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Impacts on African American Male Adolescents of Attending a Charter School Led by African American Men

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Mekole Pfiffer Wells

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Impacts on African American Male Adolescents of Attending a Charter School Led by

African American Men

by

Mekole Pfiffer Wells

MS, Walden University, 2011

BFA, University of Southern California, 1985

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

There is a lack of research on African American male adolescents who have progressed socially and academically in charter school systems under the administrative and classroom leadership of African American men. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a deeper understanding of how adolescent African American male students in one U.S. charter school system progress academically and socially under the classroom and administrative guidance of African American men. The research questions addressed how gender focus and cultural representation developed academic equity and propelled these African American male adolescent students socially and academically. Critical race theory was the theoretical framework for the case study. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 22 participants who represented four groups of stakeholders at an East Coast charter school: the CEO, founders, and board members; administrative leaders; teachers and counselors; and parents. The participants offered insights on policy development, administrative guidance, classroom leadership, and the home lives of students. Data from participant interviews and other credible sources were triangulated to validate the research findings. This research yielded an in-depth understanding of how unmet needs affect behaviors, social engagement, and the academic progress of students in urban settings. This case study also highlights the importance of school support systems for teachers, students, and parents within an academic community. Understanding how support enhances the skill set of teachers may motivate educational leaders to develop strategies to improve parent participation, which may help students to progress academically and socially.

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Dedication

To my mother, Emma Weldon, a woman who trusted God and surpassed the odds of racism. A woman who educated people and taught her children always to be their best selves. A woman who did not allow gender, race, or physical disabilities stop her from achieving academic greatness. I will always live by and remember the moment she whispered in my ear, "We came here to Win!" I live by that credo and will always resonate with the power to create change and develop equity for those who have not channeled their individual superpowers.

To my father, Willie Weldon, who always called me his "little Martian." At the time I would be so offended; however, as life has moved forward, I realize that he was completely right. You saw and said I was different and that my difference would change the world. To my father, whose last words before taking his final breath were "I cannot wait to see you cross the stage." Please know that those words were my mantra to complete this dissertation. Most of all, thank you for being the best father a girl could have.

This is dedicated to the Indigenous ancestors who were beaten, enslaved, and marginalized because of the hue of their skin. Every pain felt created a platform of equality for other generations to come. Thank you for making the sacrifice and for holding the torch so that others could continue to challenge inequity in education, racism, and organizational policy.

My brother Willie for the spiritual push I needed when I wanted to quit and give up. Thank you for being my own personal Lazarus, teaching me how to come out of life's various graves to live and live more plentifully every time.

Most of all, this is dedicated to God. When I was homeless, you housed me. When I was broken, you glued me back together. When I was hungry, you fed me. You lit the path and led me to safety when I was blinded and could not see my way. God, you have instilled a power in me that I am honored to share with the world. Many say I am strange, but they do not know the struggles that only you have brought me out of. I thank and praise you for this miraculous gift called "Living" that many take for granted.

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I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the guidance, patience, and focus given by my committee chair, Dr. Anthony Fleming. Many times, I wanted to give up; however, you pushed me to wipe away the tears, step away, and come back fighting through the disappointments to get this dissertation completed. I kept your quote in mind: "You swam this far out to sea to drown now?" That one sentence kept me going, and I did not want to give up on myself when you never gave up on me.

I would also like to thank my other committee member, Dr. Paul Rutledge, and my university research reviewer, Dr. Lynn Wilson. Dr. Wilson, thank you for showing me how to change an individual's mindset. I must have an open mindset myself. Thank you for all your patience in my numerous rewrites and for your support to completion.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the history of the United States, education has not been equally accessible in terms of opportunities for learning or leadership for African Americans. History has shown a trajectory of intentional punishments and racial discrimination toward African Americans in the past and present-day (Feagin, 2006; Kendi, 2016; Rothstein, 2017). African Americans, during the heights of slavery and beyond, were beaten, jailed, and even murdered for learning to read or write or being educated (Feagin, 2010).

The disenfranchisement of African American people from having the right to education began in 1860 when funding for Black education was objected to by the United States Senate (Kendi, 2016). The issues of racism and academic marginalization in the United States caused African Americans to separately develop their communities and schooling systems, which were conditioned around the policies of nonminority/White government systems and lacked equitable academic resources for their learning advancement (Kendi, 2016; Spring, 2007). The continual issues of racial bias, academic separation, and the lack of equity in educational funding have led to national concern regarding education equality for African American men and women (Kendi, 2016: Morris, 2018).

The 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. The Board of Education* allowed African Americans to attend and fully participate in the previously segregated American education system (Pitts, 1999). The integration of U.S. school systems was problematic for it made African Americans feel that they could receive a quality education, though they were still being treated unequally in academic sectors (Singleton, 2015). African

American students were allowed to attend public school systems yet were continually taunted, victimized, and treated cruelly by nonminority/White teachers, parents, and students. The issues of racial bias in school hiring, student admission, and disbursements of funding and learning resources continue to hinder African Americans' equal treatment. A lack of cultural representation in learning, leadership, and economic delegation roles also continues to adversely affect minority students and those from impoverished areas.

The impetus for the *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision was to create equality and equity in the U.S. education sector for students of color (Pitts, 1999). However, the decision and subsequent educational policy have not led to equity for African American students, especially African American male students. Academic bias and educational division have remained problematic for these students. African American men comprised a meager 7% of the academic and administrative positions in education (Young & Young, 2020). Male African American teenagers have, on average, the lowest attendance yet the largest percentage of expulsions/suspensions, special education labeling, and school dropout rates (Young & Young, 2020; Morris, 2014).

These issues have fueled the development of a new type of charter school system that has been successful in increasing the academic achievements of African American male adolescents and has provided opportunities for African American men to serve in areas of school development, administration, and classroom leadership positions with gender-focus and cultural representation. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a deeper understanding of how adolescent African American male students progressed academically and socially with the classroom leadership and administrative

guidance of African American men in a charter school system. This research investigation focused on the academic achievements of one single-gendered, culturally represented (SGCR) East Coast charter school and how officials have fomented gains among their adolescent African American male student population in core testing, academic progression, and social development (Brown & Boser, 2017; Corra et al., 2011; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012).

Research shows that mentorship plays a role in the advancement of African American male teenagers in SGCR academic environments (Cokley, 2015; Young & Young, 2020). Male African American teenagers have academically excelled in education featuring gender and cultural representation (Harper & Kuykendall, 2012; Kafele, 2012; Vaughn, 2015). In school systems, nonminority educators in urban schools often do not understand racial minority students' cultural backgrounds and economic deficits (Singleton, 2015). Singleton (2015) described the biased behaviors of teachers and administrations that have placed blame on these students for their racial achievement gaps and lack of academic knowledge (p. 11). Racial biases also account for the limited representation of African American men in policy development, administrative leadership, and classroom teaching (Gordon, 2017).

Nevertheless, some charter school systems now offer an SGCR academic environment for male African American adolescents with the administrative and classroom leadership of African American men. Credit (2020) provided evidence that male principals fostered a climate of empowerment in middle and high school environments, which had an impact on the teenage male academic experience. However,

there is limited research on the academic progression of teenage African American male students when African American men lead their academic experience in administration and the classroom.

In this research study, I concentrated on the academic development of secondary African American male students who attended one East Coast SGCR secondary charter school system. I also sought to further the understanding of how gender and cultural representation in policy development, practices/procedures, and classroom leadership assist in creating educational equity for male African American teenagers. Researchers have found evidence of narrowed achievement gaps for male African American teenagers in charter schools with African American males in academic leadership positions (Hotchkins, 2016; Lynch, 2017; Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010).

I used critical race theory (CRT) to examine the education experience of African American male teenagers as students and African American men as leaders in public school sectors. CRT emerged from the work of law scholars who challenged how racial power and race had been "constructed and represented" in the systematic structures of law, education, and policy in U.S. society (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p.121). The systemic racism highlighted by CRT led five African American men to develop a charter school system to further the academic progression of African American male teenagers. A CRC perspective has also motivated educators to focus on what was needed to develop academic achievement in terms of policies, practices, and procedures as well as gender and cultural representation (Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Feagin & Sikes, 1994). CRT has offered a useful perspective in the growing conversations about the lack of diversity and

equality in public school education systems (Sowell, 2020). CRT has reviewed the subjective personal voice of how racism, privilege, and whiteness have shaped the discipline of laws, policies, and education systems (Hurtado, 2019; De La Garza & Ono, 2016). This research study highlighted the importance of educational equity and cultural representation for the academic achievement of African American teenage male students.

Background

The public school sectors and federal education systems in the United States have grown increasingly hostile toward charter school systems. Sowell (2020) investigated the ongoing battles between public and charter school systems regarding testing, policies, and the impact charter schools have had on various sectors of student academic progression(s). As Sowell noted, charter school systems have improved the academic progression of children of color. In these climates, economic, cultural, and social components have not affected the academic progression of African American and Latino children, Sowell added. Benson and Fiarman (2019) have shown the ongoing issues of racism and unconscious bias in public school education reflected in school policies, discriminatory hiring practices, and issues of suspension/expulsion.

Charter school students' academic testing scores and grades have improved in these systems, no matter the economic backgrounds of individual students (Sowell, 2020). Researchers have continued to examine past charter schools like KIPP, Uncommon Schools, and Success Academy, well-known charter school systems, to learn how the schools facilitate the academic progress of their students in contrast to public school systems within their same district that have high rates of student failure. This style

of charter school has been in existence since the mid-1900s. In reviewing the literature, however, I found no research on charter school systems that focused on the importance of culture and gender representation for African American male adolescents and exposure to African American men in administrative leadership and classroom roles. More broadly, there is a gap in research on the outcomes of charter schools that have been developed and led by African American men. Past researchers discussed the importance of African American men in education systems and how exposure to gender and cultural diversity in leadership administrations enhances students' academic experience (Kafele, 2012).

A core tenet of U.S. education is that it must be proficient for all individuals to grasp knowledge and develop ingenuity as they participate in a culturally diverse society. Students are expected to develop wisdom and become significant individuals in society. However, researchers have yet to focus on the academic progressions of male African American teenagers in charter schools. There is especially a gap in research on those individuals who learned in SGCR charter school environments (Moore et al., 2018).

Implicit bias is an everyday occurrence for minority students in U.S. classrooms (Benson & Fiarman, 2020). In education systems, individuals who profess to treat all students equally still unconsciously reflect their implicit biases as they hide their explicit biases. Individuals in education, leadership, and policy have spoken about equality for all, yet their actions have produced discriminatory outcomes for minority students (Staats, 2016). These continual biases have caused an increase in suspensions that have supported the development of charter school systems (Sowell, 2020). These schools have improved academic results and outcomes in comparison to many public education facilities within

the same school districts. Charter schools have waitlisted parents to participate in school lotteries to secure their students' attendance. Parents hope to better their child's academic experience by placing them in charter schools instead of public schools. The administrative and classroom leadership of Charter school systems is more representative, in comparison to public schools, of student diversity in culture, gender, and life experience. However, limited research exists on how gender focus and cultural representation are positive factors in the academic achievements of African American adolescent male students. In this qualitative case study, I focused on one East Coast charter school with African American males in its leadership and its student populations and how educators at this school obtained gains in academic and social achievement in its student population.

In this research, I explain how the equal representation of African American men in all sectors of educational leadership at the target school had narrowed the achievement gaps between African American male teenagers and their peers. The leaders of this education system comprehended the implicit and academic biases that affected the academic progression of their adolescent male student population. The school founders understood how implemented policies, such as equal educational funding, cultural representation, and gender focus, create social change and equity with their African American teenage male student population (see Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015). This representation and gender focus has provided students equal representation and educational equity, while developing educational progress without limitations (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Lester, 2019). Issues of bias have

underscored the academic experiences of male African American teenagers, which has caused them to transition from public education schools to these SGCR charter school systems (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; Feagin, 2006).

The ongoing issues of minimal cultural and gendered representation in administration, policy development, board membership, and classroom teaching have challenged the academic progress of teenage African American males (Lester, 2019; Moore et al., 2018; Rothstein, 2017). Another focus of this research study was to understand how these African American male leaders have furthered the academic progress of, and redefined the narrative of educational success for, the school population of male African American teenagers. According to Benson and Fiarman (2020), there have been continual issues of bias in the U.S. education system; however, when there has been cultural and gendered representation in leadership, students' academic and social experiences have significantly improved. This case study research was needed to understand how gender focus and cultural reflection in administration and educational leadership affected the experience and academic progress of male African American teenagers in a charter school setting. The research furthers understanding of the importance of equity in education and that students matter culturally, socially, and academically. Educational equity is imperative because it illustrates the importance of culture in leadership and how a reflection of diversity successfully influences the academic experiences of African American teenage male students (Cogburn et al., 2011; Corley, 2014; Gewertz, 2007).

Problem Statement

The U.S. education system has a fraught history in terms of equality in educational funding and cultural representation within administrative and classroom leadership. These inequities have lessened the opportunities for all students to learn and progress equally (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Feagin & Barnett, 2005; National Center for Fair & Open Testing, 2011). They also underscore continual issues of bias in the education of African American teenage males. These educational biases underpin a theoretical paradigm of indifference and marginalization toward African Americans (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Lester, 2019; Morris, 2014). From the earliest American history to the present day, numerous administrations, school leaders, and policy developments have assisted in the negative academic experiences and biases African Americans have continually experienced (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Benson & Fiarman, 2014). Racial division and educational bias have been continually discussed yet never amended in national education sectors (Sowell, 2020; Rothstein, 2017; Singleton, 2015). Disparities and indifference against African American male students have been prevalent in academic policy, educational leadership, and the daily academic experiences of these students (Benson & Fairman, 2020).

Previous researchers discussed issues pertaining to public school administrations, educators, and procedures that have hampered the academic progress of African American male students (Jackson, 2015; Wilson & Nielsen, 2011). Male African Americans have faced inequities academically, politically, socially, and economically as they worked to achieve the same educational and personal successes as their nonminority

peers (Brown & Boser, 2017; Shah & Sato, 2012). Critical race theorists contend that those who created the systems of law, education, and government in the United States manipulated systems for their own racial power and societal purpose. The racial power of nonminorities/Whites set the precedent for elitist power in laws, government policies, and financial and academic systems that continues to linger. Historically the suppression of African Americans has benefited nonminorities/Whites, and this suppression led to unfair treatment of people of color in the past and present (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; Crenshaw, Gotanda, et.al., 1995).

Evidence on a National Level

National educational data show disparities in dropout rates from secondary education. According to National Center for Education Statistics (2021), the status dropout rates for Asian 16- to 24-year-olds (1.8%) were lower than those who were White (4.1%), and both were lower than the rates for those who were of two or more races (5.1%), African American (5.6%), Hispanic (7.7%), Pacific Islander (8.0%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (9.6%). The dropout rates for those who were American Indian/Alaska Native were higher than most racial/ethnic groups but were not measurably different from the rates of those who were Pacific Islanders.

In U.S. school settings, nonminority/White male students are often placed in academically gifted programs, unlike their African American male peers who are placed in special education classes beginning in prekindergarten and elementary school more frequently than any other race or gender (Morris, 2014; Jackson, 2015). Statistics show that African American male students made up 20% of special education cases nationally

but only 9% of the national education population (Kidsdata.org, 2021) Even though

research has African American secondary students to have the same levels of intelligence

as their nonminority counterparts, many are placed in special education classes instead of

college preparatory courses for the academically advanced (African American Leadership

Forum, 2011; Cogburn et al., 2011).

The repetitious cycles of academic marginalization of African American male

students have been concurrent in research and national statistics (Brandt & Reyna, 2012;

Cornelius & Lew, 2009; Cogburn et al., 2011; Morris, 2014). For example, 46% of

African American students are educated in schools that do not meet annual yearly

progress benchmarks, and 39% of African American students are educated in "intensely"

segregated and dangerous school settings (Morris, 2014). African American male

students accounted for 20% of school suspensions, the highest percentage of any race,

and there has been minimal action towards crafting a remedy for the causes of these

negative circumstances for African American male students.

Unlike other genders or races, African American male students in secondary

education have lacked academic support and progression during different levels of their

schooling (Green, 2008; Jackson, 2015; Shah & Sato, 2012). These individuals have

faced academic deficits daily, while biased education systems have depreciated the

educational value of African American male students at all levels of education (Brandt &

Reyna, 2012; Cogburn et al., 2011; Kluse, 2009; Phillips, 2011;). The academic

marginalization of African American male students has spurred concern from African

American parents, leaders, and surrounding communities (Alexander, 2012; Corley,

2014; Kafele, 2012). These concerns supported the development of SGCR charter school systems that focus solely on the academic progression and achievements of male African American teenagers (Gewertz, 2007; Goodkind, 2012; Harper, 2015).

These SGCR academic campuses have been developed by African American men and others that are concerned about the academic welfare of this student demographic. These schools have bridged the progressive learning and cultural development with adolescent African American boys (Laing, 2010; Lester, 2019). In 2014, there was a total of 39 campuses in the United States that focused on the academic revitalization of African American males in SGCR environments. The initial focus of the focal SGCR charter school system was on offering African American male students academic equity in their learning experience while developing an atmosphere for these young men to grow academically and culturally. These schools have created outstanding leaders with the role modeling and integration of African American male mentorship and leadership (Corley, 2014; Gewertz, 2007).

This academic structural outline of SGCR charter schools is based on the belief that single-gender focus and cultural representation contribute to African American male students' academic and life progression. The structuring of gendered, cultural representation implemented with African American history has developed the academic strength and cultural knowledge these young men needed to be successful academically, and progressive in their lives as African American men (Corley, 2014). A large body of research exists on the educational decline of African American male students in secondary education (e.g., Barbarin, 2010; James, 2011; Rashid, 2009; White, 2009). Yet,

research is lacking on the academic progression of male African American teenagers who were educated in SGCR school environments led by African American men (Bell, 2015; Feagin & Barnett, 2005). There were gaps in research on how African American male students achieved academically when African American men administered policies, developed coursework, and led the students' administrative and academic experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a deeper understanding of how adolescent African American male students progressed academically and socially with the classroom leadership and administrative guidance of African American men in a charter school system. There have been many gifted African American male students; however, race, ethnicity, and gender have affected these students' learning development in U.S. public school systems (Credit, 2020). This study developed a deeper understanding of how equal representation of African American men in educational leadership narrowed the achievement gaps among African America teenage males in one charter school population. The leadership of this charter school system comprehended the issues of implicit and academic bias that have affected academic progression within its student community and offered an understanding to implement educational policies requiring equal percentages in funding, cultural representation, and gender focus.

These policies have created academic equity and social progression for male African American adolescents and are needed in all sectors of education (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015). I focused on one East Coast charter school led by African American men and how the school's leadership has influenced its

adolescent African American male student population to achieve academic distinction and achievement. By using a case study design, I was able to further understand how gender focus and cultural representation are important to school policy development, administrative and classroom leadership, and academic progression (see Brown & Boser, 2017; Corra et al., 2011; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012). This investigation gave insight into the impact culture and gender reflection made in narrowing achievement gaps and developing student academic success (see Gewertz, 2007; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012). By limiting my focus to one East Coast SGCR charter school, I was able to explore in depth the practices, procedures, and academic implementations that contributed to the academic success of the students within this school community.

This study focused on the participants' experience within the SGCR charter school and the developments that contributed to successful educational outcomes for male African American teenagers at the school. The research offers an understanding of how gender and cultural representation are factors in academic knowledge, personal development, and cultural awareness within an SGCR charter school community (see Gewertz, 2007). The school I researched was founded by five African American men who sought to advance the educational progression of their teenage African American male students. I conducted semistructured participant interviews with four sets of stakeholders from this charter school community: counselors and teachers, parents of the student population, school board leadership and school founders, and administrative leadership. The research questions (RQs) and theoretical framework of CRT served as the lens for the research design. The RQs addressed the development of the SGCR charter

school and how participants' experiences in education led them to this SGCR academic community.

The intention of this research was to understand how gender focus and cultural representation affected academic equity in academic policies and educational practices and procedures in this chartered school system. I also sought to understand how achievement gaps were lessened in African American male students when their educational experience was led by African American men (see American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Brown & Boser, 2017; Feagin & Barnett, 2005: Kafele, 2012). Implemented practices have deterred academic development and dissuaded the educational success of African American males in the past (Cokley, 2015; Lester, 2019; Sowell, 2020). For generations, "children learning by example" has been a key phrase in education (Koralek, 2009). It has served as the staple of learning, teaching, and intellectual progression of children in academic environments (Koralek, 2009).

Yet, U.S. education has minimal representation of African American men in positions of administrative leadership, classroom instruction, and academic policy development. This lack of representation has been a factor in African American male students experiencing continual academic bias in representation, academics, and leadership, which has never allowed them the same educational experiences as their peers (Corra et al., 2011). In this research, I explored the perspectives of African American men within the target SGCR school community regarding the importance of their presence in administrative and classroom leadership and how their leadership has

contributed to academic and student progress in their population of adolescent male African Americans.

Research Questions

In this case study, I investigated how gender and cultural representation impacted the academic progression of male African American teenagers in an East Coast secondary charter school. There were two RQs asked of all participants that explored participant attitudes, school practices, and the belief systems of this SGCR charter school system. The two RQs that underpinned the study were

RQ1: How can African American male representation (in educational administration and leadership) be used to propel the academic experience of male African American teenagers?

RQ2: How can gender focus and cultural representation be used to develop academic equity with these minority students?

Seider and Graves (2020) stated that many minority students feel that they never experience equality and cultural equity in their school systems. Similarly, in research conducted within charter schools cultural representation was important to grade progression and the academic development of minority students (Sowell, 2020). This study further emphasizes the importance of cultural representation and gender focus for male African American teenagers in a charter school system. The study also illustrates how this learning environment promotes academic equity for students through policy implementation, educational practices, and academic procedures.

Theoretical Foundation

Researchers have used CRT as a lens to evaluate bias in systems of law, education, and government, and how bias has constructed racial power benefits for nonminorities/Whites in U.S. systems of law, policy, and education (Banks & Valentino, 2012; Green, 2008; Ostertag & Armaline, 2011; Tuch & Hughes, 2011). The underlying focus of CRT, racial power relations, has restricted the freedoms of African Americans to progress financially, judicially, and academically for centuries (Rothstein, 2017). These practices have served as connectors to the impactful academic experiences and overall developments of African Americans, both male and female (Corra et al., 2011; Green, 2008; Tuch & Hughes, 2011; Project Fair Test Center, & NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2011). Many entities have stated a desire to amend the issues of academic inequity and lack of learning equality in past education sectors (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Yet, even with the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, in the present 21st century most African American children who attend public school systems are racially compromised and treated as inferior because of racial bias (Crenshaw et al.,1995). A focus of CRT is on making more transparent the biased practices that have stymied the academic progression and cultural representation of African American men in U.S. education (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Emdin, 2017; Lester, 2019).

The framework of CRT underpinned the design of this research. I used CRT to increase the understanding of how bias has affected the education of male African American teenagers and led to the rise of SGCR charter school education systems (see Sowell, 2020). Schools have had successful student populations because both leadership

and students had an allegiance to the school's belief system (Seider & Graves, 2020; Sowell, 2020). CRT offers an explanation for the increased percentages of suspension/expulsions and special needs placements and the deficient representation of academic and classroom leadership with students, predominantly African American males (Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Cogburn et al., 2011). There are calls for school administrations and policymakers critically review how race factors into the most important areas of education (Young, 2011).

Academic assessment issues, poor-quality instruction, program development lapses, and unequal funding of schools are well-established factors of educational bias (Young, 2011). Theorists have proposed that racial biases stagnate the progress of African Americans, especially men, in numerous structured systems (i.e., judicial, education; Alexander and Stivers, 2010; Tuch & Hughes, 2011). Educational bias is problematic because academic practices and procedures are definitive factors in a student's success or failure (Singleton, 2015). These practices shape systems of education, government, and organizational leadership. However, African American men experience racial biases within all sectors that regulate their individual successes from preschool to adulthood, research shows (Compton-Lilly, 2011; Green, 2008; Alexander, 2010).

In summary, the theoretical framework of CRT offered a comprehensive framework for assessing the impact of biased academic practices and procedures on African American male adolescents in secondary education settings. The framework of CRT outlined the research and developed an understanding of how microaggressions in

public school education caused the transition from public school to the SGCR charter school education with African American male leadership and its gender-focused, culturally reflective student population (Compton-Lilly, 2011; Gewertz, 2007).

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative case study design in this study. I chose this method because it allowed for analysis of multiple forms of data pertaining to the school population. The study results not only provide insight into the academic growth and social development of students at the target school. They also specify the elements of the school culture that developed the students' academic successes. I used a semistructured interview approach with the four participant groups as the method of data collection. This method of data collection ensured that the participants' experiences were authentically reflected in the information they shared with me as the researcher. This necessitated the recruitment of four participant groups that reflected the school's culture: (a) board members and school founders; (b) principals, assistant Principals, and administrative leadership; (c) teachers and counselors, and (d) parents of students who attended the SGCR charter school.

Understanding how CRT influenced the development of the schools' practices and procedures was also important. It was beneficial for me to choose participants who reflected the school culture and understood the importance of gender focus and cultural representation in academic settings. I focused on the importance of SGCR in administration and classroom leadership for African American male teenagers' academic progress. It was, thus, important that the participant pool and environments reflected the case study focus.

I triangulated data from credible sources that reflected the SGCR charter school community. Mishra and Rasundram (2017) noted the importance of data triangulation for the validity and credibility of research findings. Noble and Heale (2019) noted that data triangulation fosters trustworthiness by giving a more developed explanation of the research findings to readers. I secured multiple resources for this qualitative research to develop a thorough understanding of the target case. Data sources came from participant interviews, participant questionnaires, academic progress reports completed by parent participants, and on-site observations.

<div align="center">**Definitions**</div>

In this section, I define keywords that are vital to understanding the case study topic and methodology.

Academic Equity: A term that means fairness, impartiality, and justice and connotes equal opportunity for all students to participate fully in all educational and nonacademic opportunities that are offered (National Equity Project, 2020).

Academic indifference: Scholarly disregard, educational disinterest, or academic neglect (Barbarin, 2010). The word *academic* relates to education; the educational system; and scholarly, intellectual behaviors. The word *indifference* means disregard, neglect, disinterest, and negligence.

African American male: A male student or adult who has origins from racial groups originating from Africa (Martin, 1991).

Bias: Individual thinking and behaviors towards others that are based on preexisting beliefs and social stigmas *(*Wang & Jeon, 2020).

Colorism: The allotment of privilege and disadvantage because of the lightness or darkness of one's skin (Burton et al., 2010).

Critical race theory (CRT): A theory that devises that law, education, and various sectors are designed for the benefit and reflection of nonminorities (Brandt & Reyna, 2012). The theory also holds that sectors of law and education are intentionally racist with inherent benefits for nonminorities (Brandt & Reyna, 2012).

Cultural representation: A phenomenon that occurs when cultures and racial groups are represented in leadership, organizational structures, and peer environments, giving children, teenagers, and others mentorship to better themselves (Harper, 2012).

Expulsion: The most severe disciplinary action that authorizes one to be removed from attending school for any crime, gross immorality, gross misbehavior, persistent disobedience, or violation of laws as instructed by the school board (As defined in Section §59-63-235 of South Carolina's Code of Laws, 2008).

Gender focus: A person's gender is the fact that they are male or female.

Implicit bias: Attitudes or stereotypes that affect a person's understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. The mind you are free of any bias in your mind, yet the individual's actions are racist in their intent (Perception Institute, n.d.).

Microaggression: A subtle action or intention, whether unconscious or conscious, that is directed toward a member or members of a marginalized group that has a negative derogatory effect (Hotchkins, 2016).

Nonminority: A person who is not of Latino, African, or Asian descent but is of European descent; a nonminority is a "White" person in American culture (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Public school system: An academic setting that is open to children in the community to attend. They are nonprivate or chartered. These schools are governed by statewide and city or county authorities (Scheider, 2017).

Racial bias: A term that highlights the systematic practices of various legal systems to subject African Americans to harsher criminal sentencing, including capital punishment; special education placement; and overall indifference because of hidden prejudices of higher positioned nonminorities (Fitzgerald, 2008).

Suspension: An act that results from the determination that a student has engaged in a major misbehavior, as presented in Section IV of this RCSD1 handbook; a student may be suspended according to the Progressive Discipline Plan (Section §59-63-235 of South Carolina's Code of Laws, 2008).

Systematic racism: A phenomenon, also defined as institutional racism, in which racism and discriminatory actions are practiced towards minorities in organizational structures (i.e., the federal government, corporations, academic structures, etc.; Feagin, 2006).

Assumptions

My first assumption in this study was that African American males in public school systems experienced academic biases in education systems. The lack of cultural and gendered representation in school systems hindered the academic equity African

American teenage males experienced in these academic sectors. Based on past research and literature, my assumptions were that SGCR charter schools developed educational progress and academic equity for African American teenage males when African American men outlined the policies/procedures and administered their academic experiences through practices/procedures and classroom leadership.

My secondary assumption was that CRT had negatively outlined the educational designs and academic experiences for African American teenage males in many public school systems. My assumptions were based on literature that CRT served as a catalyst in the development of school systems that focused on inclusive diversity and the educational achievements and outcomes of African American teenage males, who believed this academic equity would develop their student demographic to progress as their non-minority/white peers.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this case study methodology was to identify how gender focus and cultural representation advanced the academic experience for African American teenage males in education. Also, to understand the importance of cultural representation and gender focus in education systems, however, it was too wide in population focus. So, I focused my scope on the academic structuring, educational policies/procedures, and practices of one SGCR charter school in the East Coast. I researched the educational outline of the school culture and how these African American men academically progressed their student demographic of African American teenage males, narrowed achievement gaps, and developed social change within this singular SGCR charter school

environment. As I interviewed participants and furthered my research, I identified additional factors that enhanced the case study research.

Limitations

The study was limited to researching the academic progression of one SGCR charter school of African American males in secondary education leadership and school attendance. The research showed how gender focus and cultural reflection developed academic development in a charter school system. The research included participant interviews/observations from one SGCR charter school campus, the focus centered on one charter school, which limited case study topics. There were limitations with participant availability for individual semi-structured interviews. Limitations occurred when locating the participant group of African American male postgraduates between those high school years (2010-2018), so this group was completely omitted from the original research investigation. This caused me to limit the research and focused on one charter school system and its participant groups. The belief if research had been conducted with numerous single-gendered schools after the shutdown of schools with Covid-19, while most schools were online, would have been problematic.

Stakeholders in these academic environments participated in the disclosure of racial issues in policy and its effects on African American males in leadership and education. Access to African American male leaders, who spoke honestly about the effects of representation with African American high school boys, was not difficult to obtain. There were positive and negative biases relating to the researcher being an African American female, however, there was no difficulty in locating an ample number

of African American male administrative participants since I researched one SGCR

charter school system.

<div align="center">**Significance**</div>

This investigation exhibited the effectiveness of gender-focused, cultural

representation of African American males in academic leadership, policymaking, and all

educational levels of administration within one single-gendered, culturally focused

charter school community. The participants of the study included stakeholders from the

focused SGCR charter school: board members, principals/assistant principals,

teachers/counselors, and parents of students that attended the researched charter school.

African American teenage males have experienced numerous challenges in

academic communities based on micro-aggressive practices and policies, biased

leadership, and the lack of diversity in academic learning with dominant non-minority

academic administrations (Emdin, 2016; Singleton, 2015). African American students

have had a rate of 13.1% in educational testing with the lowest 6.5% between 2000 and

2015 (Mcfarland et al., 2018). The unfavored statistics on the education of African

American males in public school systems caused the increase in charter schools,

especially those focused on SGCR leadership and attendance (Sowell, 2020). Even

though teachers' unions and federal systems have made it hard for charter schools to

increase in percentages, they have created a strong presence and have continued their

development (Sowell, 2020). Charter schools have caused significant, positive impacts

socially and academically with students of color (Sowell, 2020).

The academic environment in America's education system has been tumultuous for African American males (Rothstein, 2017; Singleton, 2015; Moore, Michael, & Penick-Parks, 2018). As a result, African American male leaders have developed charter school systems that replicated culture, gender, and empowerment to teenage African American secondary students. Creating practices/policies that progressed these young men socially and academically in education. Unlike the negative social and academic narratives that have outlined the African American teenage male educational experience.

Understanding the leadership models and practices provided insight into the attitudes and beliefs of African American men as educational leaders and how it affected their school development with African-male teenage students. It also gave the audience an understanding of why parents chose to transition from public school systems to this SGCR charter school. The study identified the academic experiences and the creation of a culturally focused curriculum for African American male teenagers in relation to the ongoing debate of CRT. This study assisted in understanding how students of color found motivation and academic achievement when gender focus and cultural reflection led them to administration and classroom leadership. Also, how this focus and understanding developed academic equity for these African American teenage males in this charter school environment. The researched evidence showed reducing gaps of educational bias, and potentially closing the academic divide between African American teenage males in this one charter school system (Benson & Fiarman, 2020).

Summary

The research design examined how one SGCR charter school progressed the secondary population of African American teenage male students academically and socially. Understanding how gender-focus and cultural representation developed academic equity while adding to the cultural knowledge of African American males in this secondary education school setting. Chapter 1 gave evidence of the continual bias and academic indifferences these individuals experienced in public school past administrations and classroom leadership. The evidence served as a rationale for the case study investigation, the evidence showed national academic research and other academic expert opinions. The background of this investigation and the RQs that outlined this study with words and definitions clarified terms within the qualitative investigation. This chapter gave clear explanations of assumptions, scope/ delimitations, and limitations. Chapter 2 provided the literature reviewed to validate the need for the research investigation while showing the absence of research that validated the research focus.

Chapter 3 supplied the methodology used for the research study and the reasoning chosen with the research design. Chapter 4 presented the discoveries based on the data collection and analysis. While Chapter 5 incorporated the conclusions based on the themes and findings collected from the research, the significance of research implementation with the findings, and what was recommended for social change and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The U.S. education system has been overwrought with problematic issues of equality in educational funding, cultural representation of minority students, and unequal academic opportunities for all students to learn and academically achieve equally (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Capra, 2009; Feagin & Barnett, 2005; National Center for Fair & Open Testing, 2011). The ongoing racial division of academic practices and procedures has fomented continual issues of bias in the education of minority children, especially male African American teenagers. These educational biases reflect an academic paradigm of indifference and marginalization toward African Americans, as a whole (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Lester, 2019; Morris, 2014). Past and present administrations, school leaders, and policymakers have contributed to the negative academic experiences and biases African Americans have experienced (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Benson & Fiarman, 2014). Although issues of racial division and educational bias have often been discussed in government sectors, they have yet to be adequately addressed (Benson & Fairman, 2020; Rothstein, 2017; Singleton, 2015; Sowell, 2020).

This research furthers understanding of how the equal representation of African American men in education leadership in one charter school system narrowed achievement gaps among the school's adolescent African American male student population. The school's doing so is unusual. In the United States, only 30% of educational leadership positions—teachers, principals, and assistant principals–have been occupied by African American individuals, and of those, only 3% have been held by

African American men (see Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, 2010).

This disparity has had far-reaching consequences, as many school educators and leaders

do not represent the cultures they serve (Dwyer, 2017; Fitzgerald, 2008; James, 2011;

Jones, 2011).

Previous literature allowed the leaders of the researched education system to

comprehend the issues of implicit and academic bias that affected their students'

academic progress. With this understanding, the school leadership implemented

educational policies that required equity in funding, cultural representation, and gender

focus. These practices create academic equity for African American males in all sectors

of the education experience, which fosters social change in school communities (Benson

& Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015). In Chapter 2, I review literature on the

historical discrimination in education and academic leadership against African American

males in the United States. I provide examples of academic inequities in public school

education that led to the development of charter school education (Compton-Lilly, 2011;

Donnor, 2011; Palmer & Maramba, 2011; Sowell, 2020). Before reviewing the literature,

I provide overviews of the literature search strategy and theoretical foundation.

Literature Search Strategy

As I researched literature for this study, I developed a protocol to limit bias with

the literature resources and foster a thorough literary investigation of the research

problem. Finding relevant literature was a key concern. The academic and

multidisciplinary databases of the Walden University Library, including ERIC and

ProQuest Central, were the means of findings research. In my database searches, I used

words that related to the study phenomenon and theoretical framework: *systemic racism*, *single*, *gendered*, *cultural*, *representative*, *African American*, *Black*, *male*, *education*, *discrimination*, and *critical race theory*. Searches using the keyword *racism* highlighted distinct types of racism, including *symbolic racism*, *structural racism*, and *systemic racism*.

The words African American male," academic leadership, cultural leadership were referenced; however, the resources were limited in the search. Another search engine accessed was Google Scholar using the titles, "African American males in education," "blacks and education," "racism," and cultural representation in education. Yet, the terms "cultural representation" and "gender" were limited as descriptive terms used to research this topic. These titles delivered limited sources and cited, which created a literature gap and a need for this case study research.

Research literature showed a variety of information on the problematic issues of African American males, racism in policies, procedures, and issues in testing. However, as I researched the words "education," "African American," "male," "charter," and "single gender" were limited literature references. After I researched other terms there was no research that focused on the SGCR in secondary education sectors with the term Black or African American males. The contents of articles, literature, and research reviewed were limited throughout the investigation.

The limitations of the research developed a gap in the literature that created the purpose for my research investigation. There was limited research literature that focused on the importance of gender focus and cultural representation (African American men) in

academic leadership, classroom education, and administration in the education of African American males in charter school systems. I included published books and peer-reviewed journals to ensure the literature was reliable for my research.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical lens for my research investigation was CRT. The focus of this theory was specifically aimed at the bias in education and minority oppression that has occurred in education and law. (Delgado and Stefanic,2017; Feagin, 2006). CRT showed the relationship between racial power in law and education was coded for non-minority superiority (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). Woodson (1916, as cited in Ladson–Billings & Tate, 1995) stated,

> The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes the spark of genius in the negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other people. (, p. 50).

Education and law systems designed by non-minorities have upheld their history, their accomplishments, and the power that created biases that have been the focus of CRT (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). This theory was important to this research. First, it displayed the bias that occurred with African Americans as non-minorities have designed the academic outlines for public education systems. The reflection of their history, their accomplishments, and how these biases impacted non-minority/white racial power. This

bias in education has developed academic inequity among minority students, especially African American males (Lester, 2019; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017).

The issues developed the focus of this research study which showed the importance of SGCR and the academic achievements of African American teenage males in a charter school system. The theory of CRT outlined the concerns of academic bias and the importance of gender/cultural reflection in administrations, classroom leadership, practices and procedures, and the education that academically and socially progressed African American teenage males (Lester, 2019; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). The importance of SGCR charter schools has been that gender focus and culture are reflected in academic and educational leadership, which has developed academic progress and social power within this student community.

In this chapter, I reviewed the perspectives of how mentorship, cultural leadership, and cultural reflection enhanced the academic progress of African American students (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). CRT has outlined inequity in education for decades (Landings-Billings & Tate, 2016). The research focused on the issues of racial inequity within the tiered systems of the past and present United States. CRT has outlined the practices within the United States judicial, government, and academic systems. The issue of bias toward minorities has been the outline of non-minority power and racist progression historically and presently in statistics, practices of law, and public education (Morris, 2014; Lester, 2019; Diangelo, 2018).

CRT was developed from the research and incidents in the 1980s by Derrick Bell, the first African American tenured professor at Harvard Law School. Professor Bell

developed classes that reviewed law through the lens of race and how these laws were developed to favor non-minority/white cultures (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). Delgado & Stefanic, (2017) explained that CRT and the issues of race have become the nucleus of law and education policy development in the United States. These theorists understood how racism has been the structural make-up of laws, judicial, and educational systematic culture of America's constitutional outline (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). CRT outlined how racial inequity structured the American education and law systems toward minorities, especially African Americans. This inequity has served as a configuration of American government, history and practices of law and education toward minorities (Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Cornelius & Lew, 2009; Jackson, 2015; Phillips, 2011; Project, Fair test, Center, & NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2011).

Inequity has caused differentiation in the academic experiences of minority students (Lester, 2019; Seider & Graves, 2020; Morris, 2014). The academic bias in educational performance, classroom/school leadership and poor student development caused the creation of charter school education (Sowell, 2020). The goal of this research investigation was to understand how CRT outlined the academic experiences in public school education to enhance one charter school system to academically progress their African American teenage male student population, with gender and cultural representation in practice/procedures, school/classroom leadership, and cultural knowledge. A secondary charter school where African American men have led the education of African American teenage males and devised a system to narrow educational gaps with their student population.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Educational Bias That Affects Male African American Teenagers

Racial bias has continually affected the education experience and academic achievement of African Americans (Barbarin, 2010; Barker and Avery, 2012; Department of Professional Employees AFL-CIO, 2010; Cogburn, Charvous, & Griffin, 2011; Grimmett, 2010; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2015). The combination of research concerning the issues in education with African American males provided the rationale to investigate how marginalization and inequality in public school education have conditioned the development of this SGCR charter school system, and the focus of this student demographic for this research investigation (Sears and Henry, 2003; Feagin, 2006; Morris, 2014; Benson and Fiarman, 2020).

The percentages of suspension/expulsions, special education placement, and school dropout rates with African American males in comparison with other races have reflected the issues of microaggression in education (Morris, 2014). Bias has continually exposed the rates of suspension and differential treatment researched in California education systems where African American male middle schoolers make up 7% of students overall yet have had a suspension rate of 13% (Taketa, 2021). Not only California, but percentages in Chicago have shown African American males made up 16% of student attendance and 60% of overall school suspensions, within the Chicago public school system (Masterson, 2016). Other research evidence displayed that academic

inequities are present in education systems nationally (Morris, 2014; Lester, 2019; Singleton, 2015).

Feagin, (2006) displayed that American systems (federal, education, judicial, economic) are intentionally biased to detain the progress of African Americans and created a path of privilege and profitability for non-minorities. For example, biased systemic structures have compromised the academic futures of African American males by developing for-profit incarceration facilities for every third-grade African American male (Alexander, 2012; Barbarin, 2010; Project, Fair test, Center, & NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2011). The literature's evidence showed bias in education development, teacher hiring, the academic process of policy development with practices/procedures, and cultural representation in school systems.

In America, 83% of teachers are non-minority/white females meaning the gender and cultural representation for students of color is limited. Cultural representation with public school educators showed 9% were Hispanic, 7% were African American, and only 2% were Asian (Dwyer, 2017). There has been a lack of diversity in gender as only 23% of U.S (United States) teachers are male, and of those only 2% have represented African American men (Hanford, 2017). Additionally, fewer administrative leadership positions—policymakers, superintendents, and school principals/ assistant principals— have been held by African American men (Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, 2010). The racial disparity in leadership and academics has historically affected African American males. After the racial segregation of U.S. schools was found

unconstitutional under *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the problems of academic inequities for African American males remained.

Cultural and racial representation has been found to be effective in classroom environments and progressively developed academics for African American teenage students (Wilson, 2011). Research has shown that when culture, male-gender leadership, policy development, counseling, and board administration are considered in relation to this demographic, progressive academic achievements resulted for African American male students (Lewis et al., 2010). There has been an absence of culturally responsive and gender-focused curricula in classrooms nationally for children of color (White, 2009). The lack of diversity, gender, racial, and cultural representation among teachers and leaders in public schools has been a continuous issue and has been related to the decline in U.S. high school graduation rates and academic success of African American male students (Lewis et al., 2010; Thornhill, 2018). Educational inequity has been embedded in the racial fabric of U.S. school systems and disproportionately affected African American male teenagers more than any other cultural demographics.

The History of Bias Toward African Americans in the United States

The history of Africans that were enslaved and brought to America has been altered throughout time. Africans' true ancestral history was erased and replaced by the name of the property owner he/she was enslaved to serve. African Americans have been viewed as property from the *transatlantic slave trade* to the heighted percentages of enslavement reflected in American prison systems. Being enslaved, African Americans have been viewed as being subhuman and denied free access to equality in United States

systems of any kind (i.e., education, housing) (Mauk & Oakland, 2013; Baker et.al, 2018). The biased treatment of non-minorities has plagued the experiences of equality for people of African descent (Baker et.al, 2018). African Americans have been forcibly denied their individual rights of freedom, land ownership, and cultural importance while being viewed as subhuman because of their African heritage (Mauk & Oakland, 2013). Since African Americans were enslaved, they had to acquire their own freedom to be educated, own property, or acquire any type of leadership position (Mauk & Oakland, 2013).

The intentional bias that came with slave ownership caused extreme duress and hardships for African Americans to access any type of freedom or equality. When the enslaved attempted to free or educate themselves, they were met with severe punishments from their owners such as lynching's. (White et al., 2013). In 1800, some areas agreed that African American children be educated, however this was met with a strong resistance from non-minorities/whites in the Southern regions (White. et al., 2013).

Many non-minority leaders in the south feared a surmountable loss that educating enslaved African Americans gave them freedom, causing a significant monetary loss because they were considered chattel (White et. al, 2013). The commodities of cotton, tobacco, and corn were an agricultural outline for wealth and financial prosperity in Southern states of America (White et. al, 2013).

Plantation owners and southern leaders believed that if enslaved African Americans were granted accessibility to education, they would not be subjected to a

continuous supply of labor (White et. al, 2013). During this era enslaved African Americans were subjected to countless issues of oppression in housing, policies, and education. There were no US Constitutional Amendments to protect the enslaved and many of these individuals were not given equality to educate themselves or their families. These individuals were continually threatened with various punishments and even death if they learned how to read, write, or educate themselves (Spring, 2016; Rothstein, 2017).

African Americans have been viewed as subhuman, therefore they have been unprotected in society which has caused violence and extreme bias against them. In 1800-1835 Southern laws banned the education of any enslaved individual (Spring, 2016). This separation caused African Americans to support, protect, learn, and develop within their own communities. African Americans students were mocked and terrorized by non-minorities for wanting to have an education and be free from enslavement (Spring, 2016).

After attaining civil, economic, and academic equity, African Americans continued to experience injustices, inequalities, and racial bias in the U.S. education system. Research showed numerous statistics of intentional bias against African American males in American history. For example, the Three-Fifths Compromise viewed them as property but not as human. However, the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments denied equal accessibility to African Americans in housing, as they had granted to non-minorities (Rothstein, 2017). After being freed from the enslavement of laws and policies that benefited the aristocracy of non-minority/white wealth, African Americans were still criminalized for any type of individual/community progression, this was called Jim Crow. Jim Crow laws implemented other discriminatory practices in government systems

which again suppressed their equality of rights and equity in human existence (Rothstein, 2017).

Jim Crow laws upheld segregation policies in transportation, housing, and education. African Americans still experienced the disparities of separation in all aspects and were continually treated as second-class citizens, even though the Constitution and Bill of Rights spoke of equality for all humankind. Discrimination in academics and academic leadership against African Americans was a continued practice from the heights of slavery to *Brown vs. The Board of Education* has continued with the present-day *Prison to Pipeline* in our present-American education system (Donnor, 2011; Palmer & Maramba, 2011; Compton-Lilly, 2011). Equity in education had been a continual issue for minorities, especially the African American male population (Fitzgerald, 2008; James, 2011; Jones, 2011).

African Americans have been the intentional target of racism in the sectors of law, policing, housing, leadership, and academics throughout the past to our present 21st century (Lynch, 2017; Compton-Lilly, 2011). The matters of racism and inequality have been continual in national sectors; with equity being an aggressively imbalanced matter of imparity in education sectors for minorities, especially African American males (Hotchkins, 2016; Wilson, 2011; Kunjufu, 1990).

The Inequities Male African Americans Experience in U.S. Education

There has been research on the continual issues of educating African American males in the United States (Moore Jr., Michael, and Penick-Parks, 2018). The continual research regarding the increased suspension/expulsion and low graduation percentages

with African American males in America's education systems (Ford & Moore, 2014; Lester, 2019). Even with national and statewide policies implementation to protect African Americans from any unfair racist treatment with academic marginalization, cases are reported daily and overlooked (Benson & Fiarman, 2018; Lester, 2019; Singleton, 2015). African American males made up 11% of America's principals, while non-minority males made up 80% of school principals. Even though percentages are low, African Americans have become more ambitious in their placements of educational board membership, school superintendents, principals, asst. principals, academic administrators, and classroom teachers (Wichman, 2018).

Research displayed the continuum of U.S. education sectors being outlined by non-minorities/whites to propel themselves in education, government, and other sectors dominated by their culture and representation (Rothstein, 2017; Seider and Graves, 2020). In America's public school systems non-minorities have made up make-up 68% of the national education sector (superintendents, principals, asst principals).72% of America's teachers are non-minority/white women (Morris, 2015). In comparison to the minimal 10% of African Americans that have served as school superintendents. Only 10% of African American males have served as principals, and a meager 20% have served as urban (metropolitan) principals. In classroom leadership 83% have been non-minority/white, and only 7% have been African American males (Morris, 2015).

A lack of cultural understanding and academic concern in the United States has affected African American male secondary students in education (Seider & Graves, 2020). The national average of student suspensions has been 5.3% overall, however

African American students are expelled at a rate of 13.7% higher than any other ethnic group (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Academic inequity has continued in the education of African American males in the United States. For example, in Prince George's County, Maryland, African Americans comprised 71% of public school enrollment, yet accounted for 87% of district school suspensions (Morris, 2015). Feagin (2006) discussed the intentional implementation of racial inequity throughout the systemic cultures of education, housing, and government in the United States, to name a few. Research suggested that racial inequity benefited non-minorities, while the progression of African Americans was oppressed in all systemic cultures (Delgado and Stefanic, 2012).

In education, only 12% of African American male eighth graders passed the CORE math proficiency test, in comparison to the 44% of their nonminority male peers (Praeger, 2011). In addition, 50% of these young men who lived in immense poverty have failed to graduate from high school (Praeger, 2011).

The creed of the United States education system has been to create academic equity for all students, regardless of race, gender, and culture. Yet, in American education, academic inequity has continued for African American male students (Weingarten, 2015; Jackson, 2012). These young men are continually stereotyped and have experienced prejudice and a lack of cultural representation in academics throughout their education (White et al., 2013). The increased percentages of expulsions, special education placement, and low-test scores have been reminders of the continued

marginalization within the United States education system and African American males (Corra, Carter, & Carter, 2011; Jackson, 2015; Meier et. al, 1998).

Bias in education has begun with African American males at an early age of pre-kindergarten. African American boys begin preschool testing high and intellectually progressing yet begin fourth grade with the lowest reading, math, and language art scores (Barbarin, 2010). For example, for-profit prison systems have been modeled by the percentages of every third-grade African American male born (Barbarin, 2010). This evidence implied a disregard for the academic progression of these adolescents in the United States education system (Barbarin, 2010). Research has highlighted the continual imbalance of suspension/expulsions, dropout rates, and special education placement with this demographic of young men, unlike their non-minority peers (Advancement Project, Education Law Center, Juvenile Law Center, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., National Center for Fair & Open Testing, The Forum for Education and Democracy, 2011). Morris, (2014) confirmed statistical evidence that 46% of African American children in both elementary and secondary students are educated in high-risk, poverty areas, more than any other racial demographic. This reasoning and action of federal academic policies, lack of funding, and non-representation of African American male leaders and educators have negatively affected African American children in testing, special education placement, misrepresentation in expulsions/suspensions, lowered graduation rates and higher percentages with teenage incarceration (Morris, 2014; Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Rothstein, 2017).

These past issues of academic inequity for African American male youth began awakening a sector of African American male leaders in surrounding communities to the issues of academic bias with African American males in America's public education system (Morris, 2014; Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Seider & Graves, 2020). Cultural representation in academic settings has empowered and developed educational equity in learning while creating academic equality in learning for minority children, especially African American males (Young, 2011; Bertrand, Perez, & Rogers, 2015; Benson & Fiarman, 2020). Lack of cultural representation and gendered reflection has limited intellectual success due to the lack of cultural misunderstanding, conditioned biases, and lack of diversity in the American education system (Henfield, 2013; American Federation of Teachers, 2015 Banks & Valentino, 2012; Brown & Boser, 2017).

The Impacts of Cultural Representation on African American Teenage Male Students

Studies show students have excelled in education and progressed in their academic experiences when their gender and culture were represented in school environments (Nance, 2016; Palmer & Maramba, 2010). Research has confirmed that African American male students achieved socially and academically when culture and gender were implemented in their educational experience (Powell, 2018). History has treated African American males as a monolith of problematic educated circumstances, yet research has found when gender and culture are represented in classroom settings these individuals exceptionally progressed academically and socially (Powell, 2018; Young, J. and Young, J., 2020).

Cultural and gender representation have been important considerations to assist in changing the continual biases with cultural misunderstanding, high percentages of suspension/expulsions, and low graduation rates among African American teenage males (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020; Wright, 2011; Lester, 2019). However, in numerous academic settings, African American men felt that they must continually explain themselves in teaching, culture, and masculinity because of the historical outlines of bias against African American men (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020).

Many African American male academic leaders have been viewed solely as disciplinarians instead of the leaders they are positioned to be, which some have believed to be an unfair representation of their skill and knowledge (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020). Research evidence outlined, African American male leaders progressed the educational trajectory for students, especially African American secondary males, as school administrators and classroom leaders (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020; Kafele, 2019; Smith, 2021). African American men have represented only 7% of the nation's teaching force. Statistics have shown that when these men are in administrative, or classroom leadership African American students have been less likely to drop out of school (American Federation of Teachers, 2020).

In 2017 African American students made up 45% of the students that attended high-poverty schools (Cai, 2020). African American males have represented 7% of the educational leadership sector. Education is supposed to offer equity and opportunity to children of different genders and cultures. African American men in educational leadership have offered cultural support to students who have struggled academically and

socially in academic settings (Kafele, 2019). Equal representation in education reflected diversity, but the lack of gender and cultural representation has increased school dropout rates (Kafele, 2019). There has also been a decrease in the hiring of African American males in positions of classroom/administrative education leadership (i.e., School Superintendents, Board members, Counselors, and Principals) (Kafele, 2012; Wilson & Nielsen, 2011; Silverman, Sumner, Frampton, et .al, 2011; Morris, 2014).

   Bianco & Canon (2021) have researched that African American males are intentionally at an "inherent" disadvantage in all American education systems. For example, America's teaching staff are made up of 85% young, non-minority/white women that have been researched to be culturally disconnected and ill-prepared to teach in these types of school environments (Dwyer, 2017). This hiring practice has not amended the academic or cultural gap within urban American public school education (Moore Jr. et. al., 2018). Research has confirmed that African American men provide instructional, emotional/ social support, and displayed positive beliefs in the abilities of the students they taught, not commonly found in the classrooms of non-minority educators (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020). African American students have faced increased percentages of humiliation, academic/social embarrassment, and racial bias more than other races in the education system (National Education Association, 2017). The representation of African American men in academic sectors has offered not only cultural representation but cultural understanding and gender reliability (Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2019; Young, J. and Young, J., 2020).

When African American men have been present in education sectors it has negated the adages of *acting white* if you are an educated and smart teenage African American male (Edwards, Mcmillon, and Turner, 2015). Because many African American male students have used the term *acting black* to shun the importance of personal intelligence and academic achievement (Edwards, Mcmillon, and Turner, 2015). The cultural representation and gender reflection of African American men developed a structure of academic responsibility and accountability with their student demographic of African American teenage males (Kafele, 2019). Also, having African American males in academic leadership allowed cultural normalcy for African American teenage males, it developed a kinship with their leaders that allowed young men the freedom to learn, develop, and organically represent their culture and individuality (Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2021).

There was limited research on the vital role African American men have lent to academic and educational leadership, and how their representation progressed the academic trajectory for African American male students. However, with African American men in leadership, the cultural familiarity allowed these young African American boys to equate power with education. According to Lester (2019), Culture is powerful in forming behavior and social and academic expectations.

> "Culture is the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, ideas, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices peculiar to a particular group of people. Culture gives meaning to reality and has the power to compel behavior" Wade Noble, 1989 (Lester, 2019, p. 75).

Research defined culture as a hidden, yet critical dimension of academic development with individuals (Lester, 2019). Evidence showed a person's culture circumscribed the life experience of the individual and developed the character and individuality of the person, as well (Lester, 2019). As African American men have led the classroom and administrative sectors it also lessened the stereotyping African American male students continued to face in non-minority-dominated academic sectors (Cokley, 2015). African Americans constantly encountered biases and idealized stereotypes from teachers and administrators because of their skin tone, which diminished their self-confidence socially and academically (Cokley, 2015).

African American men in educational leadership have developed equity and intellectual progression in their academic environments (Kafele, 2021). Most of all, the representation of culture in the academic experiences of African American students propelled them academically (Cokley, 2015). African American students have been known to be exceptionally smart, however, the continued racist degradation they have experienced has negatively impacted their talents since they lacked cultural representation in the classroom (Howard, 2016). While cultural representation has impacted the academic experience of African American teenage boys, literature addressed the importance of gender representation in the academic experience of African American teenage males. Even though culture had profound effects on the academic experiences of African American teenage males, I explored the importance of gender representation in academic settings. As the percentages increase with single-family households, African American male incarcerations, and high school dropout rates, the

investigation was important in understanding gender focus and culture in academic settings.

The Importance of a Gendered Focus in Academic Settings That Serve Male African American Teenagers

Statistics has shown 64% of African American households are female-led while there is a limited 7% of African American men in academic leadership (Morris, 2014; Kids count.org, 2022). The lack of African American male representation in academic settings and in home life has given a slighted view of African American male representation in the lives of African American boys (Morris, 2014). Neither home or school settings have offered a positive outlook for the overall social and academic progression of African American teenage males (Morris, 2014; Brooks, Jones, and Latten, 2014). Gender representation in the home is just as important as gender representation in school settings. Research validated that students who grew up in homes where education was important to parents who were both academically and socially successful (Brooks, Jones, and Latten, 2014).

African American male students have excelled academically when mentored by African American men who assisted them in adjusting to high school and college life (Brooks, Jones, and Latten, 2014) Gendered representation for African American teenage males has been important in mentorship and has become needed because of the lack of male leadership in households (Morris, 2014). Gender representation has been key, since there were such high percentages of non-minority female teachers and high rates of expulsion/suspension for African American male

students. The lack of gender equity for these young men could be the reason for high

dropout rates and the causes of other educational issues (Morris, 2014). As the literature

has shown, gender representation has been important to the progression of African

American teenage males. However, this lack of gender representation could be attributed

to the struggles and problems these young men have experienced in academic sectors.

Cultural and Gender as Key Elements of Academic Equity

From a universal context education should be equal for everyone while

developing academic equity for all to learn and progress the same (U.S. Const. amend

XIV). However, the issues of learning equality and academic equity have been

challenging for African Americans (Singleton, 2015; Rothstein, 2017). As we know

racial bias has been the outline of inequality for African Americans in all sectors of

education and academic learning (Emdim, 2016; Rothstein, 2017; Lester, 2019). The

practices of inequality in education have regulated past practices and have been present in

the academic sectors of hiring, testing, and leadership (Brown & Boser, 2017; Dwyer,

2017). Bias labeling of students' academic abilities has been disguised with actions that

concealed indifference in testing, special education placement, and suspension/expulsion

procedures with African American males (see National Center for Fair & Open Testing,

2011). This labeling has led to catastrophic declines in the educational progress of

African American males (Green III, 2008; Gewertz, 2007; Cogburn, Chavous, & Griffin,

2011).

The labels and actions of cultural bias and gender misrepresentation have

continually outlined the academic inequities with people of color, especially African

American males (Kunjufu, 2002; Singleton, 2015; Kafele, 2021). The inequalities in education have been affiliated with the academic inequities African Americans male students experienced with limited cultural representation, single-gender focus, and beliefs that African American males were monolithic (Moore Jr., et. al., 2018; Cokley, 2015; Emdin, 2016). There has been a dominance of non-minority/white representation in the everyday learning of academic recitations with anthems, academic lessons, and history lessons. Education has lacked the equitable representation of other cultures' diversities in history, cultural practices, and academic learning (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Singleton, 2015). This lack of diversity in learning has continually displayed the past and present inequities in America's education systems toward people of color.

Even in this quest for equity in education, knowledgeable leaders have been heckled, even threatened when they educated non-minority/white teaching staff equity development with their African American student body (Kafele, 2021). Researchers agreed that cultural diversity in classroom settings progressed students academically; and caused students to feel relevant in their educational experiences (N'Dri Konan, et al., 2010). Academic equity has not been practiced nor resonated in the academic systems of America. This continued suppression and oppression of the "intellectual rights" of children of color, and African American children continue the division with academic equity for all students (Lester, 2019; Alexander, 2012; Palmer & Maramba, 2010).

Educational equality and academic equity developed individual knowledge, yet more incidents of non-minorities/whites in educational leadership and administrations racially profiled, African American students. Educators used racial expletives and racially

biased actions against students have reoccurred (Culver, 2017). These issues of bias in educational policies and administrations have created academic inequity for students from diverse backgrounds, especially African American adolescent males. Research has shown that leaders believed that equity has not been reflected in humanity or the care of education with students from diverse backgrounds (Kafele, 2021). While many have confused educational equality with the act of attending public schools. Academic equity developed the equal treatment, and academic development of all students from diverse racial or economic backgrounds (Kafele, 2021).

The SGCR charter school has developed academic equity for its student population, as administrators focused on the needs of individual students in their academic population (Delgado & Stefani, 2017; Cokley, 2015; Young, 2011; De La Garza & Ono, 2016; Young and Young, 2020). Academic equity has been defined as having equal representation of culture and gender focus for all students to succeed academically (Young and Young, 2020; Cokley, 2015). Academic inequity displayed the meager 7% hiring rate of African American men in academic leadership and the 83% representation of non-minority/white females in classroom leadership. The inequity was displayed in the national public education systems' 10% make-up of African American students offered the opportunity to enroll in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs, even though these students were as academically advantaged as their peers of other races/nationalities (Lynch, 2017; Morris, 2014: Corra, Carter, & Carter, 2011; Cokley, 2015).

Academic equity has been misunderstood by many educational systems because it has focused solely on high-achieving, non-minority/white students and disregarded students of other cultures and diverse backgrounds (Kafele, 2021). Academic equity has been researched to improve student individualism, social identity, and societal voice and focus (Kafele, 2021). Academic equity has been researched to develop classroom leadership, educational practices/procedures, and individual learning. This made students feel as though they were important to their learning process. CRT has been the imbalance of academic equity because it covered historical truths of American biases toward minorities (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). While many southern states have banned CRT implementation in school policies and academics, there has been a continuance of non-diversity, racial bias, and "whiteness" in education sectors (Rothstein, 2017; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2021).

Moreover, academic equity ensured student-centered learning in school systems, where all students are represented culturally (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2021). Academic equality offered students learning equal, collective representation in historical achievements of all cultures and races, not just the predominant of non-minority/white culture (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2021). Kafele (2019) shared that the role of school leadership, whether administration or principal, is to tend to the learning needs of all students and implement diverse learning which developed a strong academic culture in the school setting.

Effective teaching created strategic learning that attended to the needs of all students in school academic communities, which created academic equity and education

equality for all learners in the school community (Singleton, 2015; Kafele, 2019). Many African American teenage males have been raised in impoverished economic and social conditions, the role of education systems has been to ensure students are treated equally and given the tools of representation and learning to make them academically and socially oriented to succeed in society (Kafele, 2019; Nieto, 2015; Sowell, 2020; Emdin, 2016; Singleton, 2015). This gave an understanding that educational leadership has outlined the importance of educational equality and the educational success and failures of the students, especially African American adolescent males.

Implications

The implications of the literature research provided the audience with a robust understanding of how gender and cultural representation of African American men enhanced the academic experiences and learning of African American teenage male student populations. The audience was given an understanding of education equality and academic equity. It also displayed how bias has been active in the learning and overall themed presentation of American education systems (Singleton, 2015; Emdin, 2016). The findings in this review were developed to outline a more diversified, culturally represented academic system that created learning equity for students of color.

It was also developed to draw attention to the needs of students that have failed these academic systems and the importance of their individual success, as well. Research has verified the mockery, harassment, and academic discriminatory practices African American males have faced by non-minority educators and leadership in various school settings (Singleton, 2015; Codrington and Fairchild, 2012; Mullen and Robertson, 2014).

Unfortunately, the implications have been validated with research that detailed African American male students received punishment quicker, with longer durations than non-minority students. African American males faced continual racial and gender bias in academic settings more than any other peer group (Redfield and Nance, 2016; Singleton, 2015; Young, 2011; Hotchkins, 2016). These findings have been attributed to low academic achievements and slighted cultural representation of African American males. Most of all, this developed a clear picture that education in America was not reflective of the diversified cultures they served. This displayed the continuance of academic inequity in the American learning system (Singleton, 2015).

The research assisted the audience in understanding the student's academic progression when gender and cultural representation are implemented in their education experience (Feagin, 2006; De La Garza & Ono, 2016; Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; Young, 2016). Academic equity happened when schools assisted the needs of the students, whether it be resources, cultural representation, gender focus, or academics (Lester, 2019). This equal delegation of resources created academic and social progress for all students. It has been researched those African American students who lived in impoverished environments lacked learning resources, qualified teachers, and equitable schools because of racial division with neighborhood structuring (Rothstein, 2017; Desmond, 2016).

These implications outlined the research and the importance of culture and gender reflection, in areas of administrative hiring, school/classroom leadership, and the overall education experiences of adolescent African American males (Advancement Project;

Education Law Center; Juvenile Law Center; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Center for Fair & Open Testing; The Forum for Education and Democracy, 2011; Young, 2011). This also focused on the importance of academic equity and educational equality for African American males in academic leadership and student populations within the American education system.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to understand the continued racial and implicit bias in American education systems. This bias has harshly affected the educational progress of minority students, especially African American teenage males (Singleton, 2015; Cokley, 2015; Redfield and Nance, 2016). Literature has shown the increased percentages of suspensions/expulsions, special education placement, and high school graduand rates with African American teenage males. However, charter school systems have become more present and successfully narrowed academic gaps with minority children in school districts and urban areas (Sowell, 2020).

African American men have had limited representation in the educational positions of classroom and administrative leadership, as well. Yet, when these men were present in the roles of leadership and administration with African American teenage males and educational systems, academic gaps were narrowed and social change was developed (Kafele, 2020; Young and Young, 2021). There has been a distinct differentiation of treatment toward African American male students in education with the lack of diversity in academic learning. The non-minority dominance in academics,

learning, and representation has not offered academic equity or equality to students of color, especially African American teenage males.

The literature review developed a pathway that defined the importance of understanding how culture and gender focus pressed students academically and socially. This research allowed me, as a researcher, to understand the importance of cultural representation and gendered focus with African American teenage males. It assisted in understanding the importance of academic equity with adolescent males from diverse backgrounds and how education outlined the component of social change for this researched charter school community. This also gave insight into how academic environments and academic bias affected the academic experiences of African American students that caused their parents to transfer to a gender-focused, culturally represented academic environment. Historical bias has affected learning and stagnated the development of equal education for African Americans in public school education for centuries (Dufresne, 2018).

CRT has outlined the progress and policies with education and student learning experiences of both educators and students of diverse backgrounds (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Education is supposed to be a safe environment of equal learning opportunities for all students to learn and develop socially and academically. However, for African American males, it has been a battleground of racial bias, micro-aggressive intentions, intellectual misrepresentation, and cultural/gendered bias in African American male representation (Singleton, 2017; Emdin, 2016; Cokley, 2015; Moore et.al., 2018). The focus of education has been solely on those that have been excellent learners, but students

that have been broken by society, systematic cultures, poverty, racial division, or home situations have been left out. The intention of education has been to build brilliance in students, create progress as critical thinkers, inventors, and while developing social changers.

Education has not developed or led their systems (principals, administrations, teachers, or superintendents) with the focus of academic success for African American students, especially adolescent African American males (Noguera, 2008). African American males have not progressed educationally or achieved socially like other peer groups (Morris, 2014; Noguera,2008). The imbalance has continued in representation, focus on educational progress, and the continued biases with incidents of expulsion /suspensions. This study has contributed to understanding how African American teenage male students progressed academically when culture and gender focus were provided in an SGCR secondary charter school environment. It also sheds light on how equity in leadership delegation in sectors of administration, academic policy development, and the classroom created avenues of social and educational progress for their student community of adolescent African American male students.

Charter schools have been in the stages of 'rebirthing' in various areas of leadership, administration, and academic focus. There has been an increase of charter schools in the American education system (Sowell, 2020). Charter schools have developed different focuses for the diversity of students they served in various communities. These schools have developed a different narrative for students of color, gender, and cultural backgrounds. SGCR schools have been created to develop the

educational progress that African American teenage males were not experiencing in American public education.

In Chapter 3, I introduced the case study design that developed my research investigation. The research consisted of four participant groups that represented groups of the school community. The organization of Chapter 3 summarized the design for the qualitative case study. The research design and methodology developed evidence that authenticated the parallels of gender- focus and cultural representation that caused the academic progression with these secondary African American males. The research evidence was developed from the collection of data of participant interview responses, the integration of the theoretical framework, and the qualitative research design.

Chapter 3 presented the case study method developed for the research investigation process, formulated the research topic, and the intentions of the research investigation. Chapter 3 developed the method of the research study: recruitment/protection of participants, data collection, and analysis. Chapter 3 developed themes and codes addressed in the research presented in chapters four and five. The following chapter presented the qualitative case study method and research on the importance of how African American men in administrative and classroom leadership progressed African American male adolescent study academically and socially.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Equal representation of culture and gender in the U.S. education system has been an ongoing issue (Moore et al., 2018). However, research shows that diversity and representation in classroom leadership enhance students' academic experience (Phillips, 2014). The purpose of this research was to develop an in-depth understanding of how the administrative and classroom leadership of African American men narrowed the achievement gaps with African American adolescent males in one charter school system. I explored the school's founders' and leaders' comprehension of implicit and academic bias's effects on the academic progress of their students. The study furthered knowledge of the school funding, cultural representation, and gender focus components of the educational policies and procedures implemented by school leadership. I explored the impacts of these changes on students' academic and social progress. Multiple sources suggest that academic equity has academic and social benefits for African American male students (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015).

In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology that I used to address the research problem, including the research design, participant selection, and other areas inclusive of data collection. The case study design choice and data collection tools were chosen because of the research focus. As I discuss, the use of this design widened my understanding of the impact African American men made when they led the education experience of male African American adolescents in this charter school population. By using this qualitative approach, I developed a comprehension of how impactful African American men in academic leadership and administration have been with the overall

educational development of male African American teenagers within this SGCR charter school.

Mason (2002) noted that qualitative research enables data-driven insight into the context and lived experiences of participants. The use of a qualitative approach informed the development of the study's RQs, participant selection logic, and use of thematic analysis to theme and code data. I chose the research design and data collection tools because I believed they would be helpful in probing participants' understanding of the importance of cultural representation and gender focus with male African American teenagers. I explored how participants in this SGCR charter school developed policies, implemented practices and procedures, and designed instruction to further the academic progression of African American teenage male students. The research design was underpinned by the theoretical framework of CRT.

The theory of CRT has framed the historical bias that minorities and African American males have continually experienced in the American education systems (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Research showed how these biases developed and how one east coast charter school, focused solely on the academic growth and social development of adolescent African American male students. Chapter 3 also focused on the issues of data analysis and ethical procedures that constructed the participant selection and interview process. Chapter 3 introduced the rationalization of the data collection methodology used for this research investigation. The following RQS underpinned this study:

RQ1: How can African American male representation (in educational administration and leadership) be used to propel the academic experience of African American male teenagers?

RQ2: How can gender focus and cultural representation be used to develop academic equity with these minority students?

In this chapter, I first discuss the appropriateness of the case study method for this research investigation. I also discuss the broader rationale for a qualitative approach. Maxwell (2013) shared how the qualitative methodology is best for understanding situations, experiences, and social occurrences that affect human beings. I used a qualitative case study methodology to understand the importance of SGCR in educational leadership with African American male teenage male students. This descriptive method and data collection assisted in understanding how participants developed a meaning of the phenomenon and/or situation they had experienced (see Kahlke, 2014). The qualitative data collection method assisted me with gathering insightful participant information regarding the importance of gender focus and cultural reflection with African American teenage males.

Research Design and Rationale

I chose the case study approach because it granted me observation and insight into the depth of research participant experiences involved in the research investigation. It rendered an extensive investigation of the research problem as well (O' Sullivan, et.al., 2009). The case study research approach warranted small groups for research inquiry yet allowed the interview process to be conducted in a natural setting (i.e., an East Coast,

secondary charter school) (Yin, 2018). This study highlighted the importance of cultural representation and gender focus with African American men in educational leadership, and their effectiveness with the academic achievements of African American teenage males in a charter school system. Since CRT was the framework of this study, I developed a thorough comprehension of how CRT conditioned the development of this SGCR charter school system.

Also, how CRT has impacted the educational experiences of African American male students in academic settings (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019; Marshall et al., 2022).

Case studies have verified the observations and experiences of participants that gave an explanation "to how and why" some social phenomenon works (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) case study research has been common among the professions of (e.g., sociology, social work, public policy, community planning, and education. A case study investigated a contemporary phenomenon "(the "case" in depth and within its real-world context), especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and content are not clear" (p.15).

In this research study, I explored the practices, procedures, and policies that impacted the academic achievements of African American teenage males (i.e., the phenomenon) in this singular charter school system. I comprehended how these African American men administered practices and procedures that caused their student population to succeed academically and narrowed the academic achievement gaps with this student demographic classroom (real-world context) (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This study focused on the importance of African American men's representation in educational leadership, and understanding how their academic focus narrowed the achievement gaps

of African American males in one charter school community, who were identified as, unteachable. The founders of this SGCR charter school's educational focus caused this education system to comprehend the issues of implicit and academic bias that affected the academic progression of its student population in previous school experiences.

The rationale used for this case study approach was to "cover contextual conditions" that were relevant to the research phenomenon (i.e., interviewing populations that conducted the education experience of these students, and how the experience in education caused participants to develop, teach, and transfer their students to this SGCR charter school (Baxter and Jack, 2015, p.1).

I chose the case study design because it granted in-depth analysis of participant beliefs, experiences, and the practices/procedures of administrative leadership. As the researcher, the case study rationale allowed me to be a lens for the academic culture of this SGCR charter school. I assimilated the participants' experiences of bias in education whether in leadership or being a student. This developed a case study investigation that served as a platform for other research investigations (Zainel, 2007). It also allowed me (the researcher) to capture participants' experiences in both the public and SGCR charter school systems which allowed me to comprehend how cultural reflection and gender focus progressed this demographic of African American teenage males. It developed an understanding of how CRT had been the framework of the American education experience (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

Young and Young (2020) emphasized the gap of African American men in classroom leadership, and how the research displayed African American male leadership

progressed the academic experience of the student populations researched. The research findings addressed that achievement gaps were lessened with African American teenage males when cultural representation and diversity management were implemented in their educational leadership and academic experience (Young and Young, 2020; Kafele, 2021).

The factors that led me to a case study methodology for this research investigation were that case studies followed the trajectory of critical theory (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). Bloomberg & Volpe (2019) believed "a key assumption of this …approach is the application of explanations that contributed to understanding beyond…thereby looking for underlying mechanisms, conditions, and capacities that might be evidence of contributory factors" (p.50). Lester, (2019) disclosed that bias against African American children in education systems had become a dominant issue and revealed that cultural representation was instrumental in academic development. As a result, the qualitative case study approach enlarged my understanding of how gender focus and cultural representation enhanced the educational development of these young men. It developed a picture of how gender and cultural representation lessened the gap of academic underachievement within this charter school population of African American teenage males (Morris, 2014; Kafele, 2021).

The case study tradition caused a thorough investigation of the phenomenon by interviewing participants that have experienced this phenomenon or an event of similar interest (Yin, 2018). A case study was used to understand this real-world case assumption that I, the researcher, developed with the inclusion of pertinent factors that gave

validation to the context of the study (Yin, 2018). This case study design outlined the

interview process with participants concerning their overall experience with the

case/issue. Mishra and Rasundram (2017) showed researchers the importance of data

triangulation with the validation and credibility of research findings. I secured multiple

resources for my qualitative research and developed a thorough understanding of this

case study research. The triangulation of the data came from multiple sources: participant

interviews, on-site observations of the school, interview questionnaires and scales (see

Appendix A), and school records of student academic achievement from parent

participants. All resources used for this case study data outlined the RQs and developed a

more in-depth explanation of the research findings to readers (Noble & Heale, 2019;

Basu et al., 1999). The data triangulation developed the trustworthiness of the research

and aligned the participant experiences, which gave readers a better understanding of the

research findings.

  The case study approach considered an organization, individual, event, or process

in relation to a bounded system (Stake, 1995, as cited in Yin, 2018). The study designed

was a focused consciousness of real-life situations that indicated a need to comprehend

how individuals viewed themselves and the world they lived in (Saunders et al., 2009).

  The rationale for this approach was chosen to have a more in-depth perception of

the participants' experience of implicit or academic biases that caused them to develop

and transition to the SGCR charter school system. The participant interviews assisted in

the case development of participant experiences with bias in hiring, school policies, and

academic practices/procedures. Also, how their experiences assisted their decision to

transfer from public school education to this SGCR charter school environment. I chose a case study approach because it expanded my knowledge of how African American male leaders integrated the framework of CRT that benefited African American men as administrative and classroom leaders, and academically and socially progressed their student demographic of adolescent African American teenage males.

CRT has embraced a belief that the dominant race that designed the system was the racial power that controlled and benefited from the system (Bell, 2005; Crenshaw et al.,1995). The case study showed how this SGCR charter school operated and developed policies and practices that amended the academic achievement gaps with their demographic of African American male students. Also, research has exhibited how charter school academic systems advanced their student demographic academically and socially while designing an education system that integrated educators that represented the student demographic in both gender and culture (Kafele, 2021; Sowell, 2020).

I chose this methodology for this study on the condition that most postgraduates, teachers, and school districts misunderstood how CRT outlined their academic experience, and how it has assisted in the development of the charter school focus. This case study approach focused on how board members, administrative leaders, parents, and teachers viewed the immense gap of academic underachievement of African American teenage male students, and how this issue developed the gender/cultural focus of this SGCR charter school. Implemented policies and developed practices have evolved the academic achievement and societal changes of this student demographic. The case study

approach established evidence of the significant role African American men have in the education and academic achievements of African American teenage males.

Role of the Researcher

Research was defined as "to favor intensity and depth, as well as exploring the interaction between case and context" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.24). This assumption allowed the researcher to observe realities and notate processes; while they became an active participant in the environment of the research (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2013). As the researcher, I became the researcher-as-instrument for this study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Which caused me to actively respond to the data collection and analysis of the research. A strategy was developed that gave flexibility to participants during the probing process, which allowed the interviewee to expand on other topic areas that related to the questions. As interviewees reflected on the RQs with the perspectives of their experiences as students, educators, and parents. The integration of confidentiality with participant interviews gave each person the freedom to truly express their individual feelings with the RQs. Their narratives of past experiences in both public and charter academic sectors. My role as the researcher gave all participants in each group category "freedom" as they expressed themselves during the interview process and answered questions derived from their past academic experiences (Patton, 2002; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Yin, 2018).

Since this research study focused on the importance of gender focus and cultural reflection in a singular charter school academic environment, I had to familiarize myself with the charter schools' administrative tiers and education system. As

the researcher, I could not express any type of bias toward participants, administration, or my personal feelings as an educator toward this case study investigation. As the researcher, I listened and learned from each research participant. When participants entered the room for their individual interviews, each participant confidentially completed the Symbolic Racism Educational Scale 2023 (see Appendix A). After each participant gave me their completed scale. I expressed that I was there to learn from their experiences in education as students, educators, and parents. I reiterated I was the observer/interviewer and was there to learn from their experiences in education as research participants of this qualitative case study.

As the researcher, I administered consent forms to selected participants 2 weeks before the actual interview process of data collection. I noted and recorded all interviews with two separate audio devices. These steps emphasized the important aspect of data collection with each audio conversation. There was authorized consent from each participant to record their individual interviews. Both interview notes and recorded audio were utilized to authenticate all participant interviews for data collection and analysis. My role as the researcher for this study was to focus on the data collected while analyzing and authenticating the information. I worked to comprehend the importance of gender focus and cultural representation within this SGCR charter school system.

I thoroughly examined the procedures, practices, beliefs, and expressions of all participants as they pertained to the framework of CRT while I focused on how gender and cultural representation impacted the educational experiences and academic achievements of teenage African American males in this SGCR charter school. I made

extended efforts to develop trusting relationships with individuals in each participant sector. To accomplish this, I encouraged participants to comfortably discuss their truth with their professional and academic experiences and how they viewed gender and cultural representation development as leaders that focused on the achievements of teenage African American males in this charter school environment.

I focused on how the interview sessions and other research artifacts bridged the research phenomenon with the data collection but were not restricted solely to participant interviews. The interview process invited participants to be comfortable, authentic, and completely transparent with their responses for the data collection process. The flexibility within the ethical outlines of the research aided in gathering organic data from the participants of the research study (Seidman, 2019).

I kept participants free from any ethical harm or research dangers by following the conditions outlined by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Yin, 2018). The protection and confidentiality of participants were imperative. Participants felt safe as I conducted each semi-structured interview. The interviews lasted up to 1 hr, and during the process, I continued to ask each participant if they felt comfortable with continuing the interview upon all participants agreed. In several interviews, participants expressed gratitude for the research, and how it allowed them to express their past academic experiences. The care and protection of each research participant enhanced the participant's communication, themes within the data collection process, and participant comfortability with the data collection process (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019; Yin, 2018). To attain a robust participant pool, I implemented a $20 gift

card which displayed my gratitude for participation in the research investigation

(Seidman, 2019). Showing gratitude toward all participants for their contribution to the

research enhanced participant interest and contributed to reliable and valid data collection

throughout the research investigation (Seidman, 2019).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Participant populations became the experts in this research investigation, because

of their individual experience with the occurrence(s) being studied (Rudestam & Newton,

2007). My case study investigation focused on the case of one SGCR secondary charter

school and the populations within its school culture. As the research focused on the

educational progression of students within this SGCR charter school, it was imperative

that my sample reflected all groups within the school that affected the academic

progression of this student population of African American teenage males. I applied a

purposive sampling strategy that chose participants who met the research criteria

(Tongco, 2007). My sample population represented four groups that significantly

represented the educational progression of the SGCR charter school population focus.

I interviewed participants from one east coast charter school campus within the

DMV (District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia) area, for three reasons: (a) I

focused on individual experience within this charter school system (b) I understood how

this charter schools had academically progressed past public schools in their school

districts (Sowell, 2020); and (c) As a past educator I understood the evolution of student

academics when gender and cultural representation were implemented in school

leadership with African American males (Pollard, 2020).

Each of the four participant groups had four to six individual participants that

represented administrative, policy development, classroom leadership, and

parent/guardianship positions, of the SGCR charter school. I initially chose seven

participants from each group; however, due to interview constraints, I chose to keep the

research groups limited to six participants each. Then implemented a strategically,

purposeful criteria for participant selection that was equitable and created respect for

participants' past experiences and me (the researcher) (Seidman, 2019).

My participant selection was directed at one SGCR charter school environment,

and how their implemented criterion of gender focus and cultural representation aligned

with the RQs and case study. Before any interviews commenced, I had an

administratively approved (meet-greet) with the CEO/Founder of the SGCR charter

school. After our meeting, he approved the research study and commenced the weeks I

was allowed to investigate the study. I worked directly with the CEO's assistant and the

head of the SGCR human resource (HR) dept. We developed research dates and times

that aligned with school hours and participant schedules. I was given email addresses of

individuals that reflected each participant group: CEO and Board members, Principals,

Asst. Principals, administrative leaders, Teachers/Counselors, and parents of students that

attended the school. I emailed participants copies of the research study invitation letter.

Individuals who were interested replied to the email that requested their interest in the

qualitative study. After receiving each participant's email of interest, I emailed consent

forms to each participant that detailed the interview hour and the ethical outline of the

research study. A different approach was used to invite individual participants from the

administrative divisions of the SGCR charter school system. First, a formal invitation

letter was emailed to administrative staff participants: policymakers/board members,

counselors, SGCR principals or assistant principals, and classroom educators. I obtained

addresses to email SGCR charter school personnel after the orientation with the

CEO/Founder and confirmed participation as he signed all research participant forms that

gave his signed consent to be the focal point of the qualitative case study.

  All emailed participant request forms and invitations were confidential since they

were sent to participants' personal email addresses. The returned forms served as a

verification of the individual's willingness to participate in the research study. All

participant email invitations included a sample of four questions and focused on the

research study and participant compensation. There was a detailed explanation of

participant confidentiality included in the consent forms, which reiterated the entire

interview observation process. All participant consent forms were reviewed and returned

with the words" I consent" emailed back to the researcher. The words "I consent" served

as the agreement to participate in the study. There was a 1-week allowance for all

participant research confirmations. After participants agreed to partake in the study and

emailed me the word "I consent". I sent an email to participants with dates and time slots

of availability. I made sure there was no participant overlap with times or dates. I gave

each participant ample time between interviews' this assured participant confidentiality

and confirmed appointment times for interviews that were convenient for each participant.

This SGCR charter school was chosen because of its continual academic achievement with its student population since it was founded in 2018. I wanted to learn about what parents experienced in their child's public school attendance, which caused them to transition to this SGCR charter school setting (Pollard, 2020; Sowell, 2020). Since this study focused on the importance of gender focus and cultural representation in education with African American male students. It was important to comprehend the experiences of school development/leadership, parents, counselors, and classroom instructors who assisted in the root cause of academic failures, student transitions, and overall achievements within this SGCR charter school environment from the CRT perspective.

Participant Group 1 consisted of individuals that developed the practices and procedures for this SGCR charter school being researched. Group (1) were board members, school founders, and the CEO, leaders that developed the educational construct that formulated and progressed this charter school education system. The CEO/Founder, board members, and other founders of this SGCR charter school were approached and participated in this research investigation. This group specifically discussed the effects of practices/procedures that developed this school system, as well as progressed the students within the school culture. These participants were delegated to be a part of the research investigation because social abstractions like "education" are understood through the experiences of those that led them (Ferrarotti, 1981) (Seidman, 2019).

Participant Group 2 consisted of six parents of African American males who currently attended the researched SGCR charter school. Kafele (2019) many students of color have not performed academically because their parents were not participating in their academic experience. Group (2) recognized the paths of academic progression when gender and culture were replicated in the academic experience of their African American male children within this SGCR charter school. Also, this group knew the experience of parents that transferred their students from public school education to this SGCR charter school community. The parent narratives allowed readers to comprehend, how students progressed, and this SGCR charter school has continued its academic achievements and progression with its student community of African American males.

I developed relationships with the SGCR charter school leadership community, I obtained participants from each school category (administration staff, parents, teachers/counselors, and founders). I understood that the views of participants gave a deeper insight into the school's beliefs and culture. This focus assisted me in obtaining participants for groups (3 and 4) of the research investigation.

Group 3 was formulated by six administrative leaders of the SGCR charter school systems (principals, assistant principals, and administrative leaders). Seidman (2019) agreed that there were limited case studies that reflected the opinions of the teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents, "whose individual and collective experiences constituted schooling" (p. 9). It was imperative the research reflected in-depth data and analysis of how this academic system affected the learning progress of African American male students within this charter school setting. Group 3 participants developed an

awareness of the trends and other dynamics that were utilized in education systems, and how CRT has structured the academic inequities with African American male students (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Participant Group 4 was composed of seven (classroom teachers and teacher assistants) from this SGCR charter school system. As the researcher, I embraced the knowledge of all individuals who were significant to the student's academic experience. Participants' experiences added another perspective to the data collection and analysis of the case study. Based on the purposive sampling method, I incorporated the opinions of the board members, administrative leaders, parents of the SGCR charter school, and other significant staff (teachers/counselors) for this research study. The goal of the purposive method was to corroborate the most fitting research participants that had the best understanding of the RQ in the data collection process (Seidman, 2019). I incorporated the four research groups and the participants per group for a successful "purposeful sampling" with the research investigation (Yin, 2018). Samples came from several sources, which included school and campus observations, reviewed public records of student academic achievement, the Symbolic Racism Education Scale 2023, and participant group semi-structured questionnaires that delivered a robust amount of data for this research investigation.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the concept of theoretical saturation as a part of their grounded theory approach to qualitative research. Theoretical saturation means the gathering of additional data which reveals no added information or theoretical insights (Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). The 22 participants with the additional artifacts and

observations served as an ample size to develop saturation with this research

investigation. Since my study focused on one SGCR charter school campus, saturation

was reached with the four significant groups and the number of participants in each

group. For example, saturation was reached as I asked each participant about the

importance of cultural reflection in the education of minority students. Every participant

agreed and said it should be mandatory that all students be represented culturally;

saturation was reached because each participant agreed.

Instrumentation

Research instrumentation was appropriate for the investigated population and

relevant to the "setting" of the research proposal (Rudestam & Newton, (2007). The

qualitative study included interviews, observations, and published research

instrumentation that were integrated as primary research instruments for the data

collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). I was the sole researcher for this case study

investigation. As the researcher, I diligently focused on the perspectives of each research

participant while I accurately discovered themes from the data collection and analysis. I

used the semi-structured interview approach and conducted 22 individual interviews,

with the accumulation of four to seven individuals from four participant groups. This

semi-structured approach allowed research participants to have the same information, yet

participants responded to their individual uniqueness for data collection (Siedman, 2019).

Merriam and Tisdale (2016) confirmed that researcher-designed, semi-structured guides

are less structured and flexibly worded; which allowed me to respond differently to each

participant. I adapted different participant responses and developed an open-mindedness to new topic ideas from participants.

The four instruments used for data collection and analysis were observations, archived grading data (brought in by the parent participant group, one redesigned published data collection tool, and two questionnaires developed by the researcher for data collection. The first instrument was observation. As I visited the school and talked with the school CEO, I quietly observed the overall setting of the school. I walked the hallways and was given a personal tour of the school. I took notes as I looked for themes of the overall presentation and structure of the school's mission and vision for the academic community. I looked for anthems, watched for student and staff protocols, observed the student and teacher interactions (not questioning anyone) just quietly observed the school culture. As an educator of 15 years, I understood how schools operated and how students reacted if protocols were not placed in the policy structure.

The second data collection tool was past progress records of students whose parents participated in the research investigation. The reports validated the academic achievements of students that attended the researched SGCR school. I asked parents to bring artifacts of past grading reports to their interviews if they chose to do so. The referenced progress reports solidified the grade progression the students of parent participants had made since they transferred to this SGCR charter school.

The third tool I used was referenced from the original SYS 2000 (Symbolic Racism Scale 2000) designed by P.J. Henry and D.O. Sears. That document scaled the issues of symbolic racism in America (Henry and Sears, 2002). However, its content

didn't align with the bias and discrimination experienced in education (Henry and Sears, 2002). The scale was changed to reflect the issues of bias and marginalization toward African Americans in education. I renamed the article Bias in Education Scale 2023. The tool was approved for use by David O. Sears. I implemented this tool because it created confidential transparency of how participants felt about American education's treatment of African Americans. This published questionnaire was completed by all participants during their interview process.

The fourth instrumentation tool was semi-structured questionnaires developed specifically for each participant group. All questions from the questionnaires were developed from my experiences as an educator and reviewed literature. These questionnaires centered on the four focus groups that served as the core of policy development, educational structuring, parenting, and the overall academic experience of the African American males in this SGCR charter school. The questionnaires highlighted the individual academic experiences of each participant as they related to the education of African American adolescent males.

The semi-structured questionnaires combined a mixture of interview styles with questions that were less rigid and pliably structured. The participants were given the same guided RQs with no predetermined order of questions, specified wording was not required or guided by a list of questions on the research topic (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). I conducted in-depth interviews for the research study that allowed extensive investigation of the research problem as I engaged in one-on-one participant interviews. It also allowed me to thoroughly exchange information between me (the researcher) and

the participants. I chose the semi-structured interview approach because it acquired the depth of feelings and truths about the research problem during interviews. The semi-structured approach allowed participants the freedom to discuss their experiences and offered a robust collection of data (Maxwell, 2012, Kumar, 2010).

A well-rounded research investigation is developed by incorporating participants that have varied focuses while sharing a commonality with the research investigation (Patton, 2002; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The research was confidential and one-on-one some time adjustments were made to concur with the participant's availability.

Interviews were an important means of data collection of how impactful gender focus and cultural representation were for the academic achievement of African American male students. Most of my focus during the interview process was based on participant beliefs and attitudes towards gender focus and cultural representation in education and how it benefited the academic achievement of African American male students and their surrounding academic community. The interviews also created a depth of knowledge of how academic practices created academic equity for this student population.

Published Data Collection Instrument

The first data collection instrument was the Symbolic Racism (SR) 2000 scale originally developed by (Henry & Sears, 2002). The data collection instrument tool was used for all participant groups (see Appendix B). This scale was developed in 2000 and reflected the experience of individuals with the topic of racism. Since I was doing a semi-structured interview approach, I understood these questions were important to the

reflection of ideas, beliefs, and experiences of each participant. Semi-structured

interviewing created an understanding of the personality differences of each participant.

The list of interview questions allowed participant interview questions to be more

focused and effective in data collection. There have been investigations that highlighted

researchers were equipped in theory but not experienced in research development

(Meeran et al., 2012). To be thorough as a researcher, I wanted to be competent in the

"knowledge and skills of conducted research investigation (Meerans et al., 2012, p.3). I

developed two RQ research that reflected the study and addressed questions of leadership

and the importance of diversity in education.

The questionnaires were created as research instruments that reflected all

participant groups involved in this study. All context and questionnaires emphasized

amending the research problem and modifications of the data collection instruments were

detailed in Chapter 4 of this study.

Researcher-Developed Instrument

The research instrumentation was appropriate for the investigated population and

relevant to the "setting" of the research proposal (Rudestam & Newton, (2007). The

instrumentation of the research was key for successful data collection and analysis

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). I developed a list of questions (see Appendix B). This

instrumentation was key to the study findings. As the investigative researcher, I was

viewed as the main instrument in the data collection and analysis process (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019). I diligently sought the meanings in the findings of the research, since the

data collected was important to the developed themes, and coding of the data. I accurately

listed how the translation, understanding, and communication of the participants' experience affected the study. Instrumentation was important to the reflected beliefs and opinions of participants while giving authenticity to the experience of the participants within their sectors of expertise. The instrumentation added to the development of the research investigation of data collection and analysis (Bloome & Volpe, 2019). With all participant categories, the goal of the data collection instrument was to interpret the individual perspectives/experiences of administrators, educators, and parents of teenage African American males.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I collected all data from a sample of 25 participants divided into four groups that represented the academic sectors involved in the education of teenage African American males in the SGCR charter school (Board members/CEO/School founders, Principals/Assistant Principals, Teachers/Counselors, and parents of students). I used in-depth interviews with all participants as an organic approach to receive a deeper understanding of the impact gender focus and cultural representation had on the academic achievements of this teenage African American male student population.

The structure of the research study defined the overall execution and results of collected data from participants. The participant interviews were significantly timed, structured, and produced strong concise results with the research investigation (Mason, 2002). I used a quiet room on the school campus that was secluded and convenient for all research participants, abetting the participants' confidentiality. I avoided disturbances and interruptions of any kind with a "*Do not disturb meeting in progress*" sign placed outside

the approved campus location. I allotted 1 hour for all participant interviews for the study and asked participants for a second interview if there is any clarification needed from their previous interview. However, the second interview was not needed for any of the participants.

Participant interviews were guided with a semi-structured interview guide which contained a list of open-ended questions that focused on the RQs and topic. Interviews were audio recorded of all participant responses, ensuring data collection was concise and accurate for precise data analysis. Participants felt confident as their experience(s) were expressed in the research interview and protected by the researcher (Wiles, et al., 2009). All participants were informed that all research was confidential. I explained the importance of research confidentiality to participants before the interview began. All data, participant information, and research artifacts (progress reports) remained confidential and were kept in the parents'/guardian's care. All answered questionnaires, participants' recordings, and interview notes were locked in a safe, in the researcher's home. It was important that participants felt secure and trusted the research protocol of confidentiality with participant data collection. All participant information, data collection notebooks, and taped recordings of participant interviews collected were confidential and placed securely in a combination locked safe, this confirmed that participant data was protected as they participated in this research investigation.

Data Analysis Plan

As I completed data collection and began the analysis of the data, I addressed similarities, trends, and issues that reflected the participants' beliefs and actions

(Rudestam & Newton, 2007). As I conducted the data analysis, I deciphered data, developed themes, coded, and contextualized research (Clarke and Braun, 2013). The qualitative data was accurate and precise throughout the research, data collection, and data analysis process. Thematic analysis served as the best approach as it identified patterns and themes with the data analysis (Macguire and Delahunt, 2017). After I interviewed the four groups of stakeholders, I incorporated the reflexive thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I developed a codebook based on the information from each research participant and developed codes from the recurring themes that emerged from each data analysis. I followed the reflexive thematic analysis process, which assisted in thematic analysis and data coding (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I outlined the focused themes of chapters four and five. I listened to each individual participant interview 10 times or more. This assisted with my understanding of key concepts and ideas that emerged from each participant interview and how each interview incorporated participant groups. As key concepts emerged from each interview, I mapped themes that occurred with each participant group. After mapping themes, I incorporated Delve analysis software to develop the research codebook from key concepts and themes from the analyzed data.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis approach helped detect similarities and narrated themes from the data collection. The research codes and themes widened the understanding of how gender-focus and cultural representation in school leadership caused young men to progress academically and develop within this charter school community. The analysis

and observations of stakeholders developed connections that spotlighted how academics and leadership developed the overall achievements of African American teenage male students in this SGCR charter school. As analysis continued coded themes surfaced throughout the data collected (Maxwell, 2013). There has been continued research on the importance of thematic analysis, however, codebooks are devised by reaching saturation of the data and explaining the codes of the study (Ando et al., 2014).

Saturation

The saturation was important to the thematic analysis and validated sections of the qualitative investigation (Ando et al., 2014). During the interview process, there were recurrent topics that continually arose from individual stakeholders, and presented themes within the data collection, this is how saturation reached the outcome. An example of saturation was participants continually discussing the lack of African American male classroom teachers in their experiences as students, educators, and parents of students. The saturation came from the recurring threads of participant interviews. The thematic analysis process mapped themes, patterns, and similarities within the data analysis. After themes were analyzed and established, a codebook was created using Delve coding software.

Codebooks and Codes

The codebook provided readers with information on data coding, structuring, and the overall context of the data to better understand the coding decisions of the research. Both inductive and deductive coding was used to identify participants and the prominent themes of the data analysis process (Streefkerk, 2019). The deductive codes identified

stakeholders and the type of school that was being researched. For example, the deductive code (SGCR) identified the SGCR charter school I researched. However, the inductive codes were created from the themes that emerged from the analysis of data. themes were implemented and developed from the data. The codebook interpreted coded themes that developed from the analysis of the research data (Maietta et al, 2021). The codebook translated re-occurring themes generated from the data of participant interviews (Saldana, 2016).

The research data analysis identified similarities, developed codes, and created themes of the case study, which allowed readers to understand the data collection and analysis of the study. (Maietta et al., 2021). As I categorized the codes and noted the themes, it gave an in-depth comprehension of the phenomena of gender focus and cultural representation and how it enhanced the education of minority students. The codebook was important to the research because its findings can accommodate future research studies (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Henry & Sears, 2002; Hotchkins, 2016; Stringer, 2007).

Maxwell (2013) "Data analysis has three analytic options: memos, categorizing (coding and thematic analysis), and connecting (narrative analysis)" (p. 105). In research analysis, strategies are developed to interpret patterns, note themes, and show the distinctions between compared and contrasted findings. The research analysis required the researcher to develop coded categories with analyzed data while developing relationships and similarities within the thematic analysis (Maxwell, 2013). Similarities

and differences in data developed the theoretical rationale (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam and Tisdale, 2016).

Triangulation

The triangulation of the research "increased the correspondence between the research and the real world" (Wolcott, 2005, p.160). The triangulation of observations, stakeholder interviews, questionnaires, and other research artifacts confirmed the credibility of the research phenomena. Triangulation processed the varied methods of data collection that increased research credibility and negated allegations that the study's findings were fragmented because of insufficient data resources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 245).

The data emerged themes that recurred throughout the study and structured the research (Mishra and Rasundram, 2017). Thematic analysis served as the logic that combined and developed specific outcomes (Schutt, 2018). The incorporation of Delve electronic software assisted me with the development of the codebook, which defined themes and codes of data research. The codes explained research themes and categories within the data analysis (Saldana, 2016). The Delve coding software made it easier to develop codes and identify themes with the multiple participant interviews. Caulfield (2019) codes in qualitative research identify patterns and develop themes discovered from the data collection and analysis. Coded identifiers were created to help readers understand the themes and similarities found in the data collection and analysis of the research. The strategized selection of participants that shared a similar focus on student progress while serving in areas of leadership strengthened the focus of the research

regarding the importance of gender focus and cultural representation in the classroom (Maxwell, 2013). The research defined the issues of the problem, while solutions were developed to amend the problem with thorough data collection and analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2012) noted that research must be systematically identified and organized while offering insight into the patterns and themes of any study. Thematic analysis taught coding mechanics and analysis that developed in-depth theories and research concepts. Codes identified important themes within the data collected: audio tapes, questionnaires, and research transcripts were reviewed for accuracy and coding specifics (Caulfield, 2019; Braun and Clarke, 2012). Priori codes were used to identify participant categories prior to data collection and analysis. Empirical codes were created from themes and as points of importance and similarities of the data were analyzed. The Priori codes were developed prior to reviewing my research data; however, the empirical codes were developed from important points and similarities throughout the data analysis (Elliott, 2018).

The priority codes were created from the participant group's description reflected in the research. Priori code (AAP) represents the parents of presently enrolled students of the SGCR charter school education systems. For example, the group of counselors and educational leaders from the researched school identifier looked like this: their participant title, years as educators, gender, and race. The identifier was SGCR/T /12/M/AA. The identifiers reflected the same pattern for other administrative groups, principals, assistant principals, and board members.

Theme Development

Saldana (2016) explained that thematic analysis is developed from codes and themes discovered from analyzed data. As I reviewed the data, I used phrases that identified emergent themes from the participant interviews, then each theme was aligned with a code. All research data coincided, and outlier data was minimal based on the participant groups and the alignment with the research focus.

In data collection, there could be participants whose opinions are opposite of the participant population. This is recognized as outlier data, a value that differs from the overall research value (Bhandari, 2021). The only incident of outlier data came from one teacher participant that felt adolescent boys should attend school with girls but needed to be in single-gendered environments to progress academically. This slight difference represented in the data analysis did not alter the overall value of the research focus.

Data Collection

Research is justified and described with procedures, tools, and methods used for data collection. Data were collected from the four participant groups: administration (Board members/Founders/CEO), Administrative leads/ Principals/Asst. Principals), classroom leadership, and parents of students presently enrolled in this SGCR charter school system. Two audio recorders were used to collect data from participant interviews. As participants entered the room before the interview, individuals were reassured that all interviews were confidential, and they would only be identified by descriptive codes. As participants began their session, they identified themselves by race, age, gender, and years of employment in public and charter school education. All participant interviews

and data collection were completed within a 3-week period, with interviews of founders and CEO being completed the 1st week of the interview period. All other interviews were completed in the weeks after.

The participant interviews lasted 30 min to 1 hr. All interviews were recorded on two separate audio devices for concise data and the avoidance of unforeseen issues with discrepancies in audio recordings. I thanked each participant upon their exit, gave everyone their monetary gift for participation, and left all my information for any further questions regarding their participation in the research study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Research participants need various sources of accreditation validated to qualify for any research investigation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explored how trustworthiness was created in research incorporating these terms: credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmation. The credibility and reliability of the data were factors that concerned me as I designed the study. Transferability was established with the research because this study highlighted the importance of diversity and cultural representation in charter schools. The research can be transferred and used in other research studies that focus on diversity in school systems, CRT academic progression, charter school education systems, and other topics that correlated with the research.

CRT has become a sensitive topic in education, however, I felt it was important to focus on the theory of CRT (Patton, 2001; Sachuk, 2021). It was important I authentically reflected the voices and truths of the participants (as leaders, parents, educators, and most of all African American males in education. Trustworthiness in this research was

assessed as participant interviews continued. I wanted the voices of the participants to be

authentic in their experience because that developed the dependability of the research

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

The authenticity and dependability of the data collected were other components

that established trustworthiness. Audit trails of research were important to keep assiduous

notes for "recapturing" the steps of the research that attained the same results of

participant authenticity (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Audit trails kept accurate records of

all data collected, including how the research was developed, coded, and deduced.

Dependability, also known as "reflexivity," highlighted the possibility of research biases

and varied assumptions that could flaw the research study. I reviewed notes and audio

recordings with participants to ensure all responses were authentic and reflective of the

participants' ideas and beliefs.

The final area of confirmation, known as objectivity, confirms conclusions with

research drawn from the participants and not the researcher's opinions (Miles &

Huberman, 1994). I ensured the validity of findings, as I self-reflected on any biases that

I projected as the researcher and with the data collection. I was intentional in identifying

any issues in the data that were non-conforming to the research, reflected any personal

biases, and ensured the validity of the data.

The primary assumption of the research study was that gender-focus and cultural

representation progressed the academic achievement of students. The other assumption

was when African American men led the academic experience of adolescent African

American male students in a charter school system, they progress academically and

socially. The assumptions were the basis for the research study. I researched this type of

learning environment to bridge gaps of academic naivety with readers concerning this

demographic of race and gender. I felt the need to also develop a more in-depth

understanding of what academic equity resembles with a gender focus and cultural

representation. It was important participants were protected throughout the research with

informed consent, confidentiality, and compliance with board-reviewed principles.

Credibility/Internal Validity

The credibility of each participant was essential to this qualitative case study.

Each participant in the observation groups was identified as a member of the SGCR

academic community. Each participant had the lived experience of being a part of the

American education experience, and they were now a part of the educational progression

of African American adolescent males in this researched charter school. This gave

validity and reliability to the data collected and analyzed for this qualitative research

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The "member check" of participants authenticated the data

collection for the investigation (Mason, 2002). Member checking confirmed the

researchers' depiction of each participant's voice and experience in the study (Candela,

2019). During the interview, I allowed participants the opportunity to take time to

respond and review their responses for authenticity.

There are distinct types of validity strategies used in qualitative research. As I

utilized the strategy of interpretive validity, I understood the depth of research accuracy,

portraying the viewpoints and interpreting the research being studied (Johnson, 1997).

The cross-checked data and multiple sources generated the triangulation and saturation of

research. Research agrees that qualitative research has been built from the empirical evidence of participants with research investigations (Creswell, 2013). Participants were given the opportunity to review interviews and confirm their responses. This allowed editing of participant interviews before data analysis began.

One underlying threat to the validity of the research is researcher bias, where the personal feelings of the researcher are told, and not the truth of their findings. I incorporated reflexivity into my research, continually checked narratives in the writing, and made sure I had not resonated with my opinion through the research. Reflexivity is when the researcher critiques themselves for any bias or predisposition through their writing. I worked diligently to clearly portray the voices and experiences of each participant within this SGCR charter school community.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical practices and procedures for the confidentiality and protection of all participants were important during the research process. Rudestam and Newton (2007) noted that U.S. universities have review boards (IRBs) that regulate the ethical standards of research with human beings. As stated in my IRB application, I used agreements to protect the participants.

Patton (2002) noted that IRB committees are needed in research investigation to implement structure with participating in research and how participants would be protected during interviews/observations of the research study. There were participant consensual agreements that were formulated to access data, conducted interview confidentiality, and gained participants for the research study. There were three different

agreements utilized from the research ethics review application, to gain participant interests and access participant data. The first document used gave information to the IRB board for research approval. These documents gave information on the researcher, the completion of research certification, the academic tier of the research, and the information on faculty and other research collaborators.

Throughout the research, each participant was guided on the importance of their opinions and experiences to the study. Participants' responses and opinions were important to the research. It was imperative that individuals didn't feel threatened throughout the research process. Each participant was guided through each process prior to the actual data collection interview. There were individual interviews and audio responses from adults over 21 years of age. All participants consented to the collection of data (1 hr interview, completing questionnaires, reviewed progress reports, and audio recordings).

There were various levels of ethical concerns with subjects in this social science research study. Rudestam and Newton (2007) believe the two most important concerns are thorough consent from subjects and that all subjects remain unharmed throughout the research experience. The utilization of the IRB forms that described the possible risks and benefits of the research was beneficial to the protection of each participant. Consent forms were developed for each participant and revised interview questionnaires with subject input assisted with the issue of participant protection throughout this study. This protection also addressed the possibilities of early participant withdrawal or refusal to participate because of issues with the research study.

IRB documents described the treatment of all data integrity and confidentiality with research subjects. Participant interviews were confidential and were coded with a description that stated the age, years of employment, and gender of the participant's identity esoteric. For example, the participants were coded by their associated group, Parents of African American Teenage Males attending SGCR charter school (PAAM/SGCR).

There were several areas of the IRB application that corresponded to the issues of confidentiality, potential conflicts of interest, and data collection. The researcher was extremely sensitive to the needs and concerns of each subject since the data collection was centered around each participant. The collection and storage of all data were essential to this case study investigation also. After the researcher finalized all requests of the IRB to keep participant information confidential, to keep participants protected throughout the data collection process, and adhere to the IRB protocol with this qualitative research study. The IRB committee approved the research study with a formal letter of conditional approval until the CEO of the research school approved the research. After meeting with the CEO, who signed all IRB documents to approve the research investigation. I received a final approval number from the IRB that appeared on every participant's invitation letter and consent form.

I analyzed the data using two different software programs. First, I used Otter.ai transcription software. This software transcribed all participant interviews into transcribed notes to summarize the text. After the interviews were recorded, I listened to each participant's interview ten times to make sure every interview was clearly

transcribed verbatim. I incorporated the otter.ai software to transcribe each interview from recording to documented text, this software aligned each interview into transcribed data. After each interview was transcribed and completed. I incorporated the Delve coding software. The delve coding software assisted me as I analyzed data that developed themes and codes from each participant interview. As I analyzed the collected data and themes from the participant interviews, there were topics that were repetitive in the data analysis. Data saturation is when enough data has been gathered to reach a conclusion, and adding any additional data will not develop any additional themes.

In those instances where saturation with the data was reached, I noted the issue and continued to analyze all data. As I analyzed the data, further themes and codes emerged that were essential to the study. Archival data, which is data collected prior to research, had minimal utilization for this research investigation since the data collection and analysis focused primarily on participant interviews.

All data was kept confidential in the storage area of the researcher; however, after the data collection and study were finalized, all questionnaires and recordings were kept in a bank safety deposit box controlled solely by me, the researcher. IRB regulations stated research must be safely kept in a confidential area for up to five years. As the researcher, I deemed all subjects vital to the study, data collected was treated with extreme care and confidentiality. Any other potential problems or issues that conflicted with the interest of this study were addressed prior to participant interviews.

Summary

Jackson and Bazaeley (2019) described how Chapter 3 of a research study developed the purpose of the research, methodology, data collection, and analysis of the variables, used in the research investigation. The chapter outlined the methodology of the research and the trajectory of the data collection process. It described the participant selection process, how priori and inductive codes were developed, utilization of data collection tools, and participant protection through IRB rules. Also, how the methodology assisted in the researcher's design to data collection and analysis, coding, and developed researched patterned themes.

This chapter explained the methodology, which gave a clearer understanding of the participants' needs and experiences throughout the research process. Newton (2005) demonstrated how "cross-checking" and authentication of data illuminated a similar belief or theory. It also assessed the viability of the research and methodology designed by the researcher. The research was developed with participant data collection, while participants were protected with confidentiality as they contributed to the research study. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth understanding of the analysis process that yielded the findings and results of this case study research.

Chapter 4: Results

The aim of the study was to understand how African American men in administrative and classroom leadership narrowed the achievement gaps among African American adolescent male students in one charter school environment. Research shows that male African American adolescents have the highest suspension and expulsion and lowest graduation rates compared to their peer groups (Morris, 2014). As the researcher, I wanted a deeper comprehension of how an understanding of CRT and implicit and academic bias led the leaders of this gender-focused, culturally represented charter school to implement educational policies of no expulsion, equal funding, and resources. These policies foster academic and social progression for adolescent African American male students, research indicates (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015). To conduct this research, I selected an explanatory case study design. I conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with participant groups: the CEO and school founders, administrative leaders, teachers and counselors, and parents of students who currently attended the SGCR charter school. The semistructured interviews gave the participants the autonomy and privilege to speak freely about their experiences, practices and procedures, and sentiments regarding the RQs, which were as follows:

RQ1: How can African American male representation (in educational administration and leadership) be used to propel the academic experience of male African American teenagers?

RQ2: How can gender focus and cultural representation be used to develop educational equity with these minority students?

In this chapter, I first discuss the qualitative data collection method and analytic approach used for this research investigation, including the setting and demography of the research participants. I also provide the results and findings of the case study research with codes and themes that emerged from the data collection and analysis. The evidence of trustworthiness includes a discussion of the credibility and dependability of the data.

Setting

I selected one SGCR secondary charter school for this case study research. In this charter school, the African American male administrative and classroom leadership lessened the achievement gaps and increased testing percentages with their school demographic of adolescent African American males (see Poteat, 2016). The charter school campus was one of the few SGCR charter schools solely focused on the educational progression of African American adolescent males from 4th through 8th grades.

The school began in 2018. Leaders have increased the school's enrollment by 40% over the past 5 years of operation and just received a 5-year renewal by the Public Charter State Board. The administration and leaders have steadily increased the school's student population, narrowed achievement gaps, and progressed students academically and socially. This SGCR charter has also exceeded national academic standards, and 75% of the student population has exceeded testing scores in math and English language arts testing scores.

It was important to interview every group that has played a role in furthering students' academic and social development. I wanted to develop a more in-depth

comprehension of the individuals who narrated the rules, created policy, and developed the procedures that furthered this academic development with this student demographic. I chose four participant groups based on the following criteria: (a) founder, CEO, or board member of the SGCR charter school, (b) administrative leaders (principals, assistant principals, dean of students, etc.) within this SGCR charter school system, (c) individuals who taught and counseled these young men in this charter school system, and (d) parents of students who had been attending the SGCR charter school and had previously attended a public school. The qualitative case study approach and the participants were chosen to gather comprehensive data and develop an in-depth understanding of how the framework of CRT underpinned this SGCR charter school system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Table 1 displays the demographics of each participant from the SGCR charter school community. Each group had between three to seven participants: including school founders and the CEO, teachers/counselors, administrative leaders, and parents of students attending the SGCR school. Their ages ranged from 24 - 45 years of age, and their experience ranged from 1 to 25 years in education and educational leadership. I administered the participant interviews beginning November 22, 2022, and completed them on December 21, 2022.

Table 1

Participant Demographics and Groupings

Participant Group	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Public	Charter School	Interview Date
Teachers and Counselors - 7 total						
Teacher1	Male	AA	24	2	1	November 29, 2022,
Teacher2	Male	AA	32	7	2	November 29, 2022,
TA1	Female	AA	34	-	1	November 29, 2022,
Teacher3	Male	AA	48	6	90 days	December 6, 2022,
Teacher4	Female	Ethiopian	23	1	-	December 14, 2022,
Teacher5	Female	AA	33	-	5	December 21, 2022,
TA2	Non-Binary	AA	24	-	5	December 21, 2022,
Administrative Leaders - 5 total						
Asst.Principal4/5	Male	AA	29	5	3	November 29, 2022
DevelopmentDir1.	Male	AA	28	-	6	December 07, 2022,
Asst.Principal678	Female	AA	30+	4	2	December 14, 2022,
(HBCU Prof 5)						
1Principal	Male	AA	40	5	12	December 07, 2022,
OperationsFENG	Female	AA	32+	-	6	December 14, 2022
CEO/Founders/Board Members - 3 total						
CEO	Male	AA	42+	7	20	November 29,2022
Founder1	Male	AA	28	-	6	December 7, 2022,
Founder2	Male	AA	40	3	20	December 7, 2022
Parents of present SGCR Students 6 total (All parents interviewed December 21, 2022)						
8parent1	Female	AA	35	4	4	Founding student
8parent2	Male	AA	31	4	4	Founding student
87parent3	Female	AA	40	4	4	Founding student
				4	3	
4parent4	Female	AA	33	4	1	
8parent5	Female	AA	50	4	4	Founding student
4parent6	Female	AA	50	3	1	
8parent5	Female	AA	50	4	4	
4parent6	Female	AA	50	3	1	

Table 1 is a summary of participant demographic categories, focusing on position and age, for all research participants in the SGCR charter school community. Parents' codes were their child's grade(s) and each parent's position in the interview. The founding students started when the school began and are now graduating this year.

Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of 21 one-hr participant interviews. The interviews were audio recorded, one on one, and confidential with individuals from the four participant groups. Since I was the researcher-as-instrument, I asked each participant questions and directed the semi-structured interview process of the research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). After I was approved by the IRB to conduct the research study, I contacted the SGCR charter school and met with the school's CEO and founder. After our meeting, he signed the IRB approval form to proceed with the research investigation. After the CEO and I met, he then directed me to contact his assistant, who also served as the head of human resources for the SGCR charter school. I sent her all IRB documentation which included the participant invitation and consent forms, for her tp review. After the documentation was reviewed, she sent me four separate lists of contacts that met the criteria of each participant group.

I emailed a total of thirty-two participants invitations from the four categories and received a total of 22 emails from individuals to participate in the research study. After I emailed participants interview invitations and they agreed to participate. I then sent each participant a research consent form, which was returned with the words "I consent". That served as a confirmation signature to be a research participant in this study. I organized

interview times that fit each participant's time schedule. The times scheduled for interviews made participants feel their time was important. I scheduled times that were convenient with school schedules and fit individual break times.

All participants were interviewed separately in a secluded room on campus that was not busy with school activities. This room was the main room used for the 21 participant interviews. As participants entered the room for his/her interview, I gave one item to each participant for the interview. First, I gave participants a copy of the SRS 2023 Education Scale (see Appendix A). I asked each participant to complete the scale anonymously. After each participant completed the scale, I was handed the scale. Then I began each one-on-one interview which lasted between 30 to 60 min. I had two distinct types of voice recorders that recorded participants during the interview process. I took no notes throughout the interview process because I wanted to give my full attention to each participant.

The semi-structured interview included open-ended questions during the timed interview. Each group and each participant had priori codes that identified them throughout the data collection and analysis process. For example, Teacher1 was identified as the first participating teacher. 8Parent1 identified the SGCR parent as the first parent participant whose student is in eighth grade and a founding student, which means one of the first students to attend the SGCR charter school. 1CEO was the code for the SGCR CEO, and the other representatives in this group representing founders had the word Founder and the participant interview number. These separate codes kept the participants' information confidential and identified them throughout the research study.

After the interviews were recorded, I used Otter.ai software and transcribed the data from the 21 participants. I listened to each participant's interview ten times. While doing this, I verified every participant's statement with the transcription software. As I listened and read the transcriptions, I began to compare outcomes, developed themes, and noted emerging patterns with the data analysis. In this study, it was imperative I identified and analyzed inconsistencies that occurred with the data's validity.

With this study, I wanted to understand the personal feelings of each participant without reflecting any personal bias as the researcher. To test the validity of the data, I identified and analyzed inconsistent cases that validated the data collected (Wolcott, 2001). I implemented the SRS 2023 Education Scale to understand and examine the overall feelings of participants toward the research topic and questions. This was important because this scale was completed by each participant with no participant identifier. I meticulously examined each participant scale and interview to assess unbiased conclusions with the participant data collection. The implementation of the SRS 2023 Education Scale and the interview questions were tooling each participant was given to freely discuss their experiences and draw their conclusion as it aligned with the research study (Wolcott, 2001).

Data Analysis

This section reviews all analyzed data collected and examined with the case study research. The results were categorically formed by the RQs and the SRS 2023 Education scale results. The origin of the SRS 2023 Education Scale was the Symbolic Racism Scale 2000, a scale originally developed by Sears and Henry in 2002. This scale was a

response to the many critiques that these two scientists presented regarding the issues of Symbolic Racism within the American policy structure.   This scale was developed to comprehend how individuals felt toward the ongoing issues of African American people in the United States in 2002. The SRS 2000 Scale was a derivative of the *Modern Racism Scale* (McConahay et. al., 1980). The base of the questions was the same. I revised these questions in the SRS 2023 Education Scale to reflect the issues that affect African American males with culture and diversity within the participants' academic experience. Each interview question in the scale was developed and aligned with the original research scale (see Appendix A). The SRS 2023 Education Scale was calculated by the total of individual responses to each question. The numeric total of each response reflected the participants' feelings toward the question asked in the SRS 2023 Education scale. The numeric total gives an idea of the participants' feelings toward the scale question and their reflections on issues of racial bias in the American education system.

David Sears & PJ Henry originally published this scale in Political Psychology (Henry & Sears, 2002). After David Sears approved the scale revisions, I developed Table 2 with scaling properties and minor adjustments. The SRS 2023 Education Scale reflected the various issues with racial bias and education. I kept the scale responses the same to prevent biases and general mindless response patterns while allowing flexibility for future scientists who wished to use the scale. The scaling instructions in the Note to the table were published in the original document (Sears & Henry, 2002).

Table 2

Summary of Participant Responses for the SRS 2023 Education Scale

	Strongly Agree	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Disagree*	*Somewhat Disagree*
1. If African American students tried harder academically in schools; they could progress just as well off as white students?	4	9	2	5
2. Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Do you feel African Americans had the same opportunities?	—--	—---	4	16
3. Do you agree culture and history affect a student's learning ability? What do you think?	17	3		
	A lot	*Some*	*Just a Little*	*None*
4. 85 % percent of teachers in public school education are white, do you think this causes bias in education system	12	7	1	
5. How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States education systems today, limiting their educational progress to get ahead?	19	1	—-	—
	Strongly Agree	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Disagree*	*Somewhat Disagree*
6. Generations of slavery and discriminatory practices in education have created conditions that make it difficult for African American males to progress in educational leadership (principals, assistant principals, teachers	16	4	—--	—-
7. Over the past years, African Americans have gotten the opportunity to academically progress as white students.	1	8	8	3
8. Since Brown vs The Board of Education do you agree that there is equality in learning and education for all students?	—	3	2	15
	All of it	*Most*	*Some*	*Not Much at All*
9. Are African American male students the cause of issues that lead to the nationally increased suspension/expulsion percentages of African American teenage boys in public school systems?	—-	—---	8	12
	Strongly Agree	*Somewhat Agree*	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*

Question				
10. Is there discrimination in federal education procedures and practices that cause academic bias, or is it solely up to the student to succeed?	16	4	—	—
11. Does gendered cultural representation in education systems better the academic outcome of black teenage males?	17	3	—-	—
12. Is the academic decline of black male students self-imposed or intentional because of historical bias in the United States?	12	7	—	1
13. Do you believe there is complete equality in the hiring practices with African American males? Do you believe these men have the same opportunities in attaining school leadership positions as non-minorities men?	2	—	—	18

(***NOTE**: **This table represents the data summary of participant responses from the SRS 2023 Education Scale. Numbers represent participant responses to the questionnaire. The table can also be found in Appendix-1***)

　　The SRS 2023 education scale was distributed to participants of the study before they began their individual interviews. I allowed no labels or participant identifiers because I wanted to understand the raw feelings of participants regarding the questions of race affects education with African Americans. The results reflected the 20 participants that completed the SRS 2023 Education Scale before their participant interviews for the study. Only one of the 21 research participants did not answer the questionnaire, because of a time constraint with the hour interview period.

　　These numbers reflected the participants' highlighted and circled responses as they anonymously answered the SRS 2023 Education Scale. The scale reflected the feelings overall that African Americans had not been treated equally in their American

education experience. This scale was limited because it reflected the opinions of 20 participants in the research investigation.

After each participant answered their individual SRS 2023 Education Scale. I placed two recorders in front of each participant throughout the duration of the interview process. I continued to explain the research study, placed each recorder on play mode, then asked each participant: their gender, their age (some gave a general figure), their position within the research participant categories, and their years of teaching in the public sector and charter school sector. The administrative leaders were asked about their teaching years and leadership years in both public and charter school education.

The parent participants were asked: the age, gender, the age and grade of their child/student). Also, parents were asked if his/her child was a founding student with the school. Each participant interview lasted between 30 and 60 min in length. Interviews that were 30 min in length were due to time constraints (teaching classes, lunch breaks, etc.). After each interview was completed, the participant received his/her gift bag with a monetary gift card for their individual participation in the study. After 4 weeks all interviews were completed, I began the analysis of all SRS 2023 Educational scales and the 21 individual participant responses with both recording devices.

The participant data analysis consisted of word-for-word passages and personal quotations from each interview. This constructed the data for this qualitative research study (Patton, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2022). Throughout the data analysis, the word-for-word passages illustrated the evidence of the participant's experience. Participants were given the opportunity to freely express their individual feelings toward the RQs in

the semistructured interview process. Braun and Clarke (2022) believed thematic analysis was reading through data to find common patterns that developed themes in the research.

The congruent responses that emerged from the participants' quotes and interviews created themes from the analyzed data. In the analysis process, I found and exhibited the most common themes that surfaced from the data. I chose to present the most recurrent and transparent responses of participants rather than focus on every quote that surfaced from the participant interviews. Selected excerpts were chosen that developed common themes and patterns that related to the RQs.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, How can African American male representation (in educational administration and leadership) be used to propel the academic experience of male African American teenagers? The following general themes emerged from the data analysis for RQ1: (a) students should be involved in the structuring of their education experience, (b) gender and cultural understanding developed camaraderie and community in academic communities, and (c) financial support and provided resources that assist in healing trauma in urban school settings and the communities within (teachers, staff, students, and families).

Theme 1: Students Should Be Involved in the Structuring of Their Education Experience

The importance of students being involved in the development of their academic liberation was found to be a critical part of the academic progress of African American teenage males. Over half of the participants believed that African Americans have never

had a fair replication or representation in the American education experience. The CEO and founders of the SGCR charter school developed two focus groups of African American males, both students and past graduates, to understand what they needed and what was missed in their academic experience. Their focus groups consisted of 450 African American male students from various regions and 150 African American adult males, who were successful, the first in their family to graduate from a university, and from various regions internationally.

1CEO discussed how he and Founder1 researched what African American adolescent students desired and needed in their school settings to make them successful. The focus groups of 450 African American teenage male students had experienced expulsion, suspension, and biases in public school academic settings. First, these individuals requested educational structure in their learning. 1CEO discussed the focus groups wanted learning that was structured and related to their everyday experiences. The focus group reiterated that learning is needed to prepare individuals, not a rote system of past practices. Another need from this group was to have classes that reflected their history and daily lives. They wanted to see themselves in their everyday education experience. 1CEO believed that students progressed academically and socially when they feel they are relevant in their educational experience.

Founder2 discussed that students must feel important and relevant to their academic experience daily. He explained that each teacher must know every student's name in the school, no matter the grade of the student. This practice identifies the student and his family's importance when every teacher knows their individual name and refers to

him as a 'scholar' in this charter school environment. The students' names are placed in math problems, and ELA writing assignments, while their photographs and pictures are placed on the walls throughout the entire school and changed regularly.

These students understand they are relevant in their education experience and understand their importance as African American teenage boys. Teacher2 also discussed the implementation of history classes that reflected African history, not the oppressive American history that focused on slavery and the suppression of African American people in the United States. 1CEO discussed within the focus group research, many said they would have preferred single-gendered schools in their academic experience. These young men believed they would have been more focused on learning and not afraid to make mistakes in the presence of their male peers. Unlike when girls are around, they felt they must keep up their image and not be embarrassed if they are insufficient in school subjects.

AsstPrincipal678 discussed that African American teenage males must have standards and not accept any level of mediocrity as a standard. She stated that in current research, African American boys were failing math, which was once their strong suit. This was her attraction to teaching and then evolved into administrative leadership in this SGCR school community. AsstPrincipal678 expressed that in mixed-gender schools, boys tended to rely on girls who assisted them in class subjects, where they are inefficient. This sometimes developed a dependency on the assistance from girls around them. AsstPrincipal678 stated that the community of intra-gender perspectives was essential to the African American males in this SGCR community. The differences in

male culture between African American men and adolescent boys have been accepted, acknowledged, and celebrated. The SGCR charter school accepts differences in each African American male leader, educator, and student as a celebration of a person's individuality.

AsstPrincipal678 shared how intentional this SGCR school was with forming relationships that focused on individual differences. As the teachers, school leadership, and staff acknowledged the differences in their academic community, they taught the young men to progress, develop their individuality and embrace the individuality of others within their student community. The other necessary implementation of this school's leadership was growing their educators because many African American teachers are grown-up versions of the African American adolescent males they teach. Many of these teachers have experienced traumas, issues of racism, and educational bias when they were students. AsstPrincipal678 reiterated that gender focus and cultural representation were essential for these boys' academic and social progression.

The school's focus has been to build the staff of African American leaders that instructed the boys because many educators have been wounded from various incidents of trauma and brokenness. Many African American men have experienced the same traumas as the African American male adolescents they teach. Asst.Principal4/5 and AsstPrincipal678 discussed how this SGCR charter school has a specialized practice called *Boy Activated Ingredients* (BAI). These are 12 ingredients and affirmations integrated into each classroom from fourth through eighth grades. Each classroom has 12 ingredients that reflect the individual classroom, whether it is music, recited affirmations,

or different handshakes. There are 12 ingredients that the students and their teacher developed together to represent their individuality. This was important for the boys to command their space and affirm their individuality. These affirmations were all different but set a tone and demanded each student their individual and community space/power.

Another important practice that was implemented in this school culture was teachers and leaders placing themselves in the shoes of the boys. This public charter school has adolescent African American males that come from a variety of economic backgrounds. Although these boys come from different lifestyles, they all have a commonality, academic bias. 1Principal shared that many of these boys have been suspended from private and public school systems. Students' suspensions began as early as kindergarten. 1Principal shared that 85% of the student population that attended this SGCR charter school had experienced suspension or expulsion from their previous school environments. AsstPrincipal678 discussed the importance of educators and staff having empathy and understanding the mindset of a child that may come from a home with no running water or adequate food to eat. She reiterated it is important to understand that African American boys are different, and these differences have not been made a priority or concern of the American education system.

Teacher2 shared a student was suffering from trauma because he did not receive adequate sleep from being bitten by rodents on his face because of an infestation in the student's home. The teacher said this is not always the case, but you must be empathetic and understanding when a child has suffered from lack of sleep and not performing fully in those instances. This type of trauma affects the student's performance; teachers should

create a safe space of understanding for the student. Founder2 stated that African American males have been failed by the traditional school setting. He explained African-American adolescent males have greater needs than other students, yet when they are presented with structure, work that challenged their intellect, treated with respect and care, and made to feel they are loved, these young men have statistically performed higher and progressed greater academically.

The continual sub-theme that was translated from the focus group of all participants was that African American adolescent males learn differently. These adolescent males have greater needs that have not been met in school sectors. Culturally, historically, and through the challenges that have conditioned urban communities, African American children have not been given equity or equality in traditional school academic settings. For example, out of 21 participants, only three participants had African American male leadership in elementary or middle school. 18 of the participants did not have African American male-gendered or cultural representation until their college/university school attendance.

Teacher1 discussed how he felt lost in high school and felt he lacked knowledge. He was a special education student, very smart but acted out because of home issues, and he was not propelled in his elementary or middle school experience. Teacher1 stated:

> "My first year of high school, because of my learning disability. I was placed in a Spec ED (special education) program with 12 other African American boys, all placed in one room. We ate cold lunches, each student had to be taken by security to go to the bathroom, and we all had gym together. We were intentionally

separated from the school population, not for being in trouble, but because we were in a Spec. ED program."

Teacher1 described this experience as his first introduction to 'academic incarceration" where you are placed in a prison-like setting in a school atmosphere. His parents transferred him to another high school, even there, he never felt accepted or cared about as a student. He had low grades in middle school, and improved in high school, but still had no cultural or gender representation. Then as he went to college, he found African American male teachers that as he and many others have stated in their experience with African American male leadership, "they never gave up on me."

This same educator, who was placed in special education classes as a teenager, maintained a 3.2 GPA in his HBCU college experience and has become an educator in both public and the SGCR charter school. Teacher1 discussed how students come to school every day with an invisible backpack. It is up to school systems and educators of African American teenage boys to help these students unpack their issues so they can be made whole. AsstPrincipal45 and Teacher1 both discussed the importance of African American males in the positions of classroom or administrative leadership. African American males leading the educational experience have created opportunity and hope in the academic experience of African American male adolescents. Because many of these young men have not seen this type of African American male in leadership within their own community. It was important for these young men to see African American men in leadership in suits, ties, well-dressed, and celebrating their differences.

1CEO discussed how George W Bush's statement *"the soft bigotry of low expectations"* has conditioned the mindsets of non-minority/white teachers and leaders toward the academic rigor and educational expectancy of minority children, especially African American boys (Nelson, 2015). The researchers Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge (2015) have not confirmed whether blacks were over-optimistic or non-minority/white teachers were too pessimistic about how African American male students academically progressed (Nelson, 2015). The researchers all stated that the students' expectations shaped the student's outcomes and experiences (Nelson, 2015). 1CEO discussed how this mindset of low expectations has outlined the academic expectancy and experiences of African American students in traditional education. This SGCR charter school has worked to deprogram the outcomes and narratives of traditional public school education. His SGCR academic community has developed academic preeminence and cultural distinction in its academic community of African American male students.

1CEO and Founder1 researched in organized two focus groups. One was African American teenage boys and what these individuals desired in their academic experiences. The second focus group was 150 men; some were first-time graduates, career professionals, and Black and Brown men who understood what type of school they desired in their primary and secondary academic years. The leaders also understood what was needed from their own education and academic leadership experiences in both public and charter school systems. These two leaders and three other African American men developed the school out of the passion they have for African American boys' academic and social progression. The school's model was developed from the experiences of

African American teenage males nationally and internationally. Both men said they understand the issues of trauma in urban neighborhoods; however, these things should not be the outlined experiences or mindsets of African American teenage male students.

To combat these issues of trauma within their academic community, therapy is provided to students, parents, and staff free of charge. Another resourced provision was school resources, uniforms, backpacks, and all types of hygiene for the students (an onsite washer, dryer, showers, toiletries, etc.). They assisted parents in numerous ways, with home visits and weekly live calls that engaged families while the academic community developed as one powerful unit. This community assisted the boys and their families to develop a better education and lifestyle.

Theme 2: Gender and Cultural Representation Develops Camaraderie and Care With African American Male Student Communities

1CEO explained that understanding the needs of these students was important, but it can be daunting because most of these adolescent African American boys acting out in class or in school settings have dealt with underlying traumatic circumstances within themselves, their homes, and their communities. There is camaraderie comradery and understanding when culture and gender are represented by African American males in their school system. African American males in America, whether a teenager or an adult, have faced the same fears and had similar experiences of being Black males in America. They have experienced academic bias, trauma, and the same traditional public school experiences with non-minority/white academic leadership. Many of these educators and students have experienced similar trauma within their households, communities, and past

school settings. 1Principal explained some of these educators have experienced the same type of trauma as the students they have taught. So, understanding the need for healing the students and teachers developed a focus on overall wellness for the school community. 1 Principal stated:

> "Many African American men do not want to return and teach in a system where they were previously traumatized as students. Then as teachers, they are continually judged by a similar system that was not made for African American males or children of color."

The evidence suggested that when African American men led the academic experience in school systems, they were successful because they understood the struggles and needs of their students (Callahan, 2020). Teacher4 discussed how she had no African American male leadership in her primary or secondary education. She felt as she progressed in school, she was learning through one system and one belief. She discussed how she finally had an African American male professor in her first year of college, and how he developed her skills and expanded her mindset about herself, and the world she lived in. Teacher4 also discussed how she felt African American boys have the least opportunity and are intentionally targeted in American culture. Teacher4 stated:

> "It is important that these young men see African American men as leaders, teachers, and critical thinkers who care about them. It helps these boys develop into strong, brilliant African American men. The commitment and drive of African American leadership is different. Because African American men understand what African American boys experience in our American culture. The

focus of this school has been African American men training, and teaching

African American boys to become great leaders is important to the American

landscape. It is important to let these African American boys cry and freely

express their pain. We (Black people), especially Black boys, are taught not to

have emotions. It is important and makes individuals feel human if they can cry

and express their feelings. Observing African American men and boys of the

same culture express themselves and have the allowance to be human, cry, and

express their pain. It is imperative. I am a psychology major, and there is power in

vulnerability. To see men and boys express their fears while building relationships

has been a beautiful thing, and it's important to our culture of African American

people."

Teacher4 expressed she understood the need for Black men leading Black boys.

However, she did feel that it is important for African American boys to be in school with

girls, as well. She felt it was also important that these boys be around girls to figure out

their individual likes and dislikes. Even though she thought attending school with girls

was important, she understood the main concern of the leaders was the boys and the

mission to not fail these boys. Teacher4:

"The 85% of African American men instructing African American boys is

important because it has broken the stereotypes that have been placed upon many

of these African American males in this American culture. The school is Black

men instructing Black boys, and this gives these boys hope to be doctors, , and

whatever leaders they choose to be. Culture and gender presented to you in a positive way can create a positive change in any individual."

The importance of camaraderie when gender and culture were in administrative and classroom leadership was important, but another theme that echoed strongly with parents who participated in the research was the component of care for these adolescent African American males as students and as a marginalized race in America. 8Parent2 and 4Parent6 both expressed how in previous schools, one public and another private, their sons, both in different schools, experienced bias and were cast aside daily. 8Parent2 and 4Parent6 felt in the previous school setting, there was a lack of concern regarding how their sons progressed academically. 4Parent6 spoke of an incident when her son was a contestant in the school spelling bee. However, she was never notified that he was a contestant. His teacher disregarded notifying her to have him study the words. She felt his academic progress was never a concern with the school or his teacher.

4Parent6 shared this SGCR charter school is vastly different because parents are contacted every Friday with a live call from teachers. The teachers reported to us about grades and school functions. The teachers of this SGCR charter school even checked on us to make sure, as parents, we were doing well. 4Parent4 discussed how her child has been made to feel important and cared for in this SGCR school community. Seeing African American men in leadership, seeing their own faces on the walls of the school, as well as seeing their names placed in the content of the literature and math problems gave the boys a powerful sense of purpose and identity.

8Parent1 spoke about how these adolescent students are called 'scholars.' She spoke about how these small words developed her son's mindset to focus on the importance of education. 4Parent4 said it is imperative for African American boys to be taught their culture, learn the history of the indigenous (Black and Brown people), and identify themselves as leaders and inventors, not as slaves or oppressed people as expressed in American history.

8Parent2 and 4Parent4 spoke adamantly on how this school cared because they are giving these young men a voice of power and purpose, to understand their existence and how their importance reflects in society. For example, 4Parent4 stated:

"This school is so passionate and caring about the boys being better men. They are giving these students opportunities to succeed as African American men, unlike his previous experience. He was in first grade and being treated like he was always a problem. He didn't eat his chips before he ate his apple, small things like that. When he would be excited when I came to his classroom and break the circle to run to me, it was a problem he was being disruptive. It was always trivial things that caused a huge problem in this school setting. It was always something, and I should believe them over my son. They were giving him anything and making him feel as though he should be happy with anything he gets. Well, I should not be happy with anything. As a parent, I want more for my child, and I am not going to settle for less. After the orientation of this SGCR school, I became so emotional, I started crying, and I have not been disappointed at all with the leadership or changing my son to this school."

All parent participants told different renditions. However, they gave a similar narrative of the school. Discussing how the CEO of the school still teaches sixth and seventh-grade math daily. They shared stories of how teachers and lead staff make it a point to go to the student's off-campus events, whether it was a baseball game, basketball game, chess league, or any other event. The teachers were consistent and continually present for these young men. The culture in this SGCR charter school was reflective of the old African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." This care and camaraderie-comradery were reflective in this school culture, as African American men lead and concern themselves with the academic and life progression of these Black and Brown teenage male students. This care and camaraderie comradery was also reflected in the support and resourcing that is provided to parents, students, and the teaching/administrative staff of the SGCR charter school.

Resources and Support Heal Trauma in the SGCR Academic Community

As research has shown, there have been continual issues of financial duress, housing marginalization, and incessant trauma within urban communities (Perkins, E. C., 2023; Brown, 2021). The theme of resourcing emerged numerous times among the participants of parents, teachers, and administrative staff. This school provided various capacities of resourcing to parents for their students in the SGCR charter school. First, five sets of uniforms were provided for the students at the school free of charge. The uniform attire of khaki pants, a white collared shirt, a regular tie, a cardigan sweater for seventh-grade scholars, and a suit jacket for eighth-grade upper-class students are supplied for each student. Second, all students were provided with brand-new books,

backpacks, and the supplies each student needed for every class to be academically

successful. The school also has a washer and dryer, a private showering facility, and

toiletries are provided in case these services are not provided for students in their living

situations. AsstPrincipal678 shared it can be embarrassing for students when they do not

have proper hygiene, and it can also be traumatic for them if those needs are not being

met in their living situations. Those things can be huge blocks to a student's learning if

not met daily.

As AsstPrincipal45 and AsstPrincipal678 discussed, the hierarchy of needs is not

being met nor integrated with the daily lifestyles of many African American students in

the systems of America. AsstPrincipal678 explained, that no one can discuss equity of

any kind, and you 'cannot' create equity until you understand that an individual

student/person has needs that must be met. The school led its resourcing for its entire

academic community with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Pichère & Cadiat, 2015). The

hierarchy of needs was a psychological theory that consists of five tiers of needs every

human must have from the lowest tier to achieve those items on the higher tier. The lower

tier is physiological (food and clothing). The next tier is personal resources, health, and

job security. The third tier is love and belonging: friendship, family, and a sense of

connection. The fourth tier is esteem: respect, recognition, strength, and freedom. The

fifth highest tier is self-actualization, the desire for one to become the best one can be

(Pichère & Cadiat, 2015). Asstprincipal678 stated:

> " Understanding academic equity for our boys and the staff is understanding the
>
> hierarchy of needs and how we create equity here. I can see you are hungry; we

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will feed you. They say I am going to school, but I have unstable housing, so we

will give you stability here and assist your family to create stability. I know you

don't have clean clothes. So let us provide you with those things. If you are

hungry and want seconds, we will give you thirds. If you are dirty? We have a

shower. As an academic community, we must provide these services and

resources for our scholars and our teachers to be their best selves."

4Parent6 both discussed the personal phone call from the homeroom teachers to parents are not only concerned with the students but the academic community is focused on the needs of the parents. Also, to see if they have any urgent needs that need to be met. 4parent6 discussed:

"The parents are part of the school culture and the school setting; parents are an

important dynamic in the academic progress of the school and their child. The

specified motto of these leaders at this school: "If something is wrong, we are

going to correct it. We are all going to love you and take care of you. It is not just

the parents that take care of the kids. Sometimes kids spend 8 hr in school. I am

not there. You must be able to trust them (the school). Trust is key. This is the

first time in his schooling that I trust the school. I always volunteered in those

other schools. Because that was my way of protecting my kids. My son told me he

feels safe and is taken good care of at this school. That is the key."

The financial component to parents is important, but other resources the school provided were receiving 1-hr-long therapy sessions for free. The school has four on-sight therapists that reflect the culture, gender and are specifically for students, parents,

teachers, and other academic administration. The therapists do not overlap in their groups or individual sessions etc. So, there are therapists that are solely for students, parents, and the staff.

All individual participants in every category discussed the importance of healing trauma and healing those who have been traumatized in urban communities, not just students but parents and teachers. 1Principal discussed how in the staff morning meetings, there is time for staff called storytelling. This allowed staff members to discuss where they came from and even the traumas they faced in their childhood and adulthood. 1Principal discussed he is amazed at the issues that many of his staff have faced and overcome throughout their lives. He believed in the importance of the school having therapy for their staff, 1Principal expressed:

> " You are asking Black men to come and (teach) be a part of an ecosystem where they were traumatized, with no therapy. Those schools are saying, 'We will beat you down the same way but in another form through the public sector with no therapy and no healing. We are (Black boys/Black men) also traumatized by government interactions. Constantly proving ourselves to people who do not think we are smart, who believe that Blacks are managers of children and not instructional experts. Racism in education has been asking, really telling Black men to tough it out for life. Therapy is a healing factor for all, and it is most important with Black and Brown boys and Black and Brown people."

As 1Principal, 1CEO, and Founder2 explained in separate interviews. There is an urgency to heal Black and Brown individuals that were taught in the traditional American public school system. 1Principal explained:

"This American system has and continues to hide the history of Africa from African American people. A system that has consistently made African Americans feel that they do not matter. A system that does not teach you in settings that represent your culture. An education system that punishes you for the trauma that their American systems have placed many African American boys."

1Principal stated:

"Education is burning black and brown boys at the stake as they have done before. So, therapy for the community of teachers, leaders, parents, and our students is imperative. As African American people, there is a healing that must take place. Also, in the daily education and life experiences of our academic community, there is a healing that must take place."

Teacher4 and Teacher5 explained that these students face trauma every day. They are living in daily trauma as African American males in America. The world has been against people of color, especially African American men. They are ostracized for being Black and male. So, therapy is essential and assists us as educators. Therapy in this school community collectively works to heal individual trauma. Therapy has helped our students, staff, and parents emphasize the importance of being emotional and respecting self-expression.

Teacher4 expressed another resource that assisted teachers in our school is called a 'tap out' system. When a teacher is having a bad day and needs a break, we can call our front contact, and another teacher will come in to take the class over. As Teacher4 emphasized, teachers are human, and we have our days, but the factor of feeling you will not lose your job because you are having a difficult day is important. The importance of healing our mental health in our school community is one of the best things. Teacher4 stated:

> "Mental health is one of the most important things. The services offered to us are the best thing. We get a therapist. There are four for the staff and four for the boys. So, I have a set hour every week. It is either Thursday or Monday. He is my favorite person. I just go in, and I feel like I can unload everything. It is free. They take care of the boys and our whole school community. I love the fact that they are not neglecting the teachers, either. We are all really taken care of by leadership."

Teacher2 and Teacher4 also discussed that, as African American educators, we are not judged or feel like our job is on the line. That is the beauty of this job, and the care we receive is very balanced. They really take care of everyone in this charter school community to heal and be better teachers, leaders, educators, parents, and students. The disparities of wealth gaps in housing, education, and financial equality have plagued African American communities. This SGCR charter school has implemented a system that supports and builds its academic community of students, parents, teachers, and

leaders resourcefully, mentally, emotionally, and academically. Allowing their academic community to heal from the past and be better individuals for their futures.

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, How can gender focus and cultural representation be used to develop academic equity with these minority students? Regarding RQ2, all participants agreed that gender focus and cultural representation developed academic equity and the liberation of individual thought and helped students to develop a focus on their future goals. The emerging themes regarding this RQ were (a) mentorship, (b) student support incentives, (c) no student expulsion policy, and (d) evidence of academic progression.

Theme 4: Mentorship is Key to Academic Progression

Asstprincipal45 explained that mentorship with African American teenage boys was important toward their academic and social progress. To see someone that is a leader that looks like you were important to the development of a young child, especially African American boys of all ages. You see, it gives these young men hope for their futures. We are led as African American leaders in this SGCR charter school community to understand what these boys are going through at home. While also teaching them how to navigate through what they may encounter and experience as African American men. The other important factor in mentorship with these young men, we (the staff and teachers) must adjust to the needs and focuses of the students. We are not adjusting to the needs of the leaders or the school, like in regular public education sectors. The school focuses on whatever is needed to progress these boys. Asstprincipal45 expressed:

"Public sector students must circulate in a bureaucratic system that is made to look one way and clearly is not made for them. This school is nationally known because what we are doing with black boys here is different. We work with all types of black boys across the city, no matter what wealth or poverty bracket they fall in. Let me reiterate that there are boys attending this school that other schools gave up on them completely. When the schools quit on them. We give them grace and understanding. We allow them to have emotions, but as I tell them, it is what you do with the emotions and how you apply them to your life and work. There is no other space in the county that allows these Black and Brown boys to get their frustration out and allow them to get back in and finish the session. This is what we do."

Another example of mentorship and understanding the experience of being an African American male is teaching these young men the important skills of presentation, etiquette, reading, writing, and math with the understanding that knowledge is their birthright and their individual weapon for success.

Teacher3 a new instructor with this SGCR charter school, and a past university professor discussed the importance of mentorship. Teacher3 disclosed the mentorship they have for students in this charter school should be a frequent practice for all African American boys in public and charter school settings. He explained the school has two practices that the staff must integrate it their daily practices. The first one is called 'mindfulness,' where teachers meet at 7 a.m. in the morning to discuss the day. But also, this reminded the teachers and staff that many of these kids barely ate or slept well the

night before. Some of the students may not have had a wonderful weekend or holiday like the teachers that have served them. Mindfulness helped the staff be conscious of the students' every need and to be understanding of the students whose homelives are in turmoil. Teacher3 disclosed:

> "The SGCR school is set on making the boys feel relevant because we, as African American men, know how important it is for us to be relevant. The school views mindfulness practices as energizing moments to really love these boys and be understanding as a staff that many of them lack the comforts we have as adults. We must remind ourselves to be understanding of the issues these boys face when they leave our campus.

Teacher3 discussed the other practice of mentorship. The school practices are 'Shout-outs' to the staff and the students. Weekly and daily recognition of the good things individuals have done as teachers and students. It is so important that we acknowledge these young men in every way. Teacher3 stated:

> "If a young man does not have adequate sneakers, the school will make sure he has new shoes. When the boys had a college tour, they made sure the boys got haircuts, to look good on the outside and put good things on the Inside. There are three components I live by to emulate my students in this academic profession: Black History, Black Power, and Black Manhood. This school applies all these important items to these boys and me. This is important to Black men. I have done the research, and if a Black male student has a Black male teacher that implements academic structure. The student will achieve and will get higher

grades. This is what I researched and learned from being a professor in a university setting for over 15 years. So, I know Black male mentorship builds equity with Black male students."

Teacher5 discussed that the use of pictures in the hallways and the Black history course and curriculum are definitive forms of mentorship for the students. Their images served as motivation for the students to continue to work hard. This school also teaches the history of African royalty and the power of indigenous people. The history classes are important so these students will understand their heritage and the lineage of African kings and Queens, something that is not taught in the American public school experience.

4Parent6 expressed mentorship for these boys is seeing a black man in a suit and a tie, seeing Black men who are working with them to achieve their goals, and having Black men that care for these young men. That is mentorship in every capacity. Teacher2 and Teacher5 gave examples of how one of the school's core values is Relevance and how it serves in the form of mentoring. So, they put everything in context for the boys, so they will understand the content. Teacher5 explained:

> " An important thing our school does is storytelling. The instructors will use
> places in the city the boys can relate to. The instructors also integrate life
> circumstances making the boys' daily education relevant to their daily life
> experience. For example, if you run a red light and get caught speeding there is a
> fine that can set you back financially if you do not pay it. These are relatable life
> circumstances that make learning engaging and interesting for our students."

Teacher2 gave another example, one of the teachers took the story of The Lion King and the story of Sundiata, being the underdog and overcoming the obstacles. We related those stories to the boys' lives and overcoming life obstacles. Teacher5 said, "Even in math problems, seeing their names in these problems because they have unique names that do not appear on standardized tests. It is an important element of representation and relevance that creates equity for these boys."

1OperationsMngr explained how African American men showing up for the boys including her son plays an intricate part in these boys' lives. This mentorship is important because many of the students have no male representation in their households. 1OperationsMngr son is a founding student and is graduating this year. She spoke about this community of African American men being from all backgrounds and communities, but they have the commonality of being "Black men" in America. 1OperationsMngr:

"Being a single parent and being in a collaborative partnership and mentorship of African American men has been rewarding, where the core of the school is based around relationships. Because these men understand what my son is going through and what he has ahead of him as an African American male. They push him to tap into his highest potential, so it's not just his mother. It's a community of men that look like him, the collaborative effort makes it easier to raise my African American son. This school is important because we teach these boys that abundance is their birthright. This school, unlike others, mentors these boys by feeding their bodies and giving them a quality education. Letting these young men

know that education is their weapon. And they can be and do anything they put their mind to."

1OperationMngr said mentorship for these boys is key, but here at this school, they are mentoring parents as well. Family engagement also mentored parents within the school community. Assisting parents to understand that this school is not just supporting their children. They are helping the parents thrive, as well. 1OperationMngr When the parent's needs are met, both the parent and their child will g. AsstPrincipal45 gave an example:

> "If a student is in trouble or faces expulsion. Instead of him being removed from the school. We make sure the parent and their student attend a joint class on health awareness, real estate, or financial literacy. They both have to do this to make sure there is parent and student accountability. It helps them mentor one another, it is important, and this is the importance of culture and representation. This is what true educational equity is."

AsstPrincipal45 shared that when African American men lead the academic focus of African American boys there is not only understanding in mentorship, but a kindred knowledge of culture. At this SGCR charter school, there is sincere care for their student population's success. This charter school was developed with the focus and passion in mind for every African American male student to succeed with no failure. This model has served as the blueprint for the entire school culture. Along with mentorship, student support incentives have also served as a tool that created equity and healthy academic competitiveness with this SGCR charter school's student population.

Theme 6: Student Support and Incentive Programs Develop Educational Performance

Student support and incentive programs are also important tools that continuously keep these young men progressing and thriving for academic success. These incentives were developed from the continuous discussions amongst the CEO, the school founders, and their focus groups of 450 African American male students and 150 successful African American men. As 1CEO discussed, student support and incentive programs were important for student progress, engagement, and academic achievements. The student support and incentive programs were designed to meet the needs of every student. Providing them with an education that fills any academic gaps. Also, it provided them with opportunities to understand who they really are and who they can become as scholars. This kind of support allowed these students to engage academically in their vision. Positioning themselves in the world as their personal and academic lives progress. 1CEO said:

> "Student support, incentives, and quality education allow students to say, this is who I am in the world, this is my contribution in the world, and this is what I need to know, to accomplish these achievements. This is the goal; however, this is not the case. Even though we are in a place with great autonomy, students don't have that kind of autonomy."

1CEO also spoke about how the support in this SGCR school is different to support the cultural needs of the students:

> "Our student support is more the adaptive way, than the cognitive way. We teach our teachers and leaders to understand this way. How were you loved as a kid?

Were you given love as a kid? What are your triggers, what causes your triggers? We understand that this is the support these students need to be understood."

Teacher2, Teacher5, TA1, and TA2 gave numerous examples of student support and student incentives that develop these young men into focused scholars. Teacher2 shared their homework/classwork achievements being placed on the walls of the school to show their accomplishments served as a reminder of their personal progress. Their pictures on the walls are changed out continually, so every young man can see his image reflected throughout the walls of the campus. This public display of images and academic achievement also assists them in their personal challenges with behavior and educational development. As AsstPrincipal45 articulated:

"Many of these Black boys have been completely discarded by school systems. African American boys need to feel validated because in numerous systems they are cast out or discarded. So here we make it a practice to celebrate our students as they arrive at school every day. There is music playing, there is a red carpet they walk on upon entry to the school. Every teacher and staff member shakes their hand or has coded handshakes to welcome them every day. If we see a scholar having a bad day coming into school that morning. We address that with a hug or a high five. We will sit with the scholar and help shift their mood for the day. What I did not realize is a love language for Black boys is hugs. In my classrooms, we are learning that Black boys need hugs. They have to have that affection to feel that they are validated." We never let those students go into the school unacknowledged. This is the daily support that starts the day"

1CEO discussed the student support and incentive programs have also been important in minimizing issues of student discipline and advancing academic progression. As Teacher5 explained, the students graded homework on the wall and name usage in math problems and other classwork, instilling a support system for the boys to assist one another. Teacher4 and Teacher5 acknowledged that another of the school's core support systems is "Being my Brother's Keeper." This support system focused not just on how the teachers support students but how the students assist and help their peers. These important practices are also recognized with student incentive programs, helping these young men practice these tools of individual success while progressing academically and socially.

The school has implemented incentive programs for students that have continually kept the young men moving toward academic excellence. 1CEO discussed how both focus groups the 450 black and brown students, and 150 male first-time graduates, assisted in the development of this school's special incentive programs. The school has many distinctive incentives, however, the first one that set this SGCR school apart was its state-of-the-art Arcade room. 1CEO spoke on this incentive:

> "The kids said we love playing video games, we love playing board games. It would be great if we had an arcade room. I thought…that's crazy, but then I heard it about 15 -20 times. Right. Then I said I wonder if we had an arcade room and we used it as an incentive. You can't just roll up in there. The boys said we needed something else. But it was hilarious, then the boys said we need to earn everything, don't give it to us. Then I thought if we give it to them, they'll trash it,

but it is researched anything you earn; you take better care of it. Then I thought it would be enormously fun. The kids would really, really enjoy it, and you have to earn it, every day. A hit! Oh my God, a hit! We finally got it opened, and the behavior issues the next day were gone by 50%. The kids wanted to get inside the arcade, and it worked immensely as a behavior and academic incentive.

1CEO says another incentive this year was 70 students, their parents, and some teachers traveling abroad to Europe, Paris, and Madrid. 1CEO said,

"Eight out of 10 educators traveled abroad before graduating from high school, and this changed their entire life experience. Then I researched 30 men, all from different backgrounds and different life experiences; all had one thing in common that changed their lives. It wasn't a great school or teacher relationship; it was traveling abroad that changed their whole life perspectives. Many of these men said traveling abroad kept them from being involved in gang activity, made them work toward going to college, and helped them develop a business."

1CEO said he researched how traveling abroad changes the perspectives of those raised in poverty and underserved urban areas. There were no other statistics that matched that kind of student change and development. So, he decided this year to spend $750,000 for the seventh and eighth graders to travel abroad with their parents and teachers. This incentive of travel, the arcade room, and the representation of student work and student photos on the walls, besides field trips and college trips, etc., served as incentives that had socially and academically progressed the student culture. 1CEO shared:

"All of these are high-level incentives. Celebration is one of the defined high expectations. So, I am talking to these boys, 450 interviews. Now we think a high standard is important. But most people misinterpret high expectations as a high standard. But the high standard is different. The boys do not consider it a high expectation if it doesn't have a high standard. They know it is a low expectation. Students know when you come, and you are not sincere, kids know. The first one is the high standard. The second one is the high structure, where are all the structures you're going to put in place. The high support, will you stand next to me while I struggle to do this? So, you gave me the standard. It's rigorous. I'm scared. You gave me the structure you modeled it you showed me. You gave me support. You stood next to me when I failed and kept me going to get it right. Then high celebration, you must affirm me in the beginning, middle, and end. The boys told me when you do these four things: High standard, High structure, high support, and high celebration, your high expectation is what will come out. And it has worked and is working with our students more and more."

This student support and incentives program has developed equity academically and culturally within this SGCR school community. These incentives and support have also been significant in lessening corrective action and the school's 'No Suspension Policy.' The third theme was continually mentioned and rarely practiced in school systems nationally. Yet highlighted the focus on academic equity in this RQ. The SGCR charter schools' policy of non-suspension or expulsion for students.

Theme 7: No Suspension Policies Give Hope to Discarded Students

The 1CEO has developed a no-suspension policy for students at this school. The 1CEO, Founder1, Founder2, and 1Principal believe in this policy of no suspension of the boys in this SGCR school setting. In four separate interviews, each participant stated the suspension has never worked, and when students are suspended it is for the satisfaction of the adult/teacher. It is never for the benefit of the child. As the statistics have shown, African American boys face suspension and expulsion at much higher rates than any gender or race (Morris, 2014). Since school began five years ago, there has been one suspension, and that was to appease the teacher. As Teacher2 stated in his interview:

"This school does not lead by suspension, as most public-school systems. When I taught in public school, the students would always say," You're going to suspend me anyway." They knew they would be kicked out for minimal consequences, so many didn't try to succeed. They felt that no one cared about their success, so why should they try in school."

Teacher4 also discussed how it can be frustrating, but the no suspension, no expulsion policy is important. Teacher4 stated:

"It's no telling where many of these young men would end up if they were expelled or thrown out. Many public school systems have worked and are working to disengage and quietly discard African American boys. Now we have public schools throwing how Black history. So, it is imperative these young men see Black men encouraging them and teaching them their greatness."

Teacher1 expressed that African American boy's acting out in classroom settings is a reaction to some type of trauma. Many of these students are pushed aside and eventually expelled because of their emotional trauma. Many of these kids have brick walls up because their emotions and pain are unacknowledged. So, work through their emotional traumas with understanding, and not casting them out. Teacher1 expressed, in his previous experience in public school when African American boys had behavioral issues, they were automatically given an IEP (individual education plan), placed in SPED (special education classes), or a 504 plan (identified as having a learning disability).

Teacher1 continued:

"No one has dissected what is going on emotionally with these Black boys. There is no equity in public education with African American boys, there is equality in giving them an IEP (Individual Education Plan). They are given the same accommodation; however, they are not given the understanding or love they need. African American boys and men are treated the same, as though they do not really matter. In this school, African American men understand what these boys will encounter as Black boys and men in America. So, we do not cast them out, we do not expel them. We are taught ourselves as teachers to understand their emotions and teach them to unpack their emotions".

Teacher1 continued. This practice has allowed them to be vulnerable and taught the teachers, as African American men, to be understanding of the student's situations and be vulnerable with them as adolescents. Teacher1 disclosed:

"Yes, some things come with a punishment. You have to know you are a Black man in America and you are a Black boy. And what these boys must understand is that how I treat you the world outside will not treat you that way. I'm trying to teach you how to get through this behavior now and learn how to mitigate that thing now. So, when you get to the real world, you will understand yourself better without them kicking you out of my classroom. I barely call home for behavior. Because I focus on, you did this thing, so let's work on fixing it. Let's get to the other side of it."

Teacher1 and Teacher2 both expressed the differences in practices as educators in public school experiences and working in a charter school where gender and culture with African American boys was the focus. It has shown the teachers the importance of working through problems instead of ignoring problems and kicking the issue to the side or out of the classroom. As 1CEO expressed:

"Our foundational philosophy is that behavior, underlying behavior. The behavior you do not want to see is an unmet need. Either it is an unmet need that a child cannot communicate or has communicated it, and adults around them are not able to receive it. Or adults can perceive it but are unwilling to provide it. Or they can perceive it and cannot provide it. So, kids then manifest what we see as behavior. So, you are going to expel a child for a topical manifestation of core issues that are unaddressed. Research shows that kids that are expelled are deeply traumatized. They are experiencing trauma. And the trauma is why they are manifesting this behavior. And they are Black and male. You know it is a fact that

Black boys are expelled more than anyone in schools, so if we are doing the work to manage them socially and emotionally. We should not have to expel them at all."

1CEO continued to explain:

"Our teachers and staff are taught the adaptive way of working with these students and not just the cognitive traditional way of working with them. So, our adults will understand what these boys have been going through, but understanding they are reflections of the life experiences of these young men that teach them."

1DevelopmentDir discussed in funding and development you cannot lead funding or donor requests with stories of poor Black and Brown boys. You must lead the stories with the triumphant story of victory and what these young men overcame and worked through daily to become high-achieving scholars. We must focus on the type of people they have become through the work of this SGCR school program and what they have experienced in our school. 1DevelopmentDir affirmed:

"We need to know that Black and Brown boys are not a monolith. Each student is different, but there are parallels that they have in common as Black and Brown males. From teaching pedagogy to curriculum content and the pushing out of Black boys. It is also easier to track the progression of the student's changes and development academically and socially in our SGCR school system."

1DevelopmentDir gave an example of how the practices of non-expulsion and development with the boys, are continually notated and acknowledged.

1DevelopmentDir:

"I continue to remind one of the boys' when he came to us he was continually expelled from his previous school; he was told he was unteachable, and how this same student has been continually on the honor roll and has been accepted to one of the top high schools in the area."

1DevelopmentDir continued:

"But if you're fed that from the ages of six to ten that you are unteachable, you're not worth anyone's time, you believe that and become that." However, this same student was the first student in 8th grade to get a high school acceptance and the first one to get a scholarship. There is still work to be done because the intervention of that kind of trauma cannot be done in that short amount of time. There is still more to be done to make sure that he is the man that he can be to finish high school and progress in life. But the difference from how he was in fourth grade to how he is in his 8th-grade year is night and day."

As TA2 explained, the no-expulsion policy was the support that many of these students needed and developed them to become academic scholars that no one thought they could be. This understanding also outlined the importance of gender focus and the cultural type of kinship among students and staff who are African American males. We all have learned to understand the issues of pain and emotions, not only with these students but with one another. We have learned how not to cast out the students but to

understand these boys and their emotions. We have also learned to work through our own traumas and teach them to work through their traumas, as well. Teacher4 discussed adults expelled students for the issues and traumas they have faced at home. These students are still young boys operating in that mental narrative. 1Principal shared:

"85% percent of our students that attend this SGCR charter school, has been suspended by 4th grade. Seeing that so much in my early years as an educator, I began to mentor Black and Brown boys. I have been a principal now for 12 years longer than statistics say the average principal lasts."

It is proven in research that African American men as leaders increased graduation rates and decreased suspension and expulsion percentages."1Principal said:

"Many of the issues of not hiring African American men in leadership are because we are not looked at as being smart enough to lead students. When statistics and the progression of students here and other places are proving the public opinions wrong with proof of these students academically."

1Principal discussed the issues of Black and Brown boys and how school systems are not treating the problems of their personal trauma. They are expelling and suspending Black and Brown boys, letting them roam hallways while passing them through. If we as leaders do not focus on the issues of trauma these boys have experienced, we will get the same results of failure. Principal1:

"Suspensions don't solve the problem; it just removes the problem from the ￼ space. And when the child comes back, they may not do it again, but the issue has not gone anywhere. They will just not do it again in front of you. We have not

replaced it with better behavior. So, for us, we are saying that relationships can fix that. What I know to be true for Black and Brown boys, they will do anything for you when they know you love them. They do anything. They will do illegal or legal stuff when they know you love them. So, we replace expulsion/suspension with building relationships with our students. If a student throws a chair, then the ecosystem was created by an adult. That is a lack of relationships and a lack of care. We have and have had boys that have thrown chairs. So, we have developed an ecosystem where they can throw the chair and not be thrown out of the school and still be loved. When the boys learn to care enough about their space and the people within the space, they won't throw the chair. They will simply manifest those emotions in a different way. We are teaching them certain ways to manifest those emotions. Because we cannot, and I say this so much, the reason we have so many ill-functioning Black and Brown kids in the world is that we are telling Black and Brown boys don't cry. We are telling them not to have emotions."

1Principal gave an example of a 10-year-old fifth grader who went through a horrible time with his family the previous day. The administrative leader said there was no way he could have told him to come in here and not be mad or upset. 1Principal continued the student deserved to be mad, he had a right to be mad. However, being mad cannot be a distraction to the student's learning. So, we have created spaces where students can be mad. We give them a safe space to be upset. 1Principal:

"We give the students a place to scream, we give them a place to shout. We give them a place to kick. There is nothing wrong with punching, kicking, screaming,

and shouting; those are the ways we process our pain. We do not do it to a teacher or a fellow student. You can hit a wall with pads or a room we have created for them to release their pain in a space where they will not be hurt. We allow students to be able to manifest those emotions. To where at least the student can get through the school day and be productive in a healthy way. "

1Principal expressed: "So, we have decided not to burn these Black and Brown boys at the stake as they have always been, and give them the space to be productive academically and progress socially as powerful young men." As 1Principal, Founder1, and 1CEO different interviews yet all three men reiterated the same message. This SGCR school was created to develop equity for boys that have been cast out by society and its educational systems. If we want to create true equity, we must create academic liberation with these boys. Liberation challenged the educational system with free thought while having the liberation to learn, create, and freely challenge the education system that was supposed to be created for all when it was not. Equity is getting every single boy what he needs emotionally, academically, and socially to be successful. Equity is the comprehension that every student is different. Every student is an individual and has a need that is different from other students. The students at this school are moved toward liberation. We must question these systems. We even question the systems we put in place here since some things were adopted from other places and systems. 1Principal explained that he, the CEO, and other founders continually question whether things placed in their school system are the best for these Black and Brown boys. We always

ask questions amongst ourselves as the founders and leaders of this school. 1Principal

said, "We will kill a thing dead if we know that it is not the best thing for these boys."

This healing for the students and staff has also caused the school to create a ZEN

room for the teachers and staff. The Zen room is a large room that has aromatherapy,

yoga mats, dimmed lighting, resting pillows, and spa music. This is another vital

component for this academic community of teachers and leaders. 1CEO and the leaders

of the school agreed; these rooms have continually attempted to heal the trauma that our

teachers have experienced in their past, which helps them better educators. As the

teachers heal, the boys can heal, their parents will heal, and they can develop a

community of healed individuals in their charter school system. The school's focus has

been for the boys, teachers/staff, and parents to heal from past trauma as they progress

academically and socially. 1CEO believed as healing happened, the boys became better

individuals and developed their own individual channels of individuality and leadership.

1 CEO and the founders believed as these boys heal inside, they become better socially

and academically. This is what has been shown in this SGCR school community with the

academic progression and social development of these students in all grades.

Theme 8: Evidence of Academic Progress/Social Development

Six parents were participants in this research investigation. The parents of

students reported the various degrees of academic progressions and overall improvements

socially with their African American students. The programs implemented by the

leadership with no expulsion policy, along with the resources and incentives, have helped

these students to be academically competitive in their education. Most of all, it is the

importance of gender focus and cultural representation of African American men in administrative and classroom leadership that created equity in the learning experience of these adolescent African American males. 8Parent5 stated:

> "This school has improved my child's grades. It's not the intention as in schools Before. It is the impact they have made on (my student's schooling). Then he sees a black man greeting him at the desk. He sees black men in suits. It was powerful. Everybody was looking nice. He didn't have to be a certain type. He didn't have to have a certain image. He saw himself. He was so excited. He saw himself. I cried. I was in tears. I was so happy he felt like he finally belonged. And he has progressed in grades and with his peers; beyond expectation."

8Parent5 added,

> "I have been an active parent in the parent-teacher association. She has volunteered along with other parents since her child began. Because what this SGCR school has done for these boys needs to be done for Black and Brown boys nationwide."

87Parent3 shared how her sons have progressed academically and her 8th grader being accepted into one of the top high schools in the city. She also spoke about the self-confidence and social development her sons have both experienced since attending this SGCR school. 87Parent3 said:

> "They would have never experienced this, not just the international trip. Which we know is the biggest one, But even college visits, HBCU (Historically Black College/University) college visits. This school has equipped them with everything

from how to tie a tie, how to interview, how to shake a hand, how to stand, and

even down to eating correctly at a table with fine dining. This school is training

these boys, to be successful and to be their best selves, as men, African American

men who will succeed in America."

8Parent2 explained that parent engagement with the school has been essential.

This SGCR school leadership understood that everything a child experiences in and out

of these school walls affects the students' mindset, education, and overall social

development. 8Parent2, 4Parent6, and 4Parent4 spoke at separate times but resounded the

same message. This SGCR charter school has worked to remove the barriers these young

men, their families, and their teachers have experienced. This has progressed these boys

academically and developed them socially. 1OperMgnr/FENG:

"Many parents come to this school feeling jaded or guarded because of their

previous experiences with other schools. As the family engagement specialist, I

am working to get parents to understand we are not the other school. We help

them understand we are truly here so these boys can win. Because when they win,

and they get these foundational principles here from 4th-8th grade. Understanding

they are known, and they are loved. Abundance is their birthright. They can go

out and do whatever (to be successful) regardless of the color of their skin. We as

a people and the families "we serve" in this school are 99.93%, African American

boys.

1OperMgnr/FENG continued:

"We will take any boys, but the emphasis in our program is to make sure that our

African American boys: 1. They are known and loved. 2. They know they have a

safe haven at school. 3. They know they are going to get a vigorous education,

and we are not going to let them tap out of their education. Because we know

when you have the foundational principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic, you

can do anything in this world, regardless of the color of your skin."

4Parent4 and 8Parent2 both discussed the differences in this school with their

work ethic and focus concerning their students. 4Parent4 discussed how she was not used

to a school environment that invested in her son, nor assisted and gave this type of care

and concern toward the parents, so their boys would be successful as African American

male students. 8Parent2 spoke passionately as an African American male. He wished he

had a school like this. 8Parent2 shared:

"When you're not going to a school like this SGCR school, and you're attending

traditional public schools, you feel a constant unacceptance. People ask you silly

questions that make you uncomfortable. It's a continual battle. See this SGCR

school is written for us. If I had been at a school like this, to be honest with you, I

wouldn't be sitting here. I would be further in my career. I wouldn't be doing this

interview with you. I would be ten times better at giving speeches. I would be

better at my writing. The boys do better in this system overall because they feel

safe and protected. To develop this school, they interviewed the Black boys, who

they said were menaces and couldn't learn. Let's see what they need. Once they

interviewed them, the boys said we need structure. If you give us an occasion to

rise to, we will rise to it every time. But if you don't, oh well, you don't care. People who love people and care about them make them do positive things. Your culture and your gender are relevant here. Even making the math problems more relevant. Not just with names but with locations they know, terms they use, so they will understand more…because most people learn by experience."

4Parent4 discussed this is the first year of her son's fourth-grade attendance at this SGCR school. The only slightly discrepant comment was from 4Parent4 since her son is a new student and this is his first experience in a fully SGCR school of African American male leadership 4Parent4 said,

"He is still adjusting; it was a major adjustment for him. He is adjusting because he has never had this many Black Boys in his classroom or had this many Black teachers in his life. This has been a culture shock for him to see himself in so many cultural capacities of students, teachers, and school leadership. This many standards for him, and teachers pay this much attention to his progress. It's different when you're the focus, and you matter. It's different when you're relevant and matter in your participation also. He's getting a lot more attention than he is used to, good or bad. As far as his education, he discusses what he is learning more than he ever has. And it surprises most adults, I say it must be the school. Because he is not learning that here. He articulates his words much more, he has always been a good student, but he is saying "yes, Ma'am" more. It was more pressure than he was expected to do well. I also get more feedback about how he is doing well in this school. I didn't hear about his academics; in the

previous environment, it was solely on his behavior. I didn't understand the grading of the other school…Parents here are included in the academic process fully here."

As 87Parent3 discussed:

"The boys seeing African American men in leadership positions, that have graduated from college, thoroughly has progressed, and developed them culturally and academically without a doubt. Success with them is less of a possibility and more of a guarantee. At the previous public school, my oldest had perfect attendance and was failing his classes. The first quarter of his attendance at this school even now he has been an honor roll and straight A student."

This school starts in fourth grade, where young boys' attire begins with a shirt, tie, and Khaki pants. Then as the young boys progress to middle school, the attire changes to a cardigan, sweater, tie, shirt, and khakis. Then their final year the young men are celebrated with a signature SGCR dress jacket, a dress tie, a white dress shirt, and khakis pants. 8Parent2, who is also a teacher at the school, talked about the social and academic development of the boys. as they begin school in fourth grade to their graduation year of eighth grade. 8Parent2:

"When they first arrive on our campus, you have to deal with a lot of traumas and personality changes. Understand, you are dealing with young boys who are going through trauma at home, then traumatized in their school systems." Many of these boys have never been told they are loved, they are safe, and most of all, they are important, or they matter. So, when boys come to an environment like this SGCR

school, they are shocked that everyone cares, that we are providing safety and

love for them, and they are not cast out or suspended because they are hurting

inside. In the beginning stages, they try to abandon the classes, teachers, and the

care they receive. They fight against the care they are receiving, but as the years

go on, they adapt to the care. We are seeing greatness in these young men from

the beginning of fourth grade when they start to now as their eighth-grade year

approaches."

As 4Parent6 spoke about her son's experience being a new student of the SGCR

charter school. 4Parent6 shared:

My son is on the AB honor roll, there is nothing else to say. He could have

straight A's, but he will finish his work at school and not at home, but he does his

work. He listens, he sits, and he does the work. All the teachers say he always

does his work. Emotionally and socially, he is much better, you can see it on his

face. You can see his emotions with his teachers, and with his peers are so much

better. He craved that male reinforcement. At the other school, he would cry. I

work from home, and as I work, he is under the desk crying, because he did not

want to go to the other school. He was being bullied so, he hated his last school…

here he has allies and friends that look like him."

In these interviews, every participating parent showed me the academic

progression of grades and student performance. It was very apparent that this SGCR

school focused on the academic progress, individual healing, and educational proficiency

of every male student from fourth to sixth grade. There were no discrepant cases in the

research of the parent participants. The limitations were the data reflected the experiences and opinions of only six parent participants. However, the evidence of academic progression with their child was the disclosure of the educational and social impact this SGCR charter school has made on these six students. The 85% staff of African American men in administrative and classroom leadership has been impactful in their child's academic experience and social advancement. This does support the research that cultural representation and gender focus were impactful toward student educational progress.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness had to demonstrate that the data analysis had been conducted in a concise, consistent, and comprehensive way through the data collection. There are four different components that develop the criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, authenticity, and dependability. The first component to develop trustworthiness with qualitative evidence was credibility. Credibility in qualitative research is established when the research findings are accurate and correct with the data. The credibility of the findings was created as I researched and received multiple perspectives from participants that represent the academic structuring of student learning: parents, classroom teachers, administrative leaders, and CEO/founders. The collection of participant data fostered the comprehension of the research to how participant views added to the authenticity of the data collection and analysis. This gave credibility to the data collection and analysis, which created validation with the research findings that cultural representation and gender focus mattered in student academic

progression and social development of adolescent African American males (Maxwell, 2012).

The next component that developed trustworthiness was transferability. The transferability was provided by establishing research findings that could be transferred to other situations and populations in research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The importance of academic equity, gender focus, and cultural representation for all students from diverse backgrounds. The results represent a wide range of academic populations within educational communities, so the research could be applied to other academic situations and research findings. I sought individuals from the different school categories so the results of this study could be informative to both public and charter school systems and be applied to the importance of diversity and cultural representation in school settings. The research can also be transferred to current academic issues of CRT, implicit bias in the academic setting, and the removal of African American history in school settings.

The third component of dependability was established with the participants despite any changes in the research setting or participants during the data collection process. Dependability with established with all participants, even though one of the participants did not complete the SRS 2023 Education Scale. The dependability of the research was developed as participants were present, and the research setting was established with no changes during the 4-week research investigation.

The final component of confirmability is the continual rechecking of data throughout the collection and analysis, validating that data can be repeated in another research study (Maxwell, 2013). I listened to each interview more than ten times

throughout the data collection and analysis. Themes emerged from the participant data. The participant interviews were clear and concise as codes and themes were developed. The analysis of participant interviews and data aligned the research to be repeated in other research studies that focused on academic equity, bias, or cultural representation in education.

Results

The three themes of this RQ1 were (a) students should be able to voice what is needed for their academic learning progress, (b) cultural representation and gender focus created camaraderie and care, and (c) when resources were provided in academic communities healing from traumas were addressed and nurtured for social and educational progress. These themes gave me an in-depth understanding of the importance of cultural representation and gender focus in education settings. How these factors propelled the academic progression and social development of adolescent African American males. The themes also showed how this representation and focus propelled individuals within these students' academic and home environments. The understanding and passion these leaders had for their students, the faculty, and the parents have created generational advancement socially and academically.

The representation of culture and gender gave these young African American male students an academic narrative and experience that most schools neither care about them having nor offered these young men or their families to experience. These themes led me to the second question's emergent theme of academic equity and how gender

focus and cultural representation provided academic equity for minority students, the
staff, and its parent community. Teacher2 spoke:

> "It is one thing to have equality where you can now walk in the front door. But
> what is equity really for Black and Brown boys? We don't know because schools
> like this are rare and really no one provides a safe space for them as Black and
> brown Boys or Black and Brown men."

RQ2 focused on how cultural representation and gender focus develop academic
equity for these minority students. The themes of mentorship, student support, the no-
expulsion policy, and the evidence of academic and social progression addressed my
question fully. These interviews helped me comprehend the passion and care these
leaders in this SGCR school have for these young men, their parents, and their
educational staff. It gave me a vivid example of what academic equity could replicate
when gender focus and cultural representation are present in the academic setting. It also
developed an in-depth understanding of how cultural and gender representation in
administrative and classroom leadership offered the opportunity to advance the outcomes
of Black and Brown boys that have been continually cast aside and misunderstood
because of their personal traumas. As OperMngr/FENG explained:

> Equity is true when every Black and Brown boy's needs are met concerning their
> education and individual progress. That is what academic equity looks like.
> Academic equity is clearly met in this SGCR charter school, more so because the
> school focuses on the needs of the students. When there is student focus, results
> are present."

As OperMngr/FENG articulated:

> "We will take any boys, but our emphasis in our program is to make sure that our
>
> African American boys know 1) They are known and loved. 2) They have a safe
>
> haven at school. 3) They are going to get a vigorous education, and we are not
>
> going to let them tap out of their education. Because we know when you have the
>
> foundational principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic, you can do anything in
>
> this world, regardless of the color of your skin."

I developed a clear understanding of the importance of gender focus and cultural

representation in leadership representation. It developed the equality of presence, concern

for individuality, and relatability for these African American adolescent male students.

Something that research stated was not happening in public school systems for African

American adolescent males (Noguera, 2008). However, this has happened at this SGCR

charter school, where Black and brown boys continue to heal, thrive, and progress

academically and socially.

Another tool that was revised and confirmed for use in this research investigation

was the Symbolic Racism Scale 2000 (SRS 2000). I revised the Symbolic Racism Scale

2000 with the approval of the original researcher (Sears, 2000). I developed the SRS

2023 Education Scale for this research study. I formulated the scale with the same type of

original questions but incorporated the issues of education with African American males.

I wanted to understand how each participant, felt about education and how it has affected

African American males in America. 20 participants answered the questions

anonymously with no participant identifier. There was only one participant that could not

participate in the research study due to a time constraint. All data collected and analyzed was reflected in Chapter 4.

As I completed the data analysis wanted to give a coherent view of the development, focus, and structure of this SGCR charter school system. The goal of this research study was for readers to have a more in-depth comprehension of the importance of gender focus and cultural representation for African American adolescent males. I wanted to share the experiences of African American males as educators and leaders. I also wanted to share what parents with African American adolescent males have experienced in public school sectors, and how their boys have progressed within the SGCR charter school system.

This research is not just focused on African American males. I am sharing how representation and gender focus within a school system progressed an academic community. Every child that attends a public or charter school should have representation in their administrative and classroom leadership. This is what academic equity represents all creeds, cultures, genders, and races represented for every student to be progressive in our society. Chapter 4 shared the progressive results of the research and what happened educationally when students were able to have a culturally reflective academic experience. Not the traditional academic experience of expulsion, bias, and nonrepresentation.

Summary

Chapter 4 summarized the findings I gathered from the data collection and analysis from participant interviews, observations of the SGCR charter campus, and

results of the SRS Education Scale 2023. The intention of this qualitative case study was to understand the process and procedures that caused African American teenage male students to progress socially and academically under the tutelage and administrative guidance of African American men. In the process of data collection and analysis, seven themes were developed from the analysis of participant interviews, on-site observations, and the SRS Education Scale 2023. The themes were (a) students should assist in the structuring of their education experience, (b) gender and cultural representation developed camaraderie and care in the academic community, (c) resources and support heal trauma in school communities (teachers, staff, students, and families), (d) mentorship is key in the student academic and social progression, (e) student support and incentives heightened student academic and intellectual performance, (f) no student expulsion policy created an opportunity of academic growth for the individual student and (g) evidence of academic progression and social development.

When all these elements were implemented in the academic experience of these adolescent African American males, and these students were fully represented in culture and gender, the traditional narratives of mediocre performance and expulsion were changed. Students who were once expelled and thought to be non-teachable developed into progressive, high-performing academic students. The results showed the outcomes of this one SGCR campus, and how they have progressed in their academic community with gender focus and cultural representation.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Conducting this study allowed me, as a researcher, to develop a more in-depth understanding of the importance of cultural representation and gender focus in a student's academic experience. As I discuss in this chapter, the results of the study underpin conclusions and recommendations that may inform future academic policies that may possibly create avenues of academic equity that give all students the opportunity to thrive academically and socially. The study highlights the importance of gender focus and cultural representation and how the traditional American academic experience has not been favorable to students from diverse backgrounds, especially male African American.

In Chapter 5, I provide a deeper understanding of the themes identified in Chapter 4. As I discuss, the themes highlight strategies that educational leaders may be able to implement to foster academic diversity and inclusion for all students in the U.S. education system. I present conclusions that I developed based on the data collection and analysis results. My purpose in conducting this qualitative case study was to thoroughly understand how equal representation of African American men in administrative and classroom leadership narrowed the achievement gaps for African American male teenage males in a single-gendered, charter school setting.

In addition, I wanted a more in-depth comprehension of how gender and cultural representation in school settings create educational equity for students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. I wanted readers to understand how equal representation of gender and culture stemmed from leaders' comprehension of the issues of implicit and academic bias and implementation of educational policies, equal funding, cultural

representation, and gender focus to promote the academic and social progression of the charter school student population (see Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021; Singleton, 2015).

Interpretation of the Findings

Based on the participants' responses, I developed the following themes:

- students should be involved in structuring their academic experience,

- Gender focus and cultural representation develop camaraderie and care,

- School resources enrich a student's education and heals trauma,

- mentorship is key to academic progress,

- student support and incentives promote academic performance,

- no expulsion policies give hope to discarded students, and

- evidence of academic progress and social development.

The themes could assist leadership in charter school systems by informing them of policies that promote academic rigor while culturally engaging all children. Implementation of such policies may possibly reverse the ongoing issues of suspension and expulsion, and educational inequity and promote an academic community that embraces and nurtures students, parents, and teachers. Also, the study findings could further school and district leaders' understanding of the importance of African American men to administrative and classroom leadership and how this gender focus and cultural reflection can be beneficial to the academic and social progression of their adolescent African American male students.

The Role of Student Involvement in Structuring the Educational Experience

1CEO, Founder1, and Founder2 held the opinion, based on their prior experience, that Black boys have been dismissed in the American education experience. These men devised a focus group of male African American adolescents who experienced expulsion and suspension, asking these young men what they needed in their education and school experience to progress academically and socially. The founders' focus was on the continual problems that male African Americans encounter as educational leaders and students in the American education system. The focus group of African American male students desired academic structure to be an essential part of their educational experience. The leaders learned how the participants in their focus groups wanted to learn about their own history and felt it imperative to have their gender and culture represented in their learning experience. These young men felt they were misunderstood culturally and not cared for in their educational trajectory. They felt it was important to express what they needed academically and socially to be successful as African American men.

Relevance was one of the four core elements of the school's educational mission. Relevance also underscores the classwork and other aspects of education in this SGCR charter school setting. The classwork, learning environment, and pedagogy are centered solely around the student population and educational progression of male African American adolescents in the culture of the United States.

These young students have been labeled as problematic in their previous school experiences. To make these boys feel relevant within this school community, every teacher and staff member must know all the students' names in the school. When children

are known by everyone, it highlights their importance and connection to that school community. Founder2 shared these young men are identified as scholars, also having their faces on the walls, and their names in math and ELA problems gave them relevancy and a reflection of their individual importance. Cultural reflection and single-gender focus have been crucial factors in the academic and social progression of the students at this charter school community.

The leaders and educators worked passionately to ensure that students have an impactful experience in their academic progression. Teacher2 explained the school leaders focused on African American male students being stakeholders in their academic experience. These African American men understood what was needed to be successful through their personal choices and experience. This hindsight assisted the African American adolescent male students in reaching their academic goals while dissipating previous education labels of being unteachable or problematic. This aligned with CRT implemented in schools would develop equity and representation for all students to learn the same and embrace the backgrounds and cultures of each other, not just one predominant race (Delgado and Stefanic, 2016).

Statistics have shown that African American men make up only 7% of the nation's teaching force, while 45% of African American students attend high-poverty schools (Cai, 2020; Kafele, 2020). Teacher2 believed African American males being stakeholders in their own education experience, would change the trajectory of their outcomes with suspension/expulsion rates, student academic progression, and academic procedures. These findings are important to school districts and charter school

environments in understanding the needs of the students they are teaching. Developing an academic environment of comprehension and conversation in asking students what they need to be successful. Instead of controlling the narratives and treating every student as a monolith, teaching every student with the same overall curriculum. This is an important concept of CRT because it increases interaction between administration, teachers, and students. When students see successful men who replicate them in gender and ethnicity, they are more prone to mirror those same behaviors (Nauert, 2018).

As AsstPrincipal678 reported, when students felt they were relevant, accepted, and challenged intellectually it caused the students to work hard through their traumas and emulate success for themselves and those around them. This aligned with research of the importance of CRT and previous research that showed African American males as academic leaders accelerate learning in the classroom (Lynch, 2017; Young & Young, 2020).

Another theme that aligned with CRT was students having the autonomy to be involved in the structuring of their academic experience and education representing all students in diversity, gender, and culture. Participants felt when students are taught by individuals that represented their gender, understood their culture and life experiences. Cultural and gender misunderstanding has been a lessened in their SGCR school settings. Teacher1 shared that many African American males felt misunderstood and negatively targeted in public school classrooms where they are not represented culturally and by African American male leadership (Gill, 2008; Moore et. Al., 2018). CRT theorists believe that systems of education and law were outlined for the success of non-

minority/White students and non-inclusive of the needs or focuses of minority students (Bell, 2005; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017).

CRT implementation has been a continual argument amongst education systems and the conversation of implicit bias toward students of color in education. This study also revealed the importance of African American male students voicing their truths about whom they needed to lead their academic experience. CRT outlined the research that revealed America's public education sectors' make-up is 63% non-minority/White males (superintendents, principals, and asst. Principals) and 85% classroom leadership is non-minority/white females (Morris, 2014; Thornhill, 2018; Sowell, 2020). In comparison to 11% of principals and 20% of public school teachers were African American males.

This study reiterated the importance of cultural representation and diversity for all students of diverse backgrounds. This could be implemented in charter school systems focusing on an academic system that is not dominated by a predominant race but represents all genders, diversities, and cultures for students to equally progress in education. The research also developed a comprehension of the importance of charter schools that focus on diverse teaching staffs and that represent the diverse student dynamic (Sowell, 2020; Lester, 2019).

Gender focus was also an important need expressed by participants. They agreed it gave the boys freedom to express themselves without judgment. Students didn't fear expulsion/suspension for their cultural identity, and they felt they were free to make mistakes without judgment as in unisex classrooms. TA1 shared it is important for these

Black boys to be guided by successful Black men. School systems should develop tiers of communication where students can freely express their needs and desires to academically and socially succeed. The common phrase used by participants when they spoke about students having a voice in their academic experience was a *stakeholder*. If school districts and charter school systems would treat students as stakeholders in their education, there would be a richer academic experience for all students because all students that attend these school systems would be represented in the culture and academic dynamic of education. This is how CRT implementation could develop change and inclusivity in the learning experiences of adolescent students from diverse cultures and backgrounds (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017).

Gender and Cultural Representation and the Development of Care and Camaraderie

The results of the participant data indicated that when gender focus and culture were represented in classroom settings African American male students academically and socially developed. The study showed that as African American males led in both the classroom and administration, care and camaraderie developed as these men understood the experiences of their African American male students.

For example, 1CEO shared that whether it is an African adult male or an African American boy, the commonality shared were the stereotypes, racism, and stigmas of being a Black male in America. There is an understanding and empathy we have when these African American male students enter our campus, and we lead their education. This aligned with the results that cultural representation and gender reflection of African

American men developed a structure of academic accountability and responsibility with their student demographic of African American teenage males (Kafele, 2019). This also correlated with research that African American men as leaders created care and security to learn in their classroom settings (Kafele, 2019; Young & Yung, 2020; Cokley, 2015).

1Principal explained many of the male educators on this campus have experienced similar traumas in their homes and communities as these young boys. These experiences have developed an understanding and care between our staff and students.

This also falls in agreement with the CRT implementation that students' education experience is led by those that lead and instruct them, this understanding and trust in leadership progresses students academically and socially (Bertani et al., 2010). All cultures should be represented academically in history, education, and leadership. Every student should see his/her importance in the academic landscape of education and learning. This coincided with CRT implementation research focused on equal representation was needed to create academic equity for students from diverse backgrounds (Lester, 2018; Bertani et al., 2010).

Another important theme that emerged from the participant interviews was the importance of caring for those within this SGCR charter school community. Teacher2 discussed the care for the school community was shown in various ways. Teacher2 discussed the daily activities of the school were the celebration of the students as they entered the campus, if they see a student having a bad day upon entering the school, they never ignore that. Teachers are taught to embrace that student, explore what is going on, and develop a relationship to help that student express that emotion. The cultural

replication developed a kinship with the students and leaders that allowed students freedom in learning, personal development, and expressing their individual vulnerability (Lester, 2019; Kafele, 2021). An important way to implement CRT is through diversity in leadership and cultural understanding of the students they teach (Bertani et al., 2010).

TA2 stated many of these young men are in the stages of puberty, they are changing as individuals and have personal issues they are experiencing individually in their home lives. As leaders, it is important for us to allow them to express emotions and celebrate them at the same time. This builds a culture of care and camaraderie amongst our students and teachers. adolescent students being free to cry and not judged for expressing their emotions. This vulnerability is allowed and applauded, so these young men can freely express themselves. This school focuses on teaching these young African American male students to have emotions and that vulnerability is powerful.

This is aligned with research that shows school systems should have more avenues for African American boys and children from diverse backgrounds to express emotion (Proffitt, 2020). Many African American adolescent males are not allowed and sometimes punished for expressing pain, emotion, or vulnerabilities of any kind in many school settings (Yaffe, 2012). This research aligned with CRT that when students are represented in cultural diversity and gender focus, they're understood and allowed to be expressive without punishment. This understanding assists in the academic and social progression of these students (Yaffe, 2012; Delgado & Stefanic; 2017). This important component of CRT assists teachers to address the social and cultural needs of the student, without judgment (Bertani et al., 2010). It allows the student to be vulnerable and

develop an avenue of truth with teachers, this educational bridging builds relationships between the student and teacher. This care and camaraderie develop the student academically and socially (Proffitt, 2020).

Another important component developed that aligned with the cultural representation and gender focus that aligned with CRT implementation was meeting the needs of students and parents in the school community to create equity. The utilization of *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* focused on the basic needs of students being met to attain the academic and social progress they needed to be successful. The recognition of each student's name in the entire school and the reference to them as *scholars* defined their intelligence instead of the previous labels of special needs or IEP (individual education plan) these young men were given in the previous education systems.

This correlated with previous research that African American boys need cultural care to understand their needs. African American boys were brilliant from Pre-kindergarten and, as they entered fourth grade, were labeled at-risk and academically limited needing an IEP or behavior guidance (Rashid, 2009; James, 2011; Busette, 2022). This coincides with the effectiveness of implementing CRT by utilizing cultural replication and gender focus in administration and leadership.

The continued displays of care were emphasized with this SGCR charter school community of students, teachers, leaders, and parents. Teacher4 referenced, the focus has been concentrated on African American men teaching and caring for African American boys, sharing their fears and vulnerabilities while academically building them into great leaders. Teacher4 continued, no matter what these student home lives are, we have been

taught to care for and be empathetic to issues these boys are facing in their daily lives. While preparing them for success and what they will experience as African American men. There were no other schools I've taught at that were like this. This is a successful CRT tool that correlates with the research that refers to the importance of empathy and cultural understanding when there is diversity in leadership (Singleton, 2015; Kafele, 2019).

4Parent6 also discussed the importance of this camaraderie and care for boys, who do not have a male presence in the home. 4Parent6 stated these boys have been genuinely cared for and looked after by this staff of African American men. It has been different, as these African American boys have African American male leadership as the dominant force behind their learning. This camaraderie and care positions itself with the research of how academic equity with gender and culture progressed student individualism, cultural identity, and academic development and societal focus (Kafele, 2021; Lester, 2019).

This representation of culture and gender was important because education inequalities were affiliated with the limited cultural representation, gender focus, and the mythical belief that African American male students were a monolith, so their individual needs had been disregarded in various education sectors (Moore Jr.et.al., 2018; Cokley, 2015; Emdin, 2016). The care and camaraderie that developed when African American men led the academic experience for African American boys were important, not just for the academic community but the individual communities these students represent.

It is important that school districts and charter school settings implement these CRT tools that direct programs and practices that embrace parents and students. The care and camaraderie these founders have developed for their student culture created a healing of the trauma of their African American male students, teachers, staff, and parents of this academic community through various systems of support and resources. Programs that acknowledge and work to heal the trauma students experience in their personal communities and even homes, develop equity and cultural care (Bertani et al., 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

CRT implementation focuses on cultural care and camaraderie (Bertani et al., 2010). This embraces that students are different, every child has a singular thumbprint and footprint, and education systems must treat students as individuals, not systems. These types of policies and procedures will assist the academic progression of all students because they will feel they are seen as individuals that are important to the academic and social systems of our society.

Resources and Support to Heal Trauma

The results of this research suggested that American school systems have become costly for the parents of students who attend public school systems. The increased costs of uniforms, accessories, backpacks, and supply lists must be purchased for students to begin and continue school. The problems of financial duress have heightened as parents are continually faced with problems financially in urban America. These issues of financial duress have not only affected parents but their children.

Asstprincipal678 explained improper hygiene, unclean clothes, and the lack of supplies for the school year could be traumatic for any student. When students' needs are not met at home or school, trivial things cause problematic blockages and negatively impact students. When the child's needs are not met, it could be detrimental to their academic and social productivity. The school-provided resourcing has assisted not just students but alleviated the financial burdens placed on parents who were normally asked to provide uniforms, backpacks, school supplies, etc.

AsstPrincipal45 and AsstPrincipal678 both explained how the needs and financial resources in many African American households are not being met, and many African American homes are led by 'financial struggle' instead of financial freedom. AsstPrincipal678 shared that when a child's basic household needs were met, it developed mental wholeness within the individual student. This school leads its research of resourcing with *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* (Pichère & Cadiat, 2015). As AsstPrincipal678 explained, If the tiers of needs are not met, children, teachers, or their parents will not be successful as students, educators, or leaders in their households. Academic equity cannot be achieved or even discussed if needs are not being met on a daily basis. This aligned with the issues of CRT and the wealth gap between non-minority/white and African Americans that have been longstanding and developed issues of economic division and a lack of understanding in the educational experiences of students in urban, impoverished areas (Reeves, 2022).

The paralleled with findings that African American students faced increased percentages of humiliation, academic/social embarrassment, and bias more than any other

race in the education system (National Education Association, 2017). Also, African

Americans had been negatively targeted financially and academically, within the

American systemic culture (Rothstein, 2017; Feagin, 2006). 1OperationsFENG discussed

the importance of assisting parents and how resourcing developed trust between parents

and their children. Many African American parents in urban areas have been scorned by

education systems, and they came to this SGCR charter school hopeful of a better

academic opportunity. DevelopmentDir1 stated the relationships and the educational

progress between the boys and the parents have continually developed in this SGCR

charter school. Everyone is an important part of the mission and vision of this school

community. This academic and social progression has allowed every teacher, student, and

parent to feel they are important to the success of this academic community.

DevelopmentDir1 explained how they have developed a village of care and

concern for all individuals within their school culture: "This is how success can be

continual. Every person (parent, teacher, student, staff member) has become an important

part of the school system. When students don't feel safe, learning blockages are created."

DevelopmentDir1 shared a student doesn't want to learn in an environment where he is

not accepted or cared about. This aligns with research that shows that minority students

are not embraced in non-culturally represented classrooms. These students continually

experience unconscious bias in academic settings (Benson & Fiarman, 2020). This is why

this SGCR school has focused on relationships and building trust that has shown care for

every person involved in this academic community. These results agreed with studies that

cultural diversity in classroom settings created relevancy and inclusivity in their

academic experience (N'Dri Konan, et al., 2010; Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kafele, 2021).

The previous studies embrace the understanding of this SGCR charter school's focus on community, and the importance of everyone being a part of the mission and vision led to the student's success. As this academic community continued and relationships were developed, it created a sense of family and structure for the academic success and social development of their African American male students. Research showed that students that grew up in homes where education is important to parents were both academically and socially successful (Brooks, Jones, and Latten, 2014).

These practices in this SGCR school serve as tools of CRT implementation. Treating students and parents with dignity and respect. This embraces children culturally and financially and develops academic equity for students and assists in developing families socially. This practice enhances the family and student academic experience, helping students to progress academically and socially.

Mentorship as Key to Academic Progression

Mentorship was vital in meeting needs, developing academic interests, and continuance of the educational and social progression of these adolescent African American male students. When these young men were guided and directed by teachers and leaders that shared their culture and gender, it created equity in representation and focus, which progressed these students socially and academically (Young & Young, 2020; Cokley, 2015, Delgado and Stefani, 2017). However, when there was not equal representation of gender or culture it disconnected the individual student from the

learning environment. Many confuse academic equality with the act of children of color attending public schools, which is not the core of academic equity, where all students are given the opportunity to progress the same academically and socially (Kafele, 2021).

1CEO discussed that equity created equal treatment and academic development with all students, no matter their racial or financial backgrounds. This school created avenues of equity for these African American teenage males through the mentorship of African American men that are educated, successful, and understood what these boys needed to thrive in America. CRT implementation means cultural diversity being accepted This statement paralleled with research that showed mentored African American male students had increased test scores, heightened school engagement, and reduced suspension/expulsions (Kunjufu, 2002; Singleton, 2015; Hamar, 2022).

Parent2 is a teacher and a parent of one of the founding students. He viewed mentorship as a key to these boys' overall academic and social progression. Parent2 explained that when boys began 4th grade at the school, they had difficulty understanding the school's student care and mentorship practices. So, mentorship here has served as a key component to what we call '*Active Boy Ingredients'.* Twelve special ingredients that were different yet defined each individual classroom and the scholars in the room. Each class has its own handshake, its own affirmations, and its own significant element that defines its classroom and its individuality.

AsstPrincipal45 discussed how mentorship allowed African American boys to participate in the conversations of classroom structuring and their academic experience. AsstPrincipal45 explained that this school's focus is our boys and their progress as they

navigate through their education, their growth, and through bureaucratic systems that have not been made for their success.

Teacher3 also centers his lessons and academic pedagogy on what the students are interested in learning in his different classes. Each class grade has separate topics but different impactful learning experiences for each grade he teaches. Mentorship allows educators to design a structure representing each student's culture and individuality while enhancing their learning experience. It is a researched fact that African American boys progress when they have cultural and gendered representation in classroom environments (Kafele, 2020).

Teacher3 shared It is a kinship, it is an understanding, it is a freedom these boys have in our school to be themselves, and to learn about themselves through learning their own history, having math problems that reflect their surroundings, and implementing academic tools that allow them to be successful in their learning. Teacher3 continued another key factor of mentorship are the daily integrations of '*Mindfulness*' and *Student and Staff* '*Shout-outs*'. Mindfulness teaches staff to be empathetic and understanding of the students' emotions, while allowing the student to have the emotion but work through the emotion, and still be academically focused.

This parallels with the research that African American men provide instructional, emotional, and social support while displaying positive beliefs in the students they teach, this is not commonly found in the classroom of non-minority/white educators (Young and Young, 2020). This position with CRT implementation when diversity is present in

teaching environments, this mentorship builds student rapport with staff (Delgado and Stefanic, 2012; Jackson, 2008).

1CEO explained Mentorship is not casting students out, because of behaviors it is understanding where the behavior comes from and still acknowledging the child as the behavior gets better and changes. Mentorship with African American boys is celebrating and acknowledging them in all capacities, no matter how large or small. The importance of mentorship and understanding with cultural representation and gender focus equates with the implications and false beliefs of CRT, while non-minority/White representation is heightened in the everyday learning of anthems, curriculum, history, poetry, and language (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Singleton, 2015).

When African American lead the classroom and education experience it develops the character and individuality of each student (Lester, 2019). The mentorship of African American men with African American boys allows these boys to equate power with education. Lester, (2019) Culture and gender focus formed bonds with behaviors and academic and social expectations with minority children.   The model of mentorship and care could be a practice that is part of student support incentives that assist in the academic progress of the school's student culture. CRT implementation of developing programs with cultural focus and gendered mentorship creates the trajectory of academic equity for students (Lester, 2019; Moore et al., 2018; Emdin, 2016). Mentorship is imperative for those students that lack cultural relevancy in education sectors and for those that lack male guidance in single-family households. Developing programs like

these are impactful in creating academic equity and student educational focus for all minority students in school sectors (Singleton, 2015).

The Importance of Student Support and Incentive Programs for Academic Performance

Support of students and incentives that make learning interesting and progressive. Because of the heightened rates of suspensions/expulsions, special education placement, and drop-out rates with African American boys, there must be increased support in academic environments (Dwyer, 2017; Benson and Fiarman, 2020). The results of the study determined that African American teenage boys progress academically and socially when they are supported and have programs implemented where they earn their celebrated achievements. Research evidence shows the continuum in American education sectors being outlined by non-minorities/Whites to propel in education and other sectors dominating with their culture as they have historically (Rothstein, 2017; Seider and Graves, 2020).

1CEO shared that student support and incentives are vital instruments to a student's progress, educational engagement, and academic achievements. These programs are designed for every boy that comes to our campus to be supported with academic rigor that fills any student's individual needs. 1CEO explained this rigor provides students with opportunities to understand who they are and who they can become as scholars. This type of support allows students to be engaged in their academic journey with their vision while positioning them for their future. The findings coincide with CRT implementation that cultural and gender representation in academic settings

empowers and develops educational equity with minority students. This representation also creates academic equality for minority children, especially African American male students (Henfield; 2013; American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Banks and Valentino, 2012).

The other support incentive is student pictures and achievements displayed on school walls continually. These forms of support also represent a celebration of these African American male students. Within the theme of support are celebration practices as these African American boys begin school daily. The celebration of music playing, teachers shaking students' hands, and students being greeted on a red carpet as they enter the school building daily is an important form of support for these African American male students. Since many of them were products of suspensions/ expulsions from other school campuses, as AsstPrincipal456 explained it is important to know the love language for these young African American boys is hugs and celebrating one another is important. Many of these young men have come from school environments and homes where they are not celebrated.

The participant data parallels with CRT implementation and how cultural relevance and diversity in education progressed students academically when their gender and culture were equally represented in school environments (Redfield and Nance, 2016; Palmer and Maramba, 2010). The findings also reiterate the importance of diversity between culture and gender in school and classroom leadership. CRT has become a myth of racial superiority and not the racial equity that happens when CRT tools are

implemented in the school curriculum (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021).

Charter schools and school districts must create different sectors of student celebration, not just 1 month or 1 weekend because of a student's racial identity. Student celebrations should happen every day to embrace student progress, enhance student academic performance, and create bridges of student importance to their academic community. It is imperative that students feel embraced where they are learning because, without students, teachers and educational leaders have no jobs. It is important to understand the importance of the students, instead of the importance of the administrative and classroom leaders (Seider & Graves, 2020; Sowell, 2020).

No-Suspension Policies and the Offering of Hope to Certain Students

The CEO and founders of this SGCR charter school researched and experienced the issues of suspension with African American boys, how hidden traumas were the cause of these students' actions, and how suspensions are to satisfy the needs of the adults. 1Principal stated that over 85% of their student population had been suspended by the time they reached their SGCR charter school. The CEO and founders set this policy so African American male students would be given opportunities to succeed, and not be discarded as they were in previous academic settings. As Teacher2 said in his previous teaching experience, many schools are led by suspension. This statement meant that students felt that no one really cared, so many of the students in his high school before would tell staff or teachers,' You're going to suspend me anyway, so why try to get any grades.'

The results of the study revealed that this strategy for non-expulsion held students accountable for academics, led these young men to better behaviors, and made them feel they mattered within this charter school system. 1CEO explained the reasoning for the no-suspension policy in his school and why this policy is so important to children from diverse and impoverished backgrounds. Problematic behavior that people do not want to see a child's unmet need. Research shows that kids that are expelled are deeply traumatized, they are experiencing trauma, and the trauma is why they are manifesting this behavior and they are Black and male (Hood, 2020). Children manifest emotions in different ways.

CRT implementation would be important because it bridges gaps of cultural diversity and gender focus while developing academic equity for minority students in charter school systems and school districts (Sawchuk, 2021). The findings align with the literature in Chapter 2. There should be more programs and policy implementation that address the emotional and intellectual needs of students attending school systems, so all students can succeed academically and socially. School systems have created quick exits with school suspension, 504 plans, and IEPs (individual education plans), instead of designating antidotes that address the cultural, emotional, and social needs of children in school settings (Lester, 2019).

CRT implementation develops academic equity for students. Every school district should have a staff of classroom and administrative leadership that replicates the student population of the school. This cultural representation and gender focus will hopefully

increase academic progression and develop academic equity so all children from diverse

backgrounds are allowed to progress at the same levels (Sawchuck; 2021; Lester, 2019).

Evidence of Academic Progress and Social Development

The cultural representation and gender focus along with program implementations

and academic structuring that concentrates solely on the needs of the students has

developed a positive impact on the student's overall academic and social progression.

These results reflect studies that African American males progress the educational

trajectory for African American secondary students, when they serve as administrative or

classroom leaders (Smith, 2021; Kafele, 2019). When African American men lead in

classroom and school administrations there is an equal playing field where African

American male students have fair representation to display their intellectualism and not

be shunned for being smart (Edwards, McMillion, and Turner, 2015).

Six parents participating in this study shared the same academic progress with

their child who was presently attending this SGCR charter school. For example, the

pedagogy of mathematics, ELA, and history reflects the culture and community

surroundings of African American male students and teachers. This academic intention

for students to have relevance and be relevant in the classwork helps these young men

become active in their classwork and homework because they feel they matter.

The implementation of high incentives, high achievement, and the continual rigor

in the student expectation has created a community for African American boys to be free

to excel as 87Parent3 explained. 87Parent3 shared this school teaches these young men

how to succeed in all capacities socially and academically, so they will not be afraid to be

successful as Black men. This parallels with CRT that pedagogy and scholarship can be utilized as a valuable unifying force, an organizing tool, and courage for students of color to break the issues of oppression (Crenshaw et. al., 1995). The '*No Expulsion*' policy and the high incentives of a full arcade room and college tour trips, also the seventh-eighth grade international trips serve as high learning incentives for these African American teenage students.

1CEO explained that the outcome for a student will be the implementation of high standards, high structuring, high support, high celebration, and high expectations. The implementation of CRT practices aligns with the importance of CRT and the research evidence that culturally responsive classroom settings create change and impactful development for students from diverse backgrounds (Bertani et al., 2010).

87Parent3 continued since their first report cards; both sons have continuously been on the A/B honor roll. As research shows it is important to implement culturally responsive curriculums and educator training (Bertani et. al., 2010). CRT implementation develops an academic rigor that engages students culturally, intellectually and socially. The CRT implementation would develop academic equity and cultural representation for all students, teachers, and school leadership. All cultures and genders will be represented equally for every student's care and their individual academic and social progression (Bertani, et al., 2010).

Education should represent all genders and cultures, allowing students to be represented freely and fully (Bertani et al., 2010). Culture, gender, and diversity should be equally delegated from the school superintendents, board members, principals,

counselors, teachers, and staff so every student will have equity and equality in their educational experience. Every student can advance academically and socially and see themselves as an equal representation of gender and culture.

CRT implementation develops academic rigor that progresses students academically and socially (Bertani et al.,2010). There should be more focus on those being expelled and pushed back academically. Charter schools and school districts should implement programs that develop and focus on the academic progress and social/emotional issues of those students that are failing academically. There should be practices and procedures that propel every student to have the opportunity to learn and progress to their highest potential. CRT implementation develops a platform of educational equality and academic equity. Allowing students of all ages to be equally represented in culture and gender, allowing him/her the opportunity to learn and succeed individually (Kafele, 2021; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Singleton, 2015).

Limitations of the Study

There were two important sources of limitations in this research study. The first common limitation with interviews and participants can be the sample size in a research investigation (Faber and Fonseca, 2014). Sometimes, sample sizes can be too small or too large, affecting the research findings' emphasis. A small sample size can constrict findings representative of a wider scope of participants within the research focus. The other side of small sample sizes is those sample sizes of participants that are too large. Faber and Fonseca (2014) research stated," Very large samples that exceed the value estimated by sample size calculation present different hurdles. The hurdles can acquire

more financial and human resources than the individual can acquire successfully. As I designed this study and the participants, it was important to choose participant categories from one SGCR charter school system. The other source of limitation with this study was self-selection bias (Christiansen, 2021).

The issue of self-selection bias can be common with the interviewer; it is better when random participants are chosen from a selection of systems that reflect the views of various SGCR charter school systems (Christiansen, 2021). Self-selection bias of one SGCR charter school system may reflect biased beliefs because participants were solely from one charter school community, which does not fully reflect the responses of the participant categories from other SGCR charter schools (administrative and classroom leadership, parents of students, and founders of other SGCR charter school systems). Rounded participant pools could reflect a greater view of SGCR charter school systems and not have the limitation of self-selection bias, because a greater number of participants are utilized to reflect the greater group of SGCR charter schools (Christiansen, 2021).

The final limitation of qualitative research can be the issues of bias that frequent qualitative research and limit true findings because participants frame their ideas and focus where they are most comfortable. Also, the focus on gender and culture can serve as a form of bias in the study, as participants prefer to focus on the importance of their personal feelings and concerns than the overall focus of the RQs (Christiansen, 2014). As previously believed, there were limitations of trustworthiness since I was an African American female researcher discussing gender-focused, cultural representation in a

charter school system. However, there was no hesitancy in gathering participants for the study or bias toward me as a female researcher.

Recommendations

The truth of the marginalization and implicit bias against African American students in public school systems remains an ongoing issue. The arguments for CRT not being implemented in the American classroom are transparent with the lack of cultural representation and non-inclusivity that African American males constantly experience in American public school education. The negative critiques of CRT implementation, the increasing suspension/expulsion rates, the lack of cultural representation, and the gendered focus toward African American males display a disregard for the importance of academic progression and educational care for African American male students. This lack of diversity and gender focus outlines the academic experience for all children from diverse backgrounds. This aligns with the unconscious biases and marginalized practices in education systems (Benson and Fiarman, 2020; Diangelo, 2018).

The first recommendation for charter school systems is to develop a requirement that charter schools have a 50-70% percent of cultural and gendered representation in administrative and classroom leadership. This representation reflects the academic student demographic. Also, educators and administrative staff should be recruited and hired to culturally reflect the student diversity ratio in charter schools and school districts. this will assist with the comprehension of diversity issues with culture and gender in the school community. Research finds evidence that educational hiring practices have not

amended nor changed the academic or cultural gaps in urban American public-school academic settings (Moore Jr. Et al., 2018). 2018).

The second recommendation for charter school systems is the implementation of therapists and mental health professionals that represent the charter school community (teachers, administrative leaders, parents, and students at the school. Additionally, having professionals representing the cultural makeup and gender focuses of the charter school system. There is an empathetic understanding of behaviors and needs when culture and gender are the focus of academic, social, and emotional progression (Lester, 2019).

The third recommendation is for charter school systems to increase the hiring of cultures and genders that reflect their school populations. African American males are slighted in the areas of administrative and classroom leadership (Morris, 2014; Young, J.& Young, J.,2020). African American male students have been targeted with increased percentages of suspensions/expulsions, special education placement (mainly because of behavioral issues), and school truancy (Morris, 2014). When teaching staffs are 85% non-minority/White females and school principals are 80% non-minority/White males, it clearly demonstrates the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the needs of African American male students (Wichman, 2017; Dwyer, 2017). If education is truly focused on students thriving academically and socially, then the group that faces the most adversity must be the group that has representation to progress and change their academic trajectory. Research shows when African American men lead the classroom or school setting; it develops a structure of academic responsibility and accountability with

African American male students (Kafele, 2019). However, the American education system should have equity and equal representation for all students from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Every student must have cultural and gender educational representation to thrive academically and socially (Benson & Fiarman, 2020).

Research shows evidence that African American male teachers and leaders develop cultural normalcy and respect in diverse and non-diverse school environments (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020). It is important not to ignore the past microaggressions of race and develop inclusivity for all students to thrive academically and socially. Hiring African American males and other leaders from diverse cultures would also provide mentorship for African American male students and other students from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, charter schools should implement therapy and training professional developments biweekly that focus on cultural empathy and understanding of the urban trauma students in middle to low-income school districts experience continually. This training would assist classroom teachers and school leaders within these schools and academic communities. Teaching educators to be culturally inclusive and responsive in understanding and developing students academically through the traumas these students face daily (Bertani et.al., 2010). Along with this training, more mental health therapists and social workers should represent the gender-focus and cultural makeup of the students that attend charter school systems. Therapy is a part of this SGCR school structure. Students expelled or suspended should be given therapy to understand the underlying trauma causing their behavior (Cardona and Nies, 2021). Students with continual

behavioral issues and suspension/expulsion should have therapy sessions for parent(s) and child. School therapists/counselors should also represent the gender and culture of the school student population. This does not punish a child for an internal trauma they are experiencing. The student is still involved academically while undergoing therapy to heal their individual trauma (Cardona and Neas, 2021).

Additionally, there should be beginning and end-of-the-day activities for the daily acknowledgments and recognitions for students and staff. No matter how small or large the accomplishment, whether the student is a high or a low achiever, all achievements should be acknowledged and celebrated throughout the entire campus. Many times, disciplinary circumstances and actions become the focus, instead of the accolades and applause of individual achievements. No matter how small or large the accomplishments must be acknowledged for students, teachers, and staff to educationally and socially progress.

Most of all, as the issues of marginalization and implicit bias increase in the classroom atmospheres, it is important that diversity of culture and gender is implemented in the educational experience of every student, especially African American males (Kunjufu, 2002; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017; Moore Jr.et. al., 2018). Their percentages of expulsion/suspension and drop-out rates are the highest in school districts and systems. It is important that every student has equity in their academic experience while being represented historically and culturally in their school curriculum. Representation of non-minority history has been dominant and non-inclusive to the accomplishments of those from diverse backgrounds (Gill, 2008; Lester, 2019). Charter

schools have separated themselves from public education experiences to allow parents and their children to engage in an academic experience that focuses on their child's needs (Sowell, 2020). If charter schools are developed to concentrate on the education and academic progress of children. Then the cultural history and accomplishments should be implemented in students' academic curriculum. By doing this, students are impacted to progress academically and socially.

This progression also reinforces the students' individual abilities to succeed, work hard, and achieve their individual goals. These recommendations design a pathway for academic equity and intellectual freedom for all students. This develops a school culture where there is no dominant race or culture, it develops an academic community where every individual student is equally represented, allowed to learn, and celebrated for their individuality.

Implications

The results of this research study spotlighted the significant role African American male administrative and classroom leaders play in the academic improvement and success of African American male students. For example, when African American men are equally included in the educational leadership there is an equal representation and understanding of the gender and culture of African American teenage male students.

This understanding of culture and gender with the representation of African American males in leadership will possibly decrease the rates of expulsions/suspensions with African American male students (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020). As African American men lead academic experiences in school systems it gives representation and

understanding to those children that come from diverse backgrounds and urban communities. Research confirms that educational hiring practices of teachers and leaders from diverse backgrounds can change the academic and cultural gaps in urban American school settings (Moore Jr. et.al., 2018). As African American male students are given equal representation in the classroom and academic leadership, it is proven that their academic performance improves and their social skills are enhanced (Kafele, 2020).

Additionally, when there is a focus on the skill set of African American male leaders and the instructional, emotional, and social support these educators bring to these diverse academic classrooms. The practices of microaggressions and implicit racial biases that have outlined the hiring and education within American classroom settings must be relinquished. As African American male students experience fairness in representation and academics it will develop numerous opportunities in higher education entry, and other social settings (Kafele, 2020). As African American males become a normalcy in the capacities of administrative and classroom leadership it will benefit the child that is being taught, not the emotions and egos of those that run and outline the American education systems federally or nationally. This increase in the hiring of African American men will also provide opportunities for children in low-income neighborhoods to see themselves rising to another level. Many of these children feel that being educated means *acting white*, so many African American boys disassociate themselves from being smart or educated (Edwards, Mcmillon, and Turner, 2015). As more African American men lead the education experience of African American male students there will be more focus on the importance of being educated and successful. Because it is known that

children learn and lead by the examples set before them (Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016).

Nationally, when African American men lead the administrative and classroom experiences of children from diverse backgrounds they will implement policies that focus on academic improvement, intellectual power, and social change with the educational progress of African American male teenage students. Education systems have been designed by non-minority/white federal and national leaders/systems. Classes, student work, academic focus, and educational needs should be not designed by those in leadership but should be developed for those that are in daily classroom attendance in these school systems (Lester, 2019; Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016).

True leadership does not implement educational policies and classes on their intention and personal focus. Leadership concentrates on the individual needs and academic progressions of the students that attend these school systems. Research shows that culture and understanding are powerful in forming behavior, and social and academic expectations (Lester, 2019). African American teenage boys suffer more than any other culture or race (Morris, 2015). African American male students face more intentional bias, humiliation, and academic/social embarrassment than any other race or gender (National Education Association, 2017). African American men only make up 11% of school superintendents and 10% of principals, while 7% of teachers are of the national average in the classroom (Morris, 2015). To develop true academic change and economic development African American males cannot be excluded or minimized in the American fabric of academic progression and societal change. African American males are

important in education and each man and child should have the opportunity and platform to culturally lead, intellectually teach, and competitively learn. Academic equity For African American males means quality education, where students are not cast out or discarded, but given the opportunities to be understood, not as monoliths, but as individuals that progress, develop, are culturally important, and learn differently from one another.

Conclusion

The findings of this research investigation add to the knowledge that cultural representation and gender focus of African American males in charter school systems enhances the academic experience and develops social change with African American teenage males. This equality in culture and gender focus with African American male students narrows the percentage gaps in testing, college and university acceptance, and educational development with these students exceeding academic achievements with female and non-minority/white peers (Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016). Research has displayed the continual disadvantages of implicit bias, microaggressive practices, and cultural prejudices African American males have faced continually in their experiences of academic leadership and school attendance in the American education system (Morris, 2015; Feagin; 2006; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). The minimal percentages of cultural representation of African American men in the areas of educational leadership and the increased percentages of suspensions/expulsions, special education placement, and school drop-out rates lead to a belief that African American males are not viewed as equal in the American education system. Especially as there are high percentages of non-

minority/white female teachers that lead and non-minority/white male principals/superintendents that outline the education experience for African American males in all sectors (Benson and Fiarman, 2020; Diangelo, 2018).

This research on academic issues has been viewed as the fault of students, instead of the intent of disparity that has been placed on African American males in the American system (Feagin, 2006). This research study sheds light on the importance of charter school systems that are led by African American men and how this leadership develops the academic experience and improves the academic performance of African American male students. This study is also important to understand how cultural representation and gender focus in diverse school communities enhance students' academic progress. This equity with the representation of gender and culture gives students the academic freedom to be themselves and learn individually.

The intentional constraints of bias and discriminatory practices of racism in education have limited the percentages of African American males as educational leaders and academically progressive students (Corra, Carter, and Carter, 2011). The implementation of CRT would develop an awareness of the issues that have plagued education systems in the past and enhance education for all students in the present (Crenshaw, K., et.al., 1995; Delgado and Stefanic, 2017).

Cultural representation and gender focus magnify the education experience for African American teenage males because they are represented and shown concern by teachers, leaders, and mentors (Kafele, 2019; Kafele, 2020). This study shows the importance of being taught from a curriculum that focuses on the cultural experiences

and individual narratives of African American teenage boys, and how this makes them relevant to the academic pedagogy. When African American males lead in the charter school education experience this develops a care and concern for African American male students that is rarely present in traditional public school academic sectors. This reiterates the research that when African American males offer educational structure it propels students academically, especially African American male students (Cokley, 2015).

The research shows that African American male leadership within this SGCR school has amplified the academic experience for their students, teachers, and parents. The founders focus on academic development and healing trauma that plague the education of these young men and their surrounding community to develop an 'academic wholeness' for this student culture. The most captivating truth that was identified from this study was students that who have ongoing behavioral issues and are expelled/suspended from systems are acting out of traumas or unmet needs within their home or community environments (Cardone and Neas, 2021). The most important practice learned from the research study as African American male students are shown love and care. They thrive academically and socially. As they are represented culturally and with gender reflection in leadership, as their needs are met and their traumas are not discarded they improve academically and socially (Young, J. and Young, J., 2020).

Note that CRT aligns with the themes of this study (Delgado and Stefanic, 2016). By implementing CRT, students will experience cultural representation and gender focus in their education experience. Students' historical backgrounds and cultural diversity should be celebrated and equally implemented as important to the American education

thread. Teachers and administrative leaders should be representative of the cultural expression, racial diversities, and genders of the students they teach (Benson and Fiarman, 2020).

Educational leadership in the classroom is important, but the key determinants of students' performance and outcomes are the school administration that navigates strategies, implements structure, and provides academic leadership that channels the success of students' grade development (Day and Simmons, 2016). This study supports evidence that cultural representation and gender focus develop students in charter school environments (Sowell, 2020). Especially when African American males guide the administration and classrooms of African American male students (Kafele, 2020; Hanford, 2017).

This study focused on one SGCR charter school's experiences and how African American men teach adolescent African American male students to embrace power, heal through the issues of trauma, learn their cultural history, and navigate through the everyday experiences of being an African American male in the United States.

This study taught me the importance of cultural diversity, gender reflection, and the importance of including CRT in the American student academic experience. It enhanced my understanding of CRT and how it highlights the lack of diversity in educational leadership, the intention to disregard culture and diversity in academic learning, and the dismissal of the educational history and historic truth of minorities in America (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017). Social change in the American education system must completely dismantle old systems, practices, and narratives. If education is to

progress, change and develop students, there should be a full representation of culture and gender in administrative and classroom leadership, academic policy development, and educational equity development. The focus should not be on those making policies. The focus should be directed at the needs of the students, their parents, teachers, and leaders educating the children (Cardona and Neas, 2021). If we are to create better students and an equitable education experience, our academic systems must learn from leaders of schools that represent culture and diversity while progressing their student culture academically and socially (Sowell, 2020).

This SGCR charter school has created an environment that reflects culture and gender. It is developing societal change and academic progression with students that were deemed unteachable. The founders of this school are not expelling or suspending students; they are choosing to heal students' traumas and progress them academically and socially. Their care for students, teachers, staff, and parents creates societal change, not just educational learning. If academic development is the focus of the American education system, there should be cultural representation in administrative and classroom leadership. There should be equal school funding despite the district. There should be assistance and concern for those that are failing academically. They should not be discarded or expelled. CRT has outlined policies in law, policing, and education (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017). Research shows education is biased, lacking equal representation with students, and increased racism, especially among African American males (Singleton; 2015; Sowell, 2020; Noguera, 2008; Lester, 2019).

The research evidence shows that when students are cared about and their individual needs are met, they progress academically and socially. Education should be a platform that gives equitable representation, equal opportunity, and equal care/concern for students regardless of race. Every student, no matter what race, culture, or gender, should see themselves in academic administration, classroom leadership, and their daily academic pedagogy. This is what social change and academic equity should represent in the American education system.

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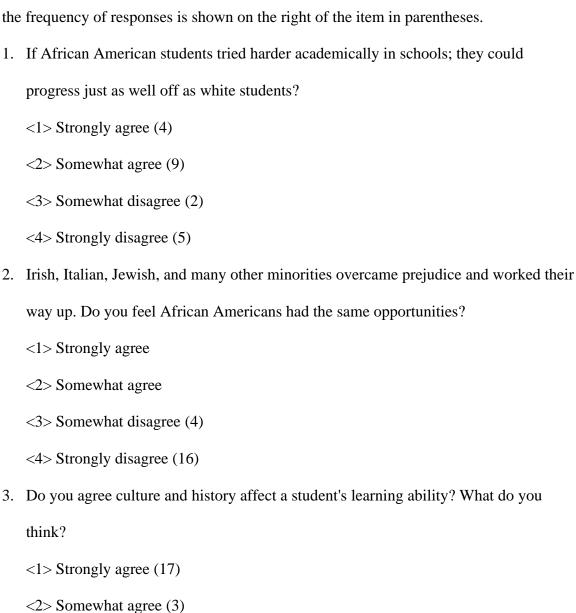Weingarten, R. (2015). Where We Stand: Moving Past Punishment Toward Support.

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Appendix A: Instrument

The instrument contains items from the Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002) and the Bias in Education Scale (Author, 2022). For items with responses, the frequency of responses is shown on the right of the item in parentheses.

1. If African American students tried harder academically in schools; they could progress just as well off as white students?

    <1> Strongly agree (4)

    <2> Somewhat agree (9)

    <3> Somewhat disagree (2)

    <4> Strongly disagree (5)

2. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Do you feel African Americans had the same opportunities?

    <1> Strongly agree

    <2> Somewhat agree

    <3> Somewhat disagree (4)

    <4> Strongly disagree (16)

3. Do you agree culture and history affect a student's learning ability? What do you think?

    <1> Strongly agree (17)

    <2> Somewhat agree (3)

    <3> Strongly disagree

    <4> Somewhat disagree

4. 85% percent of teachers in public school education are white, do you think this causes

    bias in education systems?

    <1> All of it (12)

    <2> Most (7)

    <3> Some (1)

    <4> Not much at all

5. How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States

    education system today, limiting their educational progress to get ahead?

    <1> A lot (19)

    <2> Some (1)

     <3> Just a little

    <4> None

6. Generations of slavery and discriminatory practices in education have created

    conditions that make it difficult for African American males to progress in

    educational leadership (principals, assistant principals, teachers)?

    <1> Strongly agree (16)

    <2> Somewhat agree (4)

    <3> Somewhat disagree

    <4> Strongly disagree

7. Over the past years, African Americans have gotten the opportunity to academically

   progress as white students.

   <1> Strongly agree (l)

   <2> Somewhat agree (8)

   <3> Somewhat disagree (8)

   <4> Strongly disagree (3)

8. Since *Brown vs The Board of Education* do you agree that there is equality in learning

   and education for all students?

   <1> Strongly agree

   <2> Somewhat agree (3)

   <3> Somewhat disagree (2)

   <4> Strongly disagree (15)

9. Are African American male students the cause of issues that lead to the nationally

   increased suspension/expulsion percentages of African American teenage boys in

   public school systems?

   <1> All of it

   <2> Most

   <3> Some (8)

   <4> Not much at all (12)

10. Is there discrimination in federal education procedures and practices that cause academic bias, or is it solely up to the student to succeed?

    <1> Strongly agree (16)

    <2> Somewhat agree (4)

    <3> Somewhat disagree

    <4> Strongly disagree

11. Does gendered cultural representation in education systems better the academic outcome of black teenage males?

    <1> Strongly agree (17)

    <2> Somewhat agree (3)

    <3> Somewhat disagree

    <4> Strongly disagree

12. Is the academic decline of black male students self-imposed or intentional because of historical bias in the United States?

    <1> Strongly agree (12)

    <2> Somewhat agree (7)

    <3> Somewhat disagree

    <4> Strongly disagree (l)

13. Do you believe there is complete equality in the hiring practices with African American males? Do you believe these men have the same opportunities in attaining school leadership positions as non-minorities men?

   <1> Strongly agree (2)

   <2> Somewhat agree

   <3> Strongly disagree (18)

Appendix B: Question Sets for the Semistructured Interviews

I posed different questions from the School Experiences Questionnaire (Wells, 2022) to the different groups of participants.

Question Set A for Group 1: Board Members/Policy Developers and Group 4: Principals/Assistant Principals/Superintendent

1. How important are school practices and procedures in relation to curriculum planning, instructional experiences, and the academic achievements of African American teenage males?

2. How does gender focus and cultural representation influence African American males academically?

3. What differentiates your school from other charter schools that represent gender and culture?

4. What are the 3 differences between SGCR charter school environments and your previous public school environments?

5. What does the term "academic equity" mean to you and how is this incorporated in your SGCR school culture?

6. What are the, if any, differences for African American males in secondary education when gender and culture are the focus of representation in an academic setting?

7. What are the differences in SGCR charter school academic progress and the high rates of suspension/expulsions and dropout rates in various public education sectors?

8. How many suspensions/expulsions/reprimands total and separate have you had this school year?

9. How do you make sure students are culturally important and relevant in the
    classroom, as well as reflect the school climate?

Question Set B for Group 3: Parents of Students Presently Attending This SGCR

Charter School

1. What reason(s), if any, in your child's previous school setting caused you to transition
    to SGCR charter school systems?

2. What are the, if any, differences for African American males in secondary education
    when gender and culture are the focus of representation in an academic setting?

3. What are the differences in the SGCR charter school environment versus previous
    school environments where your child was a student?

4. What causes academic progress in certain school settings and high rates of
    suspension/expulsions and dropout rates with African American teenage boys in other
    settings?

5. What is the difference in the education of African American males and non-minority
    males in the American education system?

6. Are you active in your student's education? If so, how? (Example: Are you on the
    parent–teacher committee, do you volunteer, etc.?

7. Was your mother, father, or both of your parents active in your academic years? How
    did this affect your education and learning?

8. How has your child progressed in this academic environment (academically, socially,
    temperament/ mood?

9. What does the term "academic equity" mean to you? Have you experienced this with your child's education experience?

Question Set C for Group 5: Counselors/Classroom Teachers

1. How does this school make their students feel welcome and they are important?

2. How does cultural representation affect an African American teenage male's academic experience in school?

3. In this SGCR environment do teachers greet students daily and know the names of your students and other students?

4. Do you encourage students to learn and to succeed in school? How does this school encourage students to learn and succeed?

5. Are your students free to express themselves in your classroom setting?

6. Do your principals/teachers/counselors show care concerning the life experiences of students in the classroom and at home?

7. How many suspensions/expulsions/reprimands did you give during your teaching experience at this SGCR school versus previous school systems?

8. How do you make sure students feel culturally important and relevant in the classroom, as well as reflect the school climate?

9. Explain what the term "academic equity" means to you, is it reflective in this education system in comparison to previous school systems you were in?

CONSENT FORM: Parents of Students attending the SGCR charter school

You are invited to take part in a research study about how African American men leading in school administrations and classroom leadership progress the academic and social outcomes of African American teenage males in a charter school system. 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 __7__ volunteers who are Parents of students that currently attend the research site charter school

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Mekole Pfiffer Wells, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to understand how African American male leadership progresses African American teenage boys academically. Researching that culture and gender focus develops the academic progression of African American teenage males.

Procedures:

This study will involve you completing the following steps

The beginning of the interview hour will start by having participants fill out and complete The Symbolic Racism Scale 2000 (SRS2000). Participants will not need to place an identifier on the Symbolic Racism questionnaire. Upon completion of the SRS2000, I reiterate that all audio is confidential and concise so participant responses are not altered or misunderstood when coding the results of the research study. for a second interview, if there are any clarifications needed for the research from his/his/their participant interviews. I will audio record all participant responses to make sure all participant's responses are concise and accurate for data collection and precise research analysis. I will ask a variation of questions to my parent participants. A few sample questions are below for participants to review. After the initial interview, if there are any discrepancies with participants' initial interviews, I will email participants for clarification, being considerate of time. The follow-up interview will be via Zoom Link.

If there are any discrepancies with responses after the first interview the researcher will email participants for a follow-up interview to revisit any discrepancies that may have

occurred in the 1st participant interview. The follow-up interview will take no more than 30 minutes, being considerate of the participants' time schedule.

Here are a few sample questions from the research questionnaire. These questions will be asked and all replies will be audio recorded with a coded identifier for participant confidentiality. Participants' names and identities are not needed for this research study.

1) What reason(s), if any, in your child's previous school setting caused you to transition to SGCR charter school systems?

2) What are the, if any, differences for African American males in secondary education when gender and culture are the focus of representation in an academic setting?

3) What causes academic progress in certain school settings and high rates of suspension/expulsions and dropout rates with African American teenage boys in other settings?

After each participant Interviews are complete, research confidentiality will be reiterated and other participant concerns will be addressed. Upon exiting the interview each participant will receive a gift bag that will include(a water bottle, a pack of ballpoint pens, 2 packs of sticky notes, 1 bottle of hand sanitizer, 1 pack of granola bars and a bag of Lays baked potato chips) and an envelope with a $20 dollar Amex gift card.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.

If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study involves minimal risks of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study will pose minimal risk to your well-being.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to understand how African American males leading the academic experience of African

American teenage males develop these young men academically and socially in their life experiences. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by emailing each research participant individually, to share the research findings.

Payment:

Each participant will receive a gift bag that will include(a water bottle, a pack of ballpoint pens, 2 packs of sticky notes,1 bottle of hand sanitizer, 1 pack of granola bars, and a bag of Lays baked potato chips) and a $20 Amex Gift card for his/her participation in the research investigation of my study.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher will not ask for your name at any time or link responses to your contact information or identity for the research investigation. Your personal information will not be used for any purposes outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University. .

I will use the codes to identify participants. For example, Single-gendered, culturally represented (SGCR) identifies the school, African American parents, Age, male, will serve as the identifier of the parent, for example SGCR/AAP/22/M.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions of the researcher by emailing mekole.wells@waldenu.edu or_202-826-2183. 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 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 10-25-22-0249775. It expires on October 24, 2023.

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.