagogy influences my professional leadership practices. I will implement the bracketing method for journal note-taking to avoid biases in the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used member checking methods to enhance the trustworthiness of the research process. The purpose of member checking supports the outcomes, thereby, increasing the truth and confirmability of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Ethical Procedures**

Once I received permission to research the local site and Walden University IRB, I prepared to conduct the research. I did not communicate or select any participants until IRB approval. The participants did not receive any monetary or other incentives to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and no penalty was applied for declining. The participant's names and identities will be kept anonymous. As recommended by Babbie (2021), the protection of participant names and organizations, to

maintain confidentiality pseudonyms were used. Codes and labels were used to identify participants.

Digital data and transcripts were stored in a locked file cabinet and Google drive assigned to my email with password protection. The data will remain until a specified time frame established by Walden university in a secure location. After the approval date and completion of the final paper, all documents and electronic data will be erased and physically shredded after 5 years based on Walden University's guidelines.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 includes the purpose of the study, the research methodology, participant sampling of elementary and middle school teachers and administrators. Chapter 3 also includes a discussion of the instrumentation used to conduct interviews and an explanation of the data analysis plan implemented to conduct the study. In chapter 4, I presented findings from the interviews. Reports on the data analysis and coding themes interpreted from the findings are displayed in tables and descriptions to address the research questions of the basic qualitative study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. An investigation and understanding of the administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers may provide insight to urban school districts seeking to address African American male teacher retention. I used the basic qualitative approach to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How do administrators perceive they support the retention of African American Male teachers in elementary and middle schools in a local urban school district?

RQ2. How do African American male teachers perceive administrators support their retention in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district.

In this chapter, I described the study setting. I explained the data collection and analysis process and presented the results of the study. I provided a review of the research questions and a brief description of the participants. Evidence of the methodology I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study is included. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Setting**

The setting for this basic qualitative study was in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Administrators and African American male teachers were

participants asked to participate in an hour-long semistructured interview. Eight administrators and eleven African American male teachers from elementary and middle schools agreed to participate in the research. The administrators and African American male teachers consented to participate in the study to me via email to ensure confidentiality. The participants were interviewed using Zoom online platform. The participants conducted their voluntary interviews at a mutually agreeable time.

### **Demographics**

Eleven of the participants were African American male teachers. Eight of the participants were administrators. Four were elementary administrators, and four were middle school level administrators. The participant's years of experience in an urban school district provided insightful perspectives of their experiences. The participant's demographics are described in Table 1.

**Table 3**

*Demographics of the Participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>School Roles</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Middle	Teacher	M
2	Elementary	Teacher	M
3	Elementary	Administrator	M
4	Elementary	Administrator	FM
5	Elementary	Administrator	FM
6	Middle	Administrator	M
7	Middle	Administrator	FM
8	Middle	Administrator	M
9	Middle	Administrator	M
10	Middle	Teacher	M
11	Middle	Teacher	M
12	Middle	Teacher	M
13	Elementary	Administrator	M
14	Middle	Teacher	M

15	Middle	Teacher	M
16	Middle	Teacher	M
17	Elementary	Teacher	M
18	Middle	Teacher	M
19	Elementary	Teacher	M

### **Data Collection**

In this basic qualitative study, I used a semistructured interview protocol I created for teachers and administrators (see Appendices C and D). The data collection protocols assisted me in gathering data to answer the study's two research questions.

After receiving Walden Institutional Review Board approval number 12-10-21-0676343, each potential participant received the letter for participation and consent form through email. After receiving the participant's consent, I emailed each participant to schedule the zoom interview. The interviews were scheduled according to the participants' availability and convenience. The participants provided a date and time to conduct the interview, and a calendar invite was sent with zoom information. The data collection process consisted of individual semistructured interviews with eight administrators and eleven African American male teachers, which ranged from 45-60 minutes from January to February. I conducted interviews using the Zoom video conferencing platform. The interviews were audio recorded using a password-protected zoom account and laptop computer. The interviews were conducted with a transcription-enabled feature. The interviews were conducted based on mutual agreement on time frames. There was no evidence of variation in the data collection process, as explained in Chapter 3.

### **Semi Structured Interview Process**

I used the school district's website to locate elementary and middle schools. I selected the elementary and middle school's individual websites to identify the name and email addresses of the administrators and teachers. The data collection process was followed as explained in the IRB Ethics Self-Check document and Chapter 3.

Each potential participant was emailed a letter for participation requesting their voluntary participation in the study. Potential participants who responded to voluntarily agreeing to participate received another email with the consent form attached. Potential participants responded to the email "I consent." Participants provided an available date and time to conduct the interview. I emailed a calendar invitation with the mutually agreed date, time, and zoom link information.

The interviews conducted began when the participant logged into the Zoom. I greeted and thanked them for volunteering to participate in the study and for agreeing to be recorded. I reiterated participation in the study was voluntary, and information shared will remain confidential. I discussed the purpose of the interview time frame and expectations of the interview protocol document. I asked the participants if each had any clarifying questions and for verbal consent to record the interview. After each administrator and teacher granted consent, I started recording and began the interview.

I used the teacher interview protocol for African American male teachers and the administrator protocol for administrators to ask open-ended interview questions. As the researcher, I tried to minimize bias during the data collection process by being an active listener to the participant's responses to the interview questions. I adhered to the data

collection process and methods I described in Chapter 3. I used this data collection process to guide, collect and organize the data from the interviews. A follow-up email was sent to potential participants who didn't respond to the initial email. This was based on the district setting transitioning to virtual learning because of the increase in Covid cases during the pandemic. As a result, there was minimal variation in the data collection process.

The participants' responses were recorded using the Zoom conferencing platform. The transcript option was enabled in my Zoom settings. When the interview was concluded, Zoom emailed me a transcribed interview audio transcript. I reviewed the audio version of the interview in order to correct errors in the transcript that influenced meaning. The interview transcripts were used to conduct the coding process and analyzed for themes. I read and made annotations on each transcript to identify patterns and trends from the interviews. I stored the transcripts and recordings on a password-protected secure computer. Based on Walden's guidelines, the recordings and transcripts will be deleted from the password-protected secure computer after five years. Paper transcripts will remain stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office for a period of five years after the completion of the final research study. All stored data will be removed and destroyed from my password-protected secure computer after the five-year period.

### **Data Analysis**

As I reviewed the transcripts, I analyzed the data using open coding for the second cycle pattern coding and thematic analysis. The data was read and reviewed again to identify patterns, themes, and categories of interest. Saldana (2021) researchers should



review data in order to identify codes to emerge during the data analysis process. The interview transcripts were managed and stored on the MAXQDA software on a password-protected computer. The organization of the data assisted me with the data analytical reflection process. CAQDAS itself does not code the data. As the researcher, I was responsible for uploading, organizing, managing, and coding the data (Saldana, 2021). After thoroughly reviewing the transcripts using the open coding and pattern coding process, I reexamined the codes for emerging themes. Theming the data is an appropriate approach for all qualitative studies (Saldana, 2021).

I used Saldana's (2021) steps to analyze the data in this study. Trustworthiness was implemented using the following steps to analyze the data:

1. I uploaded the data onto MAXQDA software and organized the data by labeling it according to participants 1 thru participant 19.
2. I read and reread every participant's response by sorting, coding, and organizing segments of the responses by categories and labeling the categories according to terms stated by the participants.
3. I used the coding process to develop categories of phrases and short segments of the participants' responses.

The emergent themes from the data represent the meaning of the interview data.

### **Coding**

Coding is an analysis process used in qualitative research, the process of applying meaning to the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Coding is descriptive information that emerges themes from the data transcripts. Open coding on transcripts allows the

researcher to organize, break down and reflect on the data prior to the analysis process. This is the initial coding approach to data prior to a more detailed thematic analysis.

### ***First Cycle***

In an inductive approach, I read and reexamined each participant's interview transcripts to assign codes and create categories. Several common codes emerged from the data, such as *male head of household, mentoring programs, time and availability, providing support, inspired by former teacher or relative, students graduating, and administrators being honest*. Table 2 displays the open coding process where I assigned the grouping of codes and themes used in the data analysis process. Open coding is a process of identifying repeated concepts in words and phrases after the initial and several cycles of reading the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The codes emerged from repeated phrases, words, and common concepts from the participant's responses during the semistructured interviews. The coding process provided insight into developing an understanding of administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

### ***Pattern Coding***

I used the pattern coding approach during the second cycle of the data analysis process. I reviewed the transcripts and open coding to organize and create categories from patterns that emerged from the data. The data displayed in the left column shows the participant, the next column the open code, the third column shows the excerpt from the interview response, and the right column shows the category. Table 2 displays the pattern

coding process, which developed from open coding into categories. I narrowed participants' responses to specific codes, which aligned to categories according to similar commonalities.

The interview transcripts are stored using the CAQDAS MAXQDA Software. I reflected on codes that emerged from the data from the interview transcripts. I highlighted phrases and words using color codes to organize data into categories. The open code of strong support developed into a category of leadership practices. The open code of the New Teacher Academy developed into a category of professional development. Color coding identified *leadership practices, strategies for mentoring, and supports for African American male teacher retention*. The codes, categories, and themes helped me analyze data addressing both research questions. Table 3 shows the codes used to create themes relating to how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

**Table 4**

*Challenges Administrators Experience when Supporting the Retention of African American Male Teachers*

Themes	Codes Used to Create Themes
Time Management	Time management
	Workload
	Evaluations
	School and district level meetings
	Teaching expectations
	Classroom management
	Work and home life balance

*(table continues)*

Themes	Codes Used to Create Themes
School Climate and Culture	Transparent and clear communication
	Support
	Parental support
	Student discipline
	Cultural background
	African American male role model
Cultivate Strong Relationships	Student achievements
	Trust
	Feeling valued
	Transparent
	Fair
	Decision-making process
Leadership Practices	Collaboration
	Support
	Feedback
	Administrator support
	Accountability
	Visibility
District Leadership Support	Listener
	Modeling
	Mentoring programs
Professional Development	Discipline expectations
	Accountability
	Professional learning communities
	Leadership roles
Policies and Procedures	Build teacher capacity
	Share strategies
	Teaching practices
	Evaluation
	Transfer opportunities
Salary Pay	School structures
	Hiring staffing process
	Salary incentives
	Income increases
	Head of households

How administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers was identified in the codes and themes as cultivate strong relationships, collaboration, feedback, and modeling were labeled under the theme *leadership practices*. Participant 5 stated, "Open being honest, being available, providing strategies, modeling for them is another huge thing for retention." Participant 4 stated, "All administrators should model, be instructional leaders and have a structure in place. African American male teachers should feel supported, and administrators should definitely listen to the needs of the African American male teachers." Participant 3 stated, "Build relationships, supporting African American male teachers academically, emotionally, instructionally making sure they are right and form relationships so they feel supported to continue to do the work." Participant 7 stated, "factors that contribute to their retention are making sure they are heard, have tracks to leadership, and making sure they feel appreciated. I think that with African American male teachers, sometimes they can feel less than because they work in a field where the majority of people are women. If they have a specific focus it helps them to remain, stay connected and grounded to the work." Participant 9 stated, "Fostering in their abilities to become leaders themselves is so important to them to ensure that one day, not only if they choose to walk in the path of administration, but also just improve their practice overall as an educator."

Time management, work-home balance, and teaching expectations were a few codes derived from the theme of time management. Participant 13 stated, "It's too much paperwork and too much work for an elementary school teacher and not enough time in a day to do it." It's hard to maintain a family with the money as a teacher, which makes it

hard to stay in the profession when you can do so much more outside the profession for companies and make more money." "They want to give back to the community, but every single year it's hard retaining African American male teachers in an urban setting."

Participant 6 stated, "A lot of African American males lose interest in teaching because they don't believe the manner of or what they are teaching are able to reach or impact students. The material is out of date or irrelevant and they feel the information is idealistic and hinders them from wanting to pursue further in their career in education."

Participant 19 stated, "the amount of time it takes to plan a lesson, grade papers and do all the work you do it on your break time and planning session." Participant 19 also stated, "Teachers are under compensated, so I think unless they come up with ways to increase the salary levels and benefits it's going to be hard to you know recruit African American males, especially when there's many other opportunities out there to work and interact with students and children."

Student discipline, support, cultural background, and transparent and clear communication were codes from the theme school climate and culture. Participant 1 stated, miscommunication could either be on the teacher or the administrator. Administrators clearly communicating expectations or the teacher clarifying the expectations of the administrator so that the teacher is able to provide what the administrator is looking for." Participant 10 stated, "I've always wanted to be in education because my mother, sister and wife are all teachers. So, they inspired me to become a teacher." Participant 11 stated, I decided to major in education to get those kids in my neighborhood that look like me an opportunity to have a positive role model."

Supports to retain African American male teachers was explained by Participant 11 stated, "After the first year of teaching, having a mentor to show you the road, give different instructional strategies, professional development, different social educational groups, networks and different things to support the teachers in their capacity to help them build their knowledge in the field and you know a shoulder to lean on at times."

Participant 18 stated, "I would say they leave the field of education because there's no support from you know the county or school district, that they will be working with you, especially in terms of trying to maintain certification and things of that nature."

Participant 2 stated, oh my goodness, yes climate and culture is everything. You can pick up the vibe in terms of how students are communicating with one another, how administrators communicate with teachers and students. Culture it takes time but is established by the administrator's work, organization and having a vision."

The themes of *District leadership support and professional development* was derived from the data. The codes accountability, professional learning communities and leadership roles were identified when developing these themes. Participants 8,12, 15 and 17 stated the importance of establishing professional development opportunities for African American male teachers. Also, the importance of recruiting, hiring and providing mentor programs and network communications to share strategies and leadership roles within the school and district environment. Participant 12 stated, "I honestly chose middle school to teach because during the first round of interviews I was offered middle and high school positions. The principal told me I was too young for high school for my first year so I was offered a middle school position." Participant 15 stated, "providing

support from administration in the building, from the county, mentoring programs to share knowledge from colleagues and an outreach program for African American male teachers.” Participant 17 stated, “Principal leadership can give teachers tools and empower them with the issues in urban school settings like discipline and lack of community support. Opportunities for programs and for urban schools to reach out to the community and get the parents involved a district agenda.”

### **Discrepant Cases**

The compliance of the data collection process used in this research ensured no discrepant cases emerged from the themes found in the data. The qualitative data from interview responses were analyzed and no outliers of discrepant data were evident. The participant’s responses and themes identified, I found no conflicts from the participants’ interview responses. As qualitative researchers analyze coded data to develop themes, the researcher will review and revise the themes to accurately reflect the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is important for researchers during the data analysis process to scrutinize themes emerged from their data by checking and rechecking the interpretations against the data to identify alternative explanations and possible misinterpretations (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Table 4 shows how each theme aligns to each research question.

### **Table 5**

#### *Research Questions Alignment with Themes*

Research Questions	Themes
RQ1: How do administrators perceive they support the retention of African American teachers in elementary and middle schools in the local urban school district?	Time management District leadership support Professional development Policies and procedures Salary pay



RQ2: How do African American male teachers perceive administrators support their retention in elementary and middle schools in the local urban school district?	School climate and culture
	African American male mentoring programs
	Workload
	Salary incentives and income
	Leadership practices
	Developing strong relationships

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### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

I conducted the research by developing validity approaches that align with the research questions, objectives, and contexts of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The trustworthiness of the data was established by the implementation of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. As the researcher, I followed the data analysis process by organizing the data, coding, and identifying categories and themes to develop an interpretation of the data findings (Creswell, 2018). Researchers must ensure protocols and data collection procedures are established based on specific criteria aligned to the trustworthiness of the basic qualitative study (Adler, 2022).

### **Credibility**

For this study, I adhered to the established approaches for conducting participant interviews, data collection, and analysis process. Credibility refers to the reliability and the integrity of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Participants were informed of a letter of participation, consent form, and their voluntary right not to participate in the study at any time. I followed the interview protocol for each participant. Data from the interviews were organized and stored in CAQDAS MAXQDA software. I implemented the credibility of the study by conducting member checking. Member checking enabled me

to clarify information from the interviews for accuracy. The participants requested no changes.

### **Transferability**

Approaches for achieving transferability consist of detailed descriptions of the data, thick descriptions for readers to make comparisons to other contexts according to the information provided (Guba, 1981) and (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used thick, rich descriptions so researchers could develop their own decisions about the transferability of the findings for further research. The data collection was conducted in a trustworthy manner to increase the transferability of the findings from the research setting to another setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) I enhanced the transferability of this basic qualitative study by using the interview protocols I prepared during the semistructured interview process. I reviewed and emailed the interview transcripts to the study's participants to clarify their responses and information. I interpreted the findings in a manner that others could review, draw their own conclusions and develop similar findings from the research.

### **Dependability**

According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), a study's dependability refers to the stability of the research data. I ensured the integrity of the data by utilizing password-protected secure storage to organize, maintain and code the data. I conducted an audit trail in this study which describes the research process and how the data was collected, and the reporting of the findings. Korstjens and Moser (2018), this study followed consistent approaches and protocols another researcher could follow and conduct similar research to my study.

**Confirmability**

Methods to achieve confirmability include implementing triangulation strategies and researcher reflexivity processes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Confirmability and dependability were verified by utilizing semistructured open-ended interview questions, coding approaches, and member checking. According to Yin (2018), I ensured the validity of this basic qualitative study by adhering to the data collection process, coding, interpreting, and presenting the findings in a manner other individuals would derive similar conclusions from the data. The integrity of the interview process was established by recording the participant interviews. As the researcher, I ensured the validity and trustworthiness of the data in this study by implementing specific criteria of credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Creswell (2018) stated researchers could directly identify reflexively their personal biases, experiences, and values, which can develop an interpretation during the research process. I reflected on my personal experiences and biases, which could influence my interpretations of the data collection process. I interpreted and analyzed the data accurately and objectively.

**Summary**

In this basic qualitative study, I explored how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers. In Chapter 4, I discussed the research setting, demographics, data collection process, evidence of the study's trustworthiness and results to address the research questions. Additionally, I outlined the data codes and themes that were collected as a part of the data analysis process derived from the participants' interviews. Chapter 5 will consist of research information I

summarized and interpreted from the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. I conducted this research to investigate and better understand administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers. The findings may provide insight to urban school districts seeking to address African American male teacher retention. I conducted semistructured interviews with participants from elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Semistructured interview questions provided rich and descriptive information essential to addressing the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

During the data analysis process, I identified eight themes regarding the administrators' and teachers' perception of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The themes identified were as follows: (a) time management, (b) school climate and culture, (c) cultivating strong relationships, (d) leadership practices, (e) district leadership support, (f) professional development, (g) policies and procedures, (h) salary pay. I found school climate, leadership practices, and workload demands have contributed to African American male teacher retention. Participating administrators and African American male teachers stated cultivating strong relationships, mentoring, professional development, and salary

income could be challenging to provide support to retain African American male teachers. I found collaboration, mentoring, feedback, and leadership support are important components of a positive school climate and culture. Administrators who provide structures and systems of monitoring, accountability, relationships, and professional learning communities are strategies to improve the retention of African American male teachers.

I found schoolwide and district-level leadership practices and approaches contribute to the challenges and support of African American male teachers. Policies, procedures, and school district mandates influence administrators' and teachers' professional learning and capacity building of administrators and teachers. I found the pay scale and progression to leadership positions influence African American male teacher retention and their decision to remain in the education profession. In this chapter, I discuss my interpretations of the findings and the study's conclusions according to the data analysis process. I also discuss recommendations for further research and the potential impact of positive social change.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings of my research study revealed the participants' experiences with administrator support of mentoring, feedback, and leadership practices influence the retention of African American male teachers. The participants discussed the value of collaboration with stakeholders in the school community. Developing relationships, transparency, accountability, and administrators' support are essential factors influencing African American male teacher retention. The findings from my study revealed that

participants became educators in this profession based on a lack of African American male role models in their households or their young-aged school environment. Family members were educators and wanted to contribute to becoming role models for students and increasing student achievement.

### **Key Finding 1: Climate and Culture**

Establishing a positive school climate and culture is essential for teacher retention of African American male teachers. Administrators' creating structures and leadership roles to provide support, give feedback, monitor instruction, and allocate time for collaboration are some challenges participants stated. Administrators providing a positive school climate and culture are critical to teacher retention (Ryan, 2017; Dixon et al., 2019). The participants in this study believed the workload, required meetings and time allocated for lesson planning, and lack of leadership supports led to stressful, inadequate working conditions. Teacher retention is determined by stressful and poor job-related situations Elyashiv (2019). The participants' understanding of the need to develop strategies and structures to maintain a positive climate and culture align with Angelle's (2006) study identifying three attributes for positive school culture and climate: (a) reflective, positive feedback, (b) administrator's promotion of best practices and instructional strategies, (c) administrator's formal and informal classroom visits.

### **Key Finding 2: Developing Strong Relationships and Collaboration**

Participants in this study indicated the importance of developing strong relationships and collaboration with administrators and colleagues, which encourages African American male teacher retention. Administrators establish various methods to

communicate with African American male teachers to ensure they feel valued and supported and provide clear expectations for teaching tasks. Participants expressed the importance of being a good listener, accessible, and time allocated for collaboration. Developing strong relationships within positive school culture is vital in mentoring African male teachers. For strong relationships to be effective, the participants in this study's understanding align to promote relationships and provide professional development that supports and sustains an individual's skills, responsibilities, and needs for growth (Mullen et al., 2022).

**Key Finding 3: Support and Professional Development .....**

Administrator leadership support is an essential component that influences teacher retention (Holmes et al., 2019). Participants in this study emphasized the importance of supporting and building the capacity of African American male teachers. Administrators explained supporting teachers means being a good listener, accessible, celebrating successes, and providing resources and professional development opportunities. Demonstrating leadership practices that promote building capacity, assisting teachers with instructional initiatives, and creating mentoring programs is essential. Participants in this study believed school administrators who allocate the time and initiative to understand the issues teachers face and provide teachers with the essential resources and training to help the teachers develop professionally, which supports teacher retention (Kimbrel, 2019).

This study identified leadership practices that supported challenges influenced by student achievement, professional growth, and teacher retention. The roles



administrators play in establishing mentor programs are essential. Previous studies explain teachers indicated mentors were fundamental in their professional development and decision to remain in the teaching profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Creating a strong support network, knowledge of resources, instructional planning, progress monitoring, and data training on assessment platforms is important to enhancing professional learning communities within the school and district environment. Participants in this study stated school administration needs to create more time to complete work, meet with leadership role teachers, and mentors to provide feedback and check in on the social and emotional well-being of the teacher. Teacher retention happens when socio-emotional personal life factors, for example, change in aspirations, motivation for professional growth, and seeking new challenges (Bardach et al., 2022). Participants in this study understood mentoring experiences are inequitable within the same school and district environment; therefore, effective mentoring structures can promote teacher retention (Maready, 2018). Mentoring practices implemented in schools should reflect the needs of the school climate and the teacher. Vagi et al., (2019) mentor programs are an effective approach for school administrators to support teachers' professional growth.

### **Review of the Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study I used was social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, human behavior is emphasized as an interaction of an individual's characteristics, the environment, and behavior which derives from cognitive elements of

self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994, 1997). Bandura's social cognitive theory is aligned with the self-efficacy of teachers. Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory relates to principals' leadership styles. Transformational leaders demonstrate leadership with an emphasis on establishing a culture of collaboration where administrators provide encouragement, motivation, and support to their teachers. Transformational leaders effectively communicate with their teachers and collaborate to increase morale and positive culture in the school environment (Burns, 1978).

The social cognitive theory and transformational leadership theory ground the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study. Social cognitive and transformational leadership theory provided a perspective through which to explore how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban district. By implementing transformational leadership approaches, administrators can maintain a positive school environment where African American male teachers feel valued and supported. Developing an understanding of these influences on African American male teacher retention, district leaders and educational policymakers can use these findings of this study to create structures aligned to leadership support, teacher retention, and school improvement (Ford et al., 2019).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This basic qualitative study was limited to a purposeful sampling size of 19 participants from schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The sample size for this study was small; however, the number of participants used in this study was within the targeted participants' range. A limitation at the time of this study

was a worldwide pandemic that may have influenced participation. I achieved the number of participants according to my goal; however, the pandemic may have limited the number of participants willing to volunteer for this study. Purposeful sampling helped moderate the limitations sample size, which was appropriate to investigate the participants' perceptions that were essential to the research findings. The participants' perceptions and experiences discussed reflect this urban school district setting. I used only those perceptions from participants in an urban public school. The participant's experience as an elementary and middle school administrator and African American male teacher, school environment, and professional experience may be a limitation of the study. The data support the findings of this study, and this study maintained trustworthiness. Last, the limitations described the possibility for further research.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from this research, one recommendation is to investigate to identify and better understand specific professional support programs or initiatives that support teachers and increase their retention. I recommend future research include participants from the high school setting. Including high school administrators and teacher participants, future researchers can investigate to determine whether the experiences, challenges, and leadership support at the high- school level influence African American male teacher retention. Last, I recommend that future researchers could focus on leadership styles and practices that administrators implement to support African American male teachers, which influence teacher attrition and retention.

## **Implications**

It's essential school districts provide support initiatives for teachers, which is crucial to their success and student academic success (Zaharis, 2019). The findings from this study can provide administrators insights on leadership practices that can be implemented to address African American male teacher retention. The findings from this study may contribute to a positive social change in African American male teachers' presence in school settings and improve effective leadership supports provided for African American male teachers in urban schools. Addressing the issue of African American male teacher retention would positively influence teacher collaboration, student academic achievement, and positive school climate and culture. African American male teachers contribute to student and school success. Their presence in school environments influences the social skills of students as well as preparation for developing life skills to become productive citizens of society.

### **Positive Social Change at the Organizational Level**

The findings from this study have implications for positive social change for administrators, African American male teachers, and students at the organizational level. The study's findings indicate, from administrators' and African American male teachers' perspectives, the importance of implementing effective leadership practices and establishing mentoring and supports to address African American male teacher retention. Positive social change in the organization can emphasize on collaboration between district leaders and school administrators on best leadership practices, mentoring, and professional development programs structured to support African American male

teachers. This collaboration may contribute to developing an understanding for administrators to implement leadership practices that support African American teacher retention and student achievement and enhance positive school climate. This may also alleviate the factors of overwhelming workload, poor school climate, mentors not comparable to provide adequate support and feedback, and instructional practices which hinder student academic growth.

Positive change at the organizational level by structuring equitable professional development, mentoring support, and time allocated to collaborate with colleagues from different schools to meet the teachers' and students' instructional and socio-emotional needs, providing professional learning communities and strategies for monitoring and accountability. The results from this study suggest more resources are essential to be implemented in schools. Administrators who demonstrate effective leadership practices could partner with administrators and staff personnel in leadership roles to create mentoring networks, shadowing visit opportunities, communication platforms to share strategies that work, and conduct learning walks to provide feedback on support strategies.

### **Methodological Implications**

Future research about the research problem from this study may be conducted to compare results and identify findings to address the problem. A similar study can be conducted by investigating quantitative data collection approaches, such as surveys and archival data from school sites. The findings may provide a deeper analysis of participants' responses from surveys conducted and more information on how

administrators' are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in urban schools.

### **Recommendation for Practice**

This study gathered data from elementary and middle school administrators and African American male teachers to develop an understanding of the participants' perceptions of challenges to support African American male teacher retention in an urban school district. The data analysis of the interview responses provided insights on the support to address African American male teacher retention. According to this study, can implement organizational structures and systems to support administrators and African American male teachers' that might influence their leadership practices and retention. Participants in this study indicated leadership support, mentoring, effective communication, feedback, and collaboration are effective strategies relevant to the school climate and culture. Leadership supports, professional development, and cultivating positive relationships might improve teaching practices and teacher retention and positively influence student achievement. Therefore, it is recommended administrators and teachers receive mentoring, and a network support system regularly engages in a professional learning community and receives leadership support schoolwide and systemically. During the hiring process, a suggested recommendation is that African American male teachers be assigned to mentor alike colleagues to support instructional planning and classroom management strategies. In addition, resources to communicate with stakeholders and get involved as role models for students within the school community.

A recommendation for practice based on the study findings is systemically providing approaches for increased salary incentives during the hiring process. Participants indicated during the interviews the workload, time management for job-related duties, student discipline, and lack of consistent support are not equitable to the salary pay and job-related demands. Therefore, it should empower administrators and willing teachers to make effective changes that will influence the school climate and culture. It should also establish mentoring and support approaches to feel valued that align with policies, procedures, and educator workload. Participants indicated time allocated for collaboration, check-ins, and receiving feedback was a barrier during the school instructional day. Therefore, time should be allocated during the school schedule to consistently share professional learning opportunities and collaboration with administrators and support leaders. Systemically provide opportunities for schools to collaborate with other schools to share strategies on instructional support and mentoring for administrators and African American male teachers with similar school demographics. This can significantly benefit to build capacity, promote professional learning opportunities, and improve teaching practices, retention, and student achievement.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The findings of this research identified supports of leadership practices, mentoring programs and professional learning opportunities perceived from the administrators' and African American male teacher participants. One recommendation for future research is for researchers to expand this study to explore a deeper

understanding of the instructional leadership practices to support an increase in student achievement. Another recommendation is to conduct future research reframing the interview questions into a survey questionnaire to emerge data of instructional leadership practices to increase teacher leadership roles as well as the positive influence of school culture on student academic achievement. Gustafson et al. (2020) stated school leaders of African American male teachers and students need for continuous focus on key issues that influence the school, students and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. This basic qualitative study provided insights into how school administrators can encourage African American male teachers' retention by providing support, mentoring programs, developing positive relationships, collaboration opportunities, and maintaining professional development for teachers. The participants in this study expressed the importance of effective leadership support influences positive school climate, self-efficacy, and teacher retention. Cochran-Smith et al. (2011) identified a strong connection between a teacher's decision to remain in the teaching profession and the administrator's support, collaboration with colleagues, mentorship, professional development, and leadership opportunities.

From a personal perspective, my journey through this research process included acquiring insights on the deeper understanding of the importance of strategies to support



African American male teacher retention. As an educator, my goal is to establish a work environment which promotes effective teachers, future leadership roles and the retention of African American male teachers to support all learners in order to promote academic achievement. Encouraging African American male teachers to seek mentoring programs to obtain skills to build their capacity. As an administrator, my response to this research is the importance of collaborating the findings with colleagues to help initiate supports to address the professional needs of African American male teachers. I want to encourage diverse population of teachers to the increase number of diverse students to promote role models, positive school culture which can benefit student achievement. Research indicates the exposure to African American male teachers increase the advantage for African American male students to complete school (El-Mekki, 2018).

The research process established opportunities for gaining insights, growth and reflection as an instructional leader. My goal is to become more reflective in my leadership practices, listen and understand how to best support the teachers within my school environment. This research process has assisted me to become more responsive to the feedback I provide, and understanding the supports and needs of educators to create an environment to encourage mentoring and retention of African male teachers. By engaging in the interviews, I was allocated the opportunity to attain insights on the challenges administrators' and African American male teachers deal with and how to address their instructional efforts. The information attained in this research on the importance mentorships, feedback, feeling valued and leadership supports can contribute to the work efforts in the teaching profession.

The findings from this study are essential to assist administrators' on the importance of implementing effective leadership practices to meet the needs of their teachers. By conducting semistructured interviews with administrators and African American male teachers, I gained insights into the influence African American male teachers provide within the school climate. African American male teachers recognize their ability to provide meaningful instruction that leads to learning and the necessity of relating to the students and providing emotional support (Fant, 2017; Walley, 2018). Underwood et al., (2020) maintain that African American students benefit from teachers who look like them and provide guidance through challenges of how to deal with rigorous school work and social issues in their school environment. In this study, new insights emerged from the data on the importance of leadership supports of African American male teachers which contributes to the influences of the instructional school climate. Awareness programs, access to effective mentoring, time to collaborate with colleagues, salary incentives, leadership promotions, and leadership supports were identified as strategies to increase the presence and academic contributions of African American male teachers in the classrooms. Administrators' can apply these strategies in their school setting to encourage African American teacher retention and promote a diverse learning environment to build capacity and increase student achievement. Administrators and teachers can collaborate on supports to promote and address retention and the decisions to stay in the profession. The essential goal of this study is for educators to identify more about instructional leadership practices which will contribute to implementation of positive influences for school cultures and student success.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol (Teacher)

Alphanumeric ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Conducting Interview: Marla West

My name is Marla West and I will be conducting this interview. The research will investigate how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Prior to the interview you received a letter of participation and consent form to sign and return. This interview process will consist of one hour and will adhere to an interview protocol. During the interview process I will use prompting phrases as elaborate more, can you provide an explanation, can you give me an example to gain further information.

Do you have any questions? Would you like to share more?

If there are no clarifying questions we can start the first question of the interview.

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. Who or what inspired or motivated you to become a teacher?
3. Why did you specifically choose elementary or middle school educational teacher as a professional career?
4. In your opinion, what supports African American male teacher retention most in elementary and middle urban schools?
5. From your perspective, what factors contribute to African American male teacher retention? What might influence a teacher to stay in their position?



6. Why do you think African American males leave the field of education?
7. Why do you think African American males stay in the field of education?
8. Have you had any barriers, challenges, or incidents that have discouraged you negatively influenced your perception of teaching?
9. What has been your most rewarding teaching experience?
10. What type of principal leadership do you find the most helpful? Explain.
11. From a personal perspective, how are administrators challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers?
12. How do you perceive leadership influencing teacher retention in urban schools?
13. Describe a situation from your perspective where you believe administrator support was lacking or inadequate.
14. Is collaboration important in your job-related satisfaction?
15. Do you have any ideas or strategies on ways to retain more African American male teachers into urban elementary and middle schools?
16. What factors influence your decision to remain with the school?
17. How does the relationship you have with teachers, parents and students play a vital role in your decision to remain or leave education?
18. Do you have any additional statements to add to the discussion?

## Appendix B: Letter for Participation

Dear Research Participant:

I hope this email finds you well. I, Marla West, am a student in the Doctoral program of Educational Leadership at Walden University. In order to fulfill the doctoral requirements, I seek the participation of elementary and middle school principals and teachers in this study.

The research is entitled, “Retention of African American Male Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools”. This research is being conducted to investigate how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. The research interview process will ask participants questions based on their experiences. The study has minimal risk to participants and is voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Data collected for this basic qualitative study will be collected by interview recorded transcripts. The interview will be no longer than one hour. Please note the identity of participants will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at

██████████ or via email [Marla.west@waldenu.edu](mailto:Marla.west@waldenu.edu).

Sincerely,

Marla West  
Walden University Doctoral Student

### Appendix C: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study entitled Retention of African American Male Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools. The research is being conducted to investigate how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 6-8 volunteers who are elementary and middle school administrators and 10-12 elementary and middle school African American Male teachers.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Marla West, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher as an assistant principal, but this study is separate from that role.

#### **Study Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate administrators’ and teachers’ perceptions of how administrators are challenged to support the retention of African American male teachers in elementary and middle schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, this will involve you completing the following steps:

- Participant will take part in a confidential, audio recorded interview to answer interview questions for up to one hour.

- Review a typed transcript of your interview to make corrections if needed by email which will take up to 15-20 minutes.

After all interviews have been conducted, the participants will be asked to participate in member checking, which will be sent via email and will take up to 20-30 minutes of the participants' time.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this research is voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. All data will be kept confidential. No one at the school district will treat you differently based on whether you volunteer or not. I will explain interview protocols, minimal risks and the transcript process. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. There are no payments or incentives for participation. The researcher will follow up by email with all potential participants selected to participate in the study.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing. Minimal risk based on participants share experiences related to the topic during the interview. Minimal professional risk exists based on the researcher and participants work in the same school district. Data collection does not anticipate participants' disclosure of information which could be damaging to their employment or reputation. □ This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by

contributing to a positive social change of African American male teachers' presence in school settings and improve effective leadership supports provided for African American male teachers in urban schools. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by emailing a summary of the research results with participants and stakeholders.

**Privacy:**

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential. If during the research, criminal or child/elder abuse is reviewed, the researcher will adhere to state mandated reporting requirements for the profession of educators within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered (very rare). The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Participants identifiable information will be kept confidential. Coding and labels will be used in the data to identify themes and participant's information. Data will be kept secure by the researcher. Paper interview transcripts and data will be stored in a locked file cabinet at my home. Electronic interview files will be stored on my password-protected computer and backed up on a password protected drive. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as

required by the university. Data will be erased from computer files and physically shredded after 5 years based on Walden University guidelines.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You can ask questions of the researcher by email at [Marla.west@waldenu.edu](mailto:Marla.west@waldenu.edu). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-10-21-0676343. It expires on December 9, 2022.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

**Obtaining Your Consent**

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, "I consent." If you are willing to participate in this research, please reply within ten days.