

2019

## Quantitative Comparison of Novice and Veteran Teachers' Cultural Beliefs

Janet Adrienne Riley  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Janet A. Cook Riley

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Glenn Penny, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. JoeAnn Hinrichs, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Kelly Hall, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

The Office of the Provost

Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Quantitative Comparison of Novice and Veteran Teachers' Cultural Beliefs

by

Janet A. Cook Riley

MA, Ball State University, 1978

BS, Ball State University, 1974

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

September 2019

## Abstract

Poor scores on standardized tests on the part of African American students are a problem at an urban high school in the U.S. Midwest. A factor potentially contributing to this problem is that teachers' cultural beliefs may not be well matched to those of students. This gap is important because cultural beliefs have an influence on the academic achievement of students. The cultural mismatch may be reduced as teachers gain experience with students' cultures and diversity, but it is not known the extent to which experience is beneficial in the Midwest urban high school setting. The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional survey study was to compare novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs using the Cultural Awareness Belief Inventory (CABI). Bennett's intercultural sensitivity developmental model was used as the framework to interpret findings. The overarching research question addressed the difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers; there were 28 hypotheses referencing each item on the CABI survey. The sample drawn from a pool of volunteer teachers included 138 novice teachers with less than 5 years of experience and 261 veteran teachers with 5 or more years of experience. Mann Whitney *U* tests were employed as the inferential statistical test to compare differences between the two groups among 28 dependent variables. There was a significant difference in beliefs of novice and veteran teachers relating to classroom management but not in other areas. This study may promote social change by providing school leaders with the understanding that classroom management is associated with different cultural beliefs among novice and veteran teachers. Leaders can use study findings to develop a training program on cultural aspects of classroom management for novice teachers and in-service workshops to enhance cultural teaching practices for veteran teachers.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to the memory of my father and sister. My father, Frank Cook, taught me the true meaning of perseverance and tenacity by demonstrating a strong work ethic, possessing a belief in family, emphasizing the importance of education, and instilling a sense of independence. Because of him, I have obtained the strength and endurance to surpass and overcome what others may deem insurmountable obstacles. He was a strong, impeccable role model in my life. The kindred spirit and helping attitude of my sister, Vanessa Cook, who was a youth probation officer, provided the inspiration to pursue my studies in helping marginalized youths. She always believed I would become a positive role model and mentor. My father and sister encouraged me to pursue my passion of helping others and not let anyone define what I can or cannot do.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank God for giving purpose to my life, which is to seek the wisdom and knowledge needed to uplift and help others through my research study. Also, a thank you goes out to my mother, Edna Cook, who has been my Number One advocate in encouraging me to pursue my dreams and do my best throughout my doctoral pursuit. I would also like to express my gratitude to my brother Frank Cook for his spiritual support, Norman Anderson for sharing my passion on this topic, and Elsie Butler for providing the confidence I needed. Finally, I would like to thank my committee chairpersons, Dr. Richard Penny, for his guidance, patience, support and belief in me, and Dr. JoeAnn Hinrichs, for her encouragement.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The demographic profile of students in the United States is changing, and students of color will soon represent more than one half of total student enrollments in K-12 schools (Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015). For the first time in 2014 students of color outnumbered White students while the majority of teachers remained White (Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015). In addition, White teachers far outnumber African American teachers in U.S. classrooms; more than 40% of U.S. public schools do not have one teacher of color, according to Hrabowski and Sanders (2015). The probability of a student of color having an African American teacher is minimal. Goldenberg (2014) noted that 63 of the 100 major school systems in the United States had a student population in which more than one half were students of color in 2016. These statistics illustrate the fast-changing composition of U.S. K-12 classrooms.

Handling diversity for teachers may be a challenge as their background, prior experience, and personal features may affect their beliefs and actions, which may go unnoticed by teachers (Chiner, Cardona-Molto, & Puerta, 2015). Chiner et al. (2015) further noted that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions can affect their educational actions and that teachers must be prepared to teach all students by not only acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to teach culturally different students, but a belief system that values difference and supports all learners. Being aware of these beliefs may assist teachers in recognizing the importance of cultural diversity in the classroom.

The length of teaching experience of teachers may be a factor in the ability to teach culturally diverse students. Novice teachers may have difficulty discussing culture and race with diverse students; however, despite their nonexperience, novice teachers typically value culturally diverse students (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). Lambeth and Smith (2016) further noted that novice teachers are unsure of how to approach culturally diverse students, usually avoid topics about race and culture, and are unsure of how to lead classroom discussions regarding culture and other critical issues. Novice teachers are able to self-reflect and learn about themselves during the teaching of these students (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). The rationale of this study is there is a central belief that as one's interculturality or length of experience with others who are culturally different, one's cultural competence increases.

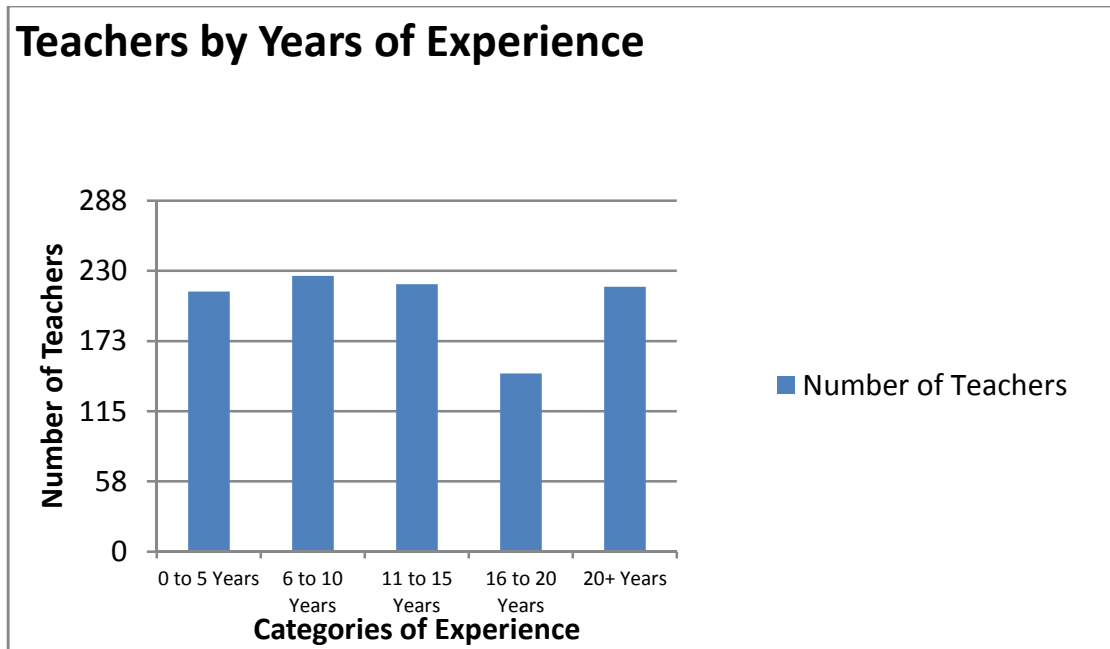
### **Background**

African American students, particularly African American males, face many problems based upon labels formulated in the educational community of teachers and administrators. African American males have been portrayed as devious, criminal, and hypersexualized in mainstream media (Warren, 2015). African American males also face being overrepresented in special education classes. Historically and currently, minority children have been overrepresented in the U.S. special education system. Overrepresentation is often considered indicative of children being misidentified as disabled because of their race or ethnicity (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The academic achievement of both African American and European American public school students, as measured, has improved across time; however, the gap in the academic

success between these two student groups persists, and African American students generally score lower than European American students (Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, & Chan, 2015). Warren (2015) further noted that educating African American students in today's schools will require knowledge of the historical, environmental, and social contexts that influence the way African American students experience school.

The local study school district has a student population of 12,913 students. Most of the students are African American or Hispanic. The student population consists of 42.1% European American students, 33.2% Hispanic students, 15.6% African American students, 7.9% multiracial students, and 1.1% Asian students (Indiana Department of Education, 2016).

In 2018 there were 1,021 teachers in the school district; 90.5% of teachers are Caucasian, 5.4% are African American, 2.5% are Hispanic, 0.7% are multiracial, 0.5% are American Indian, 0.4% are Asian, and 0.1% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Figure 1 shows the teachers in the school district grouped by experience in five categories. There were almost three times as many veteran teachers as there were novice teachers; veteran teachers are those who have 6 or more years of experience. This finding indicates that the school district is composed mainly of teachers who have experience in teaching African American students with a significant number of teachers in the 20+-year category. Teachers with a longer tenure, thus, should have a higher likelihood of teaching and interacting with African American students.



*Figure 1.* Number of teachers by years of experience. The data in the bar graph are from the Indiana Department of Education (2016).

### **Problem Statement**

Demographic differences can create a significant social and cultural gap between teachers and students. A lack of cultural awareness among teachers can create beliefs about African American students that may contribute to a teacher-student cultural gap. These beliefs of teachers about students may lead to different expectations and treatment which may further lead to the poor academic performance of students who are culturally different from their teachers (Sandell & Tupy, 2016). Data from the high school under study revealed that African American males were the lowest academically performing subgroup. Specifically, African American males performed at a level of 64.7% proficiency while their European American male counterparts performed at a level of



88% proficiency. Evidence such as this may contribute to the beliefs of teachers to hold lower expectations of their African American male students.

A possible contributor to this problem is that there may be a mismatch between the cultural beliefs of teachers in this district and the diverse makeup of the student body, according to the district. District leaders recognize the importance of cultural awareness and the role it plays in assisting teachers to be effective in serving all students; however, they struggle with how to assess cultural awareness among teachers and how to implement a program by which staff can become culturally competent educators, according to the report.

The knowledge, behavior, and attitudes teachers possess toward students, particularly students who are culturally different from them, influence their teaching practices and the learning environment (Sandell & Tupy, 2016). Sandell and Tupy (2016) further noted that novice European American teachers often have little personal experience, knowledge, or understanding of African American students. The lack of experience, knowledge, or understanding among teachers might hinder the common ground needed to develop meaningful relationships with African American students. Without intervention, teachers may inadvertently stereotype students and respond to them in an oppressive manner. Many teachers, who are mainly European American and middle class, often enter teaching with ethnic, racial, or class prejudices about which they are incognizant (Ford, Stuart, & Vakil, 2015). In contrast, veteran teachers may gain a stronger appreciation of cultural diversity through their interactions with students during their teaching tenure and provide differentiated teaching to fit the cultural styles of all

students (Ford et al., 2015). Therefore the mismatch between the student demographics in the diverse school in this study and the cultural competency of its teachers may be reduced as teachers gain experience with the students' cultures and diversity. However, the extent to which experience is beneficial in this setting or how the effect of experience might be accelerated was not known, per the district's 2015 Equity & Inclusion Committee Report.

### **Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative comparative cross-sectional study was to provide a numerical examination of beliefs of a population by studying a sample of that population. I compared the cultural beliefs of two groups of teachers, novice and veteran. According to Lopes-Murphy and Murphy (2017), when teachers can make a transition from traditional classroom practices to those that value the cultural differences of their students, they are considered to be culturally competent teachers.

This study involved a cross-sectional survey in which data were collected at one time point. Creswell (2013) noted that survey research includes longitudinal and cross-sectional studies in which questionnaires are used for data collection so that the data can be generalized from a sample to a population. I concluded that a survey was the best research design as it allowed data to be collected from a large group of respondents and provided a rapid turnaround in responses. I administered the Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory (CABI) survey (Natesan, Webb-Hasan, Carter, & Walter, 2012). online. The inventory, sample selection, and data collection and analysis procedures are

described in detail in Section 3 of this study. The individual survey items are presented in Appendix C.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question for this study was, Is there a difference in the cultural belief system between novice and veteran teachers as it relates to 28 items on the CABI survey? Subresearch questions relating to the 28 items on the CABI survey and corresponding null and alternative hypotheses follow.

1. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as “acting White”?

*H<sub>0</sub>1*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers’ cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as “acting White.”

*H<sub>A</sub>1*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers’ cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as “acting White.”

2. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students?

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students.

$H_{A2}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students.

3. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students?

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.

$H_{A3}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.

4. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach?

$H_{04}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach.

$H_{A4}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach.

5. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers?

*H<sub>0</sub>5*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.

*H<sub>A</sub>5*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.

6. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues?

*H<sub>0</sub>6*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues.

*H<sub>A</sub>6*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues.

7. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at their Intermediate School District (ISD)?

*H<sub>0</sub>7*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at their ISD.

*H<sub>A</sub>7*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at their ISD.

8. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline?

*H<sub>0</sub>8*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.

*H<sub>A</sub>8*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.

9. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management?

*H<sub>0</sub>9*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.

*H<sub>A</sub>9*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom.

10. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups?

$H_010$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.

$H_A10$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.

11. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that ISD families of African American students are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students?

$H_011$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that ISD families of African American students are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.

$H_A11$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that ISD families of African American students are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.

12. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that ISD families are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students?

$H_012$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that ISD families are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.

$H_A12$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that ISD families are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.

13. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business)?

$H_013$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business).

$H_A13$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business).

14. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status?

$H_014$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.

$H_A14$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.



15. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve?

$H_0$ 15: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve.

$H_A$ 15: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve.

16. Is there difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own?

$H_0$ 16: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own.

$H_A$ 16: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own.

17. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning?

$H_017$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.

$H_A17$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.

18. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving my teaching strategies?

$H_018$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving my teaching strategies.

$H_A18$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving my teaching strategies.

19. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are culturally responsible in my teaching behaviors?

$H_019$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are culturally responsible in their teaching behaviors.

*H<sub>A</sub>19*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are culturally responsible in their teaching behaviors.

20. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of ISD teaching and learning philosophy?

*H<sub>0</sub>20*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of ISD teaching and learning philosophy.

*H<sub>A</sub>20*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of ISD teaching and learning philosophy.

21. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups?

*H<sub>0</sub>21*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups.

*H<sub>A</sub>21*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups.

22. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students?

*H<sub>0</sub>22*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.

*H<sub>A</sub>22*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.

23. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored?

*H<sub>0</sub>23*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.

*H<sub>A</sub>23*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.

24. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences?

*H<sub>0</sub>24*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.

*H<sub>A</sub>24*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.

25. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that some students do not want to learn?

*H<sub>0</sub>25*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that some students do not want to learn.

*H<sub>A</sub>25*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that some students do not want to learn.

26. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure?

*H<sub>0</sub>26*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.

*H<sub>A</sub>26*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.

27. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel?

*H<sub>0</sub>27*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.

*H<sub>A</sub>27*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.

28. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues'?

*H<sub>0</sub>28*: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues'.

*H<sub>A</sub>28*: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues'.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative comparative cross-sectional survey study was to compare novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs using the CABI (Natesan et al., 2012). I examined the cultural beliefs of teachers in an urban school district. I compared cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity is a grounded theory in understanding intercultural sensitivity and will serve as the framework for this study. The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity was created by Bennett to hypothesize a framework for conceptualizing dimensions of intercultural competence and explains the interpretation of cultural difference by people (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Hammer et al. (2003) posited that the concept of the model is based on a constructivist view, which exemplifies the central belief that as one's experience with other cultures grows cultural competency increases. Hammer et al. (2003) further stated individuals who have knowledge of or access to only one culture are unable to experience the difference between their own culture and those who possess a different culture.

This concept explains the reactions or responses that individuals experience when encountering cultural differences in stages from either an ethnocentric or ethnorelative viewpoint (Mellizo, 2017). Mellizo (2017) further added that intercultural sensitivity falls under the category of intercultural competence, which is the ultimate successful behavior when encountering cultural difference. Intercultural competence is one's skill to reason and perform interculturally correct while intercultural sensitivity is one's capability to distinguish, appreciate, and understand cultural differences. Intercultural sensitivity further entails developing a positive emotion regarding cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behavior.

Cultural competence is the action or performance of exhibiting cultural knowledge while intercultural sensitivity is of an experiential nature of cultural

immersion. Hammer et al. (2003) explained that ethnocentrism refers to one's own culture being central and unquestioned while ethnorelativism refers to one's cultural beliefs and behaviors being a part of many other cultures. The three ethnocentric stages range from denial to defense to minimization while the ethnorelative stages range from acceptance to adaptation to integration (Hammer et al. (2003). An ethnocentric viewpoint does not recognize cultural differences, while the ethnorelative viewpoint embraces these differences as well as accepting one's cultural identity. This model was applied in the interpretation of the findings.

The CABI can be interpreted as a measure of cultural awareness and beliefs with respondents scoring in the lower half of the range on survey items displaying ethnocentrism and those responding in the upper half of the range displaying ethnorelativism. The Bennett model therefore can be used as a framework for interpreting and making meaning of the findings of the current study.

### **Operational Definitions**

For purposes of understanding the terminology used in this study, the following definitions are provided. These terms are used throughout the study as factors that both shape one's cultural identity and influence the relationships of interaction with others who share a different culture.

*Colorblindness*: A term that “emphasizes treating all people equally regardless of their background” (Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015, p. 46).



*Cultural awareness*: “Sensitivity to and understanding of another ethnic group that includes changes in attitudes and values and reflect an openness and flexibility when working with others” (Povenmire-Kirk, Bethune, Alverson, & Kahn, 2015, p. 320).

*Cultural capital*: “The belief, knowledge, and sense of self that is closely linked to (a) person and has value in the marketplace of society” (Goldenberg, 2014, p. 116).

*Cultural competence*: “An ability to integrate and translate knowledge about groups of people into attitudes, standards, policies, and practices that increase the quality of services and produce better outcomes” (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015, p. 320).

*Cultural diversity*: “A term used to describe the differences in ethnic or racial classification and self-identification, tribal or clan affiliation, nationality, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, education, religion, spirituality, physical and intellectual abilities, personal appearance, and other facts that distinguish one group or individual from another” (Goode & Jones, 2015, p. 2).

*Cultural gap*: “The theoretical, conceptual, and practical spaces between what learners bring from their communities and what is the cultural norm at schools regarding the values, traditions, customs, and beliefs of dichotomous groups” (Berry & Candis, 2013, p. 46).

*Cultural identity*: “A person’s conscious decision to identify with a particular group or groups; a person’s identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has a shared system of symbols and meanings as well as norms of conduct” (Goode & Jones, 2015, p. 2).

*Cultural knowledge*: “The information derived from experiences, traditions, and social relationships that students and teachers possess, which is directly related to various aspects of identity including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and religion” (Milner, McGee, Pabon, & Woodson, 2013, p. 238).

*Cultural perceptions*: The ability to understand different cultures and to understand social problems (Erbas, 2013, p. 1).

*Cultural sensitivity*: “Knowledge that there are both differences and similarities between and among cultures without placing value on or judging such differences” (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015, p. 320).

*Cultural worldview*: “The set of distinctions that is appropriate to a particular culture” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 423).

*Culture*: “A way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next” (Stanford University, 2018).

*Culture beliefs*: A term that “refers to people’s assumption about the malleability of cultural attributes, such as value endorsement, personality traits, or other deep-seated underlying characteristics” (Chao, Tkeuchi, & Farh, 2017, p. 258).

*Intercultural competence*: “The effective or successful behavior that people exhibit when they encounter cultural difference” (Mellizo, 2017, p. 571).

*Intercultural sensitivity*: “One of several related terms used to describe an individual’s ability to step beyond his or her own culture and function with other

individuals from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds” (Mellizo, 2017, p. 571).

*Interculturality*: “The capacity to recognize, interact, and acknowledge cultural differences to develop significant learning outcomes for all students” (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017, p. 49).

*Race*: A term that “refers to genetic or biologically based similarities among people, which are distinguishable and unique and function to mark or separate groups of people from one another” (Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 19).

*Self-affirmation*: “A process of asserting personally important values” (Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, & Borman, 2014, p. 110).

*Stereotype*: “A gross generalization applied to a group of people with some level of shared characteristics” (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2013, p. 2).

*Stereotype threat*: “Anxiety or stress triggered by the fear that one might fulfill or be associated with a relevant stereotype” (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2013, p.383).

### **Assumptions**

I made five assumptions for this study. First, I assumed that culture is essential to teaching and learning and that the terms *culture* and *environment* are often used similarly. Second, I assumed that teachers in the study would know and be honest about their beliefs about cultural awareness. A third assumption was that novice and veteran teachers bring different experiences into the classroom and may have different beliefs. A fourth assumption was that those teachers’ beliefs toward diverse students have a significant

impact on student achievement. Finally, I assumed that the CABI survey (Natesan et al., 2012) measures cultural beliefs.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This study is delimited in scope in several ways:

1. Setting and sample: The study is delimited to measuring beliefs of teachers in one school in the Midwest. I delimited the setting because my goal is to understand the local setting to possibly affect social change in the local setting.

2. Theory: The study is delimited to applying one theory of cultural awareness. The researcher delimited the study to Bennett's theory because this theory depicts the stages of cultural beliefs from an ethnocentric and ethnorelative viewpoint of constructing beliefs, which is a form of measurement that this study seeks.

3. Teacher experience: The study is delimited in scope to comparing teacher experience. Other factors are relevant to cultural awareness and beliefs, but experience was selected by the researcher as a potentially relevant factor to be studied.

### **Limitations**

The study is limited in several ways:

1. The study is bounded by the cultural climate of the school as the school has limited resources in obtaining cultural knowledge about oneself and of others.

2. Web surveys have a primary limitation that may entail two challenging objectives. One of the primary challenges is to gather data in a significant quantity so data can be used to yield complicated, interrelated results and the second goal is to plan an instrument which will retain the attention of users enough to complete the survey

(Lauer, McLeod, & Blythe, 2013). Lauer et al. (2013) further added that *survey fatigue* is a common problem in the survey literature.

3. The teaching staff in the school district was encouraged to participate in an online web survey. Participants were asked to volunteer in the survey, which is strictly voluntary. As it is voluntary, the response rate may be low and email delivery as to its existence may prove to be ineffective.

4. Use of one instrument to measure cultural awareness beliefs. Other instruments were available. The researcher chose the CABI because the CABI was shown to measure what it was supposed to measure (Natesan et al., 2012).

5. Survey method: Surveys limit data to numeric responses of pre-determined questions and categories. Other types of data could have been selected. I chose the CABI survey because of the efficiency of data collection from a large number of people (Creswell, 2014).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was potentially a unique contribution to the importance of developing beliefs that support learning for all students. It added to the literature as to what role teaching experience plays in developing a positive belief system through years of experience by comparing the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers. This study assisted in understanding the difference of cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers and how their beliefs affect their relationship with diverse students

This study was significant in that it contributed to the importance for teachers to identify and understand that their cultural perceptions are shaped by their social

background, personal experiences, and years of teaching experience and that their cultural perceptions may unconsciously determine educational responses that impact the academic achievement of students who may be culturally different. Identification of teacher beliefs may assist teachers in becoming aware of their cultural perceptions, valuing cultural differences, overcoming the barriers that prevent African American students from experiencing equal academic opportunities, and producing positive changes for African American students academically.

This study contributed to the understanding of cultural awareness between novice and veteran teachers and the importance of interculturality or teaching experience in building positive, caring relationships with culturally diverse students. The findings assisted teachers in determining if experience or immersion into a culture different from the teacher's culture shapes their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs toward their African American students and guides their teaching practices for culturally diverse students. All school districts can use this study to develop professional development programs for training novice teachers as a first-year cultural training program and to enhance teaching practices for veteran teachers. State educators can benefit from this study in developing curriculum and state standards that would specifically address the needs of underserved culturally diverse students to improve these students' cultural self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and academic achievement. This study aided teachers in understanding how awareness of cultural differences can play a major role in building positive beliefs, appreciating and developing positive relationships between teachers and students, and how becoming culturally competent can equip teachers in developing the attitude needed

to develop the skills and practices needed to narrow the gap of achievement between African American and Caucasian students.

### **Summary**

Section 1 identified the problem under investigation and provided a background from which the problem arose. A framework was outlined that links the study to the local problem. The rationale for the study and the significance as it applies to the local problem was presented as well as the study's potential to bring social change in the form of professional development regarding cultural awareness and sensitivity. The assumptions were presented as they relate to teachers' beliefs, teaching experience, and the affect the teachers' beliefs and years of teaching experience have on African American student achievement. A significant assumption for this study is that novice and veteran teachers bring different experiences into the classroom and may have different beliefs. This study was delimited to measuring beliefs of teachers in one school in the Midwest and to applying Bennett's theory of cultural awareness because this theory depicts the stages of cultural beliefs from an ethnocentric and ethnorelative viewpoint of constructing beliefs, which is a form of measurement that this study seeks. This study was also delimited in scope to comparing teacher experience with the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This quantitative comparative cross-sectional survey study will examine novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs. It will demonstrate whether there is a measured difference in the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers. The cultural beliefs of teachers were explored as to the role it plays in the classroom and how it relates to providing the educational needs of a diverse student population. The literature review provides a review of the level of teaching experience as being novice or veteran teachers and how it relates to the social constructs of culture, cultural capital, and cultural difference; teachers' beliefs, efficacy, attitudes, and cultural identity. Implicit bias, stereotype threat, and colorblindness are also discussed. The literature review discusses all aspects of cultural diversity such as the definition of culture, cultural gap, cultural capital, cultural differences; teacher efficacy, teachers' beliefs and attitudes, cultural barriers, and how cultural identity relates to interaction with others who are culturally different. Cultural barriers such as colorblindness, deficit thinking, implicit bias, and stereotype threat were discussed in assisting with understanding cultural differences. Because little research was available regarding novice teachers' cultural beliefs toward students, pre-service teachers' beliefs were researched. There is very little literature discussing how experience in the field of teaching culturally different students promotes interculturality or the ability to understand one's culture as well as the culture of others. For clarity, the terms *African American* and *students of color* will be used interchangeably throughout the study. Pre-service will be used interchangeably for novice as well as in-service for veteran.



### **Literature Search Strategy**

The key resources for this review were current (2013-2018) peer-reviewed journal articles from the EBSCOhost search engine and other online research databases such as SAGE, ERIC, and ProQuest. Key search terms included *cultural diversity*, *African American students*, *cultural gap*, *novice (pre-service) and veteran (in-service) teachers*, *cultural proficiency*, *interculturality*, *achievement gap*, *stereotype*, and *colorblindness*. I reached saturation after reviewing over 75 research articles regarding cultural beliefs of teachers. Saturation is the point at which additional information will not lead to finding any additional data as it relates to the research questions (Lowe, Norris, & Farris, 2018).

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

The following literature review discusses the key concept of interculturality as it relates components of culture such as cultural awareness, cultural capital and cultural difference, and cultural identity. Key concepts related to the role teachers play in educating diverse students were also examined as the literature review delves into the teacher efficiency of novice and experienced teachers pertaining to awareness, cultural, knowledge, and cultural identity of what it takes to become culturally competent. Teachers' beliefs and how they are derived were examined in this literature review. Teachers' professional and cultural experience, culture and the cultural gap, the cultural gap and cultural capital, teachers' efficacy, teachers' beliefs, teachers' attitudes, cultural barriers, and cultural identity are reviewed.

### **Teachers' Professional and Cultural Experience**

While there is very little literature on the effect that experience has on the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers, it is an important topic to investigate. As a teacher gains cultural experience in working with culturally diverse students, teachers become more aware of their culture identity and that their cultural beliefs may produce positive outcomes (Wyatt, 2017). Wyatt further noted that gaining experience through community-based immersion experience with other cultures is helpful in understanding one's societal position and developing a practice of reflection. Lopes-Murphy and Murphy (2017) concluded that cross-cultural experiences were positively linked to cultural competence. Lopes-Murphy and Murphy further explained the reason for the difference in scores between the two locations of the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest is that the diversity is greater in the states located in the Mid-Atlantic location than the states located in the Midwest promoting greater opportunities for interculturality or cross-cultural experiences. These results suggested that cross-cultural experiences affect cultural competence directly, whereas the effect of location is indirect (Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2017).

Researchers have discovered that there are significant differences in professional beliefs depending on teaching experience. A study by Chiner et al. (2015) revealed a significant difference in a comparison of teachers in various stages of professional experience. Teachers with no experience reported a higher tolerance for diversity than the rest of the three groups ranging from one to six years of experience, seven to 14 years of experience, and 15 or more years. As the number of professional years increased, the

significant difference increased revealing that the 15 or more group was significantly less tolerance for diversity than the other groups. Regarding personal beliefs between the groups, no significant differences were found.

Some researchers argued that as the level of experience of interacting with culturally diverse students increases teachers' beliefs may change before and after the intercultural experience. Studies indicated that teachers were moved from a sense of caution in interacting with culturally diverse students to becoming comfortable. Lambeth and Smith (2016) conducted a qualitative study where 21 pre-service teachers or novice teachers in two master of teaching cohorts were interviewed about their cultural beliefs in teaching culturally diverse students before and after their practicum classes. The interview questions were designed to determine their perception of teaching culturally diverse students. Based on their evaluations of the novice teachers after the practicum classes and field experience the findings revealed that the novice teachers believed that they were more culturally responsive in teaching by the end of their field experience. Other findings were that novice teacher recognized that being culturally responsive was important; however, they appeared to disregard the idea that culture and race are socially constructed and were more concerned with practical teaching strategies. Novice teachers were also concerned about their role as educators performing as the caring Caucasian teacher in a learning environment with a large enrollment of African American students; however, data from the study indicated that through classroom experience and discussions about racial issues, teachers became comfortable and students were empowered.

In a study similar to the current report it was found that there is no considerable difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs. The cultural beliefs of pre-service teachers where of the 68 participants 52.9% were teachers with less than one year of experience and 47.1% were teachers with more than one year experience were analyzed using the CABI survey (Boudreaux, 2016). Whether they were novice or veteran teachers most respondents nearly 80% indicated a non-stereotypical view of African American students. The response to experiencing a struggle in engaging African American families in the education of African Americans students yielded a lower response with 49% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing and a little over a half 50.8% strongly agreeing or agreeing. The current study is much needed, as there is only one similar study that compares the interculturality or cultural beliefs of teachers with less than one year of teaching experience with teachers who have more than one year of teaching experience (Natesan et al., 2012).

It is evident that when novice teachers reflect on cultural competence or the ability to teach culturally diverse students the cultural experience of the teacher and other socio-demographics are factors in their beliefs and perceptions (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). The following socio-demographic factors such as culture, colorblindness, implicit bias, and cultural identity may be factors in shaping teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward their African American students. A detailed explanation of these socio-demographic factors and how these factors affect the cultural awareness and beliefs of novice and/or veteran teachers toward African American students follows.

## **Culture and the Cultural Gap**

**Culture.** It is important to understand the meaning of culture as it relates to education. Goldenberg (2014) offered several definitions as a sense of belonging people acquired as a result of being part of a specific group and that part of behavior that others share; culture refers to sets of beliefs, knowledge, and ideas consciously and unconsciously which are spread through learning and teaching. According to Gunay (2016) culture is defined as the common characteristics which distinguish a group from another group. Gunay further noted that culture consists of two levels—visible entailing language, artifacts, behavior, food, fashion and other visible terms; and invisible which consists of values, norms, and beliefs. Goldenberg further added that individuals as well as institutions such as schools have culture and that its indefinable aspects which shape attitudes and behaviors of teachers and students in diverse schools is critically important in the field of education or in other words culture does matter in diverse schools.

It is imperative for teachers to be conscious of their own culture, the culture of others, student cultural values, and how those cultures may differ especially as it pertains to students of color. Culture binds people and defines them because of a common identity based on their unique languages, beliefs, traditions, values, and practices (Berry & Candis, 2013).

**Cultural gap.** The U.S. population is expected to increase from 310 million to 439 million between 2010 and 2050; within this projected group, minorities will become the numerical majority of the population less than 18 years in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Of this minority, the African American population will increase by 29% (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2010). Given these statistics, it is important to study the intercultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers in teaching students who are culturally different and assist teachers in understanding how to become culturally competent. Understanding and defining what may be a cultural gap between teachers and culturally diverse students may assist in closing the gap.

A cultural gap is defined as a space between one's culture (beliefs, customs, values, traditions, etc.) and the communities from which they belong and schooling organizations (Berry & Candis, 2013). Given the increasing number of Caucasian teachers, mostly female teachers, school history and its notion of assimilation; African American students may be facing what is called a cultural gap whereas the cultural experiences which are the events of a specific group with shared beliefs, customs, languages, practices, traditions, and values may be different from the teaching force (Berry & Candis, 2013). Berry and Candis further suggested that these teachers who often hold ethnocentric beliefs that adversely affect the academic experiences of students who are different from them deny role models to non-Caucasian students. The gap in student-teacher diversity, which is also known as a demographic gap, is prominent and has become an issue for both educators and parents (Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015). Goldenberg (2014) noted of the 100 major school systems in the United States 63% of them have an enrollment where more than one half of the student population are students of color and that this changing school demographics show that Caucasian teachers in current classrooms will discover themselves with students who are culturally different.

The demographic gap has drawn attention because of the increasing number of culturally diverse students and the consistent high percentage of Caucasian teachers.

Demographics suggest African American children will probably be taught by Caucasian teachers and that these teachers will persist in being the principal schooling facilitator for all students resulting in a cultural mismatch (Fasching-Varner, 2013). Over the past decades, public schools have become more culturally diverse widening the cultural divide particularly between novice teachers and students because novice teachers are unprepared to teach in a school where the students' life experiences are different from their own (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). Lambeth and Smith argued not only are teachers' beliefs influenced by social class, ethnicity, and race; but the beliefs, expectations and behaviors of teachers help to maintain, and even to expand the gap of African American-Caucasian test scores.

Research shows that there is a gap that exists socially and culturally between students and teachers that suggest that teachers' beliefs about their students lead to different expectations of culturally diverse students resulting in poor performance in public education (Sandell & Tupy, 2016). Teachers who are mindful and responsive to the cultural experiences and cultural identities of their students will have students who are less likely to experience a cultural gap identity crisis (Berry & Candis, 2013). Schools are not attending to the cultural differences between teachers and students or between students when trying to deal with this achievement gap. According to Carey (2014) educational stakeholders hold narrow-minded perspectives about the role of schools in

best educating all children, while ignoring the cultural and social issues in their public education reform efforts.

According to Smolcic and Katunich (2017) the two methods to tackle the cultural gap between teachers and students are developing a cultural knowledge base for novice teachers and recruit more racially and culturally diverse teachers. Smolcic and Katunich further noted that for Caucasian teachers having teachers obtain community-based immersion experiences along with classroom practice could dispose of deficit thinking and assist in developing the skills needed to interact with culturally different students.

### **Cultural Awareness and Cultural Knowledge**

Teachers need to have the awareness, skills, and knowledge to develop a connection with students who are culturally different and to believe that their ability to teach African American students is just as important as their quality of teaching. A culturally efficacious teacher combines a high positive teaching efficacy with sociocultural competence, and can effectively instruct culturally diverse students (Moseley, Bilica, Wandless, & Gdovin, 2014). Teacher efficacy is heightened when teachers are critically conscious of their own culture and how it shapes their behaviors and attitudes in the classroom, and are willing to understand and accept culturally diverse students (Ford et al., 2015). According to Ford et al. (2015), teachers who critically analyzed and evaluated their cultural values and beliefs were more likely to reduce negative beliefs.

Few studies have investigated the relationship between successful cultural teaching practices and teachers' beliefs in their own efficacy (Moseley et al., 2014). In



addition to possessing a high level of teaching efficacy, teachers need to obtain cultural competence to interact with effectively with diverse students. Nadan, Weinberg-Kurnik, and Ben-Ari (2015) explained that cultural competence is composed of three major elements: cultural awareness—referring a self-consciousness of one’s own cultural attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, social status, power associations, and values; knowledge—the information required usually regarding a particular cultural or ethnic group; and skills as the capability to combine consciousness with information in teaching. These three elements can promote teacher effectiveness in interacting and teaching culturally diverse students. According to Smolcic and Katunich (2017) an essential of cultural immersion experience are cultural knowledge and the awareness of cultural ways, differences, and similarities.

**Cultural Awareness.** Awareness of cultural differences in the classroom is the first step in becoming an effective teacher of culturally diverse students. Many teachers are unaware of their own cultural identity and that of their students. The majority of teachers in U.S. schools is English, middle-class, and is culturally different from their students, and hold ethnocentric beliefs that may create a cultural dissonance between minority students and teachers (Lewis Chiu et al., 2017).

Some teachers fail to recognize the cultural differences that exist between themselves and students, the different learning styles of students, and the teaching practices needed for culturally diverse students to learn. Ford et al. (2015) explained that teachers in the U.S. often prefer to assume colorblindness in the classroom, teaching all students in the same manner because of a strong resistance to acknowledging cultural

differences in the United States. Such failure to acknowledge cultural differences has led to deficit thinking; that is, teachers come to have lower expectations and negative beliefs of culturally diverse students—based on their learning differences rather than their cognitive abilities (Ford et al., 2015).

Teachers can enhance their cultural awareness by critically analyzing their values and beliefs. As teachers significantly self-reflect their attitudes and biases about culturally diverse students, they help create a consciousness that enables them to recognize their assumptions and their role in the inequitable student outcomes (Ford et al., 2015). Self-reflection can assist in understanding the differences in the cultural values and beliefs of teachers and culturally diverse students.

**Cultural Knowledge.** Theory and research have acknowledged a need for knowledge about culture as it relates to the information derived from the traditions, experiences, and socialization of students and teachers, including their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and religion (Milner et al., 2013). Teachers should obtain cultural knowledge to become effective teachers of diverse students. According to Milner et al. (2013), cultural knowledge is a crucial element of supporting the ability to interact with students and develop the methodology needed for diverse students. The authors further noted that cultural knowledge provides a foundation on which to build the ability to transform teachers' practices to one which serves all students (Milner et al., 2013).

Preservice teachers fall into what are the label of familiarity pitfall and an apprenticeship of observation because of their partial understanding of cultural diversity. Miretzky (2017) defined familiarity pitfall as the preservice teachers' image that the way

they experienced school is the way their future students will experience school and apprentice of observation as the image pre-service teachers created as to what a teacher acts and looks like while they were in school. Caucasian teachers should seek to understand the background of culturally diverse students. It is probably a good practice for a teacher to learn about the students' background and incorporate it into their curriculum (Ford et al., 2015).

Culturally competent teachers should seek the knowledge needed to bridge the gap by studying the culture of students who do not share their own culture. To avoid teaching blindly, it was noted that the teacher's duty to collect facts and study students of other cultures so that they can address learning styles, habits, backgrounds, and motivations that are different from the norm and to avoid teaching blindly.

Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah, and Ringlaben (2015) investigated 80 preservice teachers about their beliefs toward culturally diverse students. The study showed that preservice teachers are extremely sensitive to the trials culturally diverse students encounter in the classroom. Findings suggested that preservice teachers are willing to study and to be aware of multiculturalism for them to teach with ease. Preservice teachers demonstrated significant understanding about the necessity to encompass multicultural education as future teacher educators. Before becoming professional teachers, preservice teachers' awareness and knowledge of multicultural education varied subject to their experience as well as their cultural bonds.

### **Cultural Gap and Cultural Capital**

An increase of students of color and the majority of teachers being Caucasian may create a cultural diversity gap. The probability of a student of color having an African American teacher to serve as a role model is minimal. According to Lambeth and Smith (2016), important is for teachers to recognize the need to attain new knowledge and skills to ensure that they are prepared to teach all students effectively as schools become more diverse. In an attempt to close the cultural gap educators should not concentrate on alleged gaps between students but on the cultural diversity gap that takes place in schools by having teachers reject colorblindness, the myth of meritocracy, deficit thinking; and instead embrace and understand the cultural capital which culturally diverse students add to the classroom (Carey, 2014).

Cultural capital describes one's self-awareness, beliefs, and knowledge that is connected closely to an individual and has societal importance (Goldenberg, 2014). Since school is an important social venue for students, culture and the cultural capital of a student cannot be overlooked or avoided, especially in the classroom. Goldenberg (2014) suggested that cultural transmissions and reflections are unavoidable for everyone, since cultural values and upbringing are reflected in the way people think, act, and talk. Teachers cannot overlook students' cultural capital brought into the classroom. African-American students' low performance in academics has become the primary focus of educators and has been used to describe the disparity between them and their Caucasian counterparts. Worrell (2014) explained that early literature on educational disparities regarding African-American students' lower academic performance and Caucasian

students focused primarily on the genetics of IQ and the cultural differences between the two cultures. Worrell further noted that there is a cultural disparity between the culture African American students bring from home and their learning styles from that of the school culture.

According to cultural capital theory, Caucasian students possess the dominant cultural capital, that the cultural capital of African American students is seen by Caucasian educators as deficient, and that students of color are thought of by Caucasian teachers as lacking cultural capital (Goldenberg, 2014). Goldenberg (2014) indicated that the cultural capital theory has been underexamined in teaching and learning inside the classroom. Emphasis placed on the classroom environment teachers have created and the school culture, rather than the disparity between African American students and Caucasian students, would ensue cultural capital and value diverse students. Vital is for educators to develop cultural awareness and effective practices to teach across cultural differences and understand the cultural capital of young learners so that the beliefs of teachers can move away from a possible deficit belief toward children of color to viewing students as cultural assets (Sykes, 2018). Sykes (2018) further stated an ultimate approach to understanding the cultural capital of diverse students is to recognize that cultures of students that may be different from one's own culture does not mean that different ways of doing, knowing, communicating, learning, and living is a deficit. African American students bring cultural capital into the classroom to include: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Goldenberg, 2014). Recognizing the different kinds of cultural capital and cultural differences that students

take with them to classroom will assist instructors in their ability to teach diverse students effectively.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of Their Efficacy**

Teachers' perception of efficacy is the confidence of a teacher pertaining to their ability to promote student learning (Moseley et al., 2014). Moulding, Stewart, Stewart, and Dunmeyer (2014) defined self-efficacy as the confidence of teachers in their ability to effectively implement teaching responsibilities. There are two elements of teachers' perception of efficacy called personal self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. The teachers' own self-efficacy reflects on their ability to succeed in certain situations— they may believe in the manner in which they perform a task. For example, they may believe that they can teach and direct students toward understanding. Self-efficacy can influence their expectation of success and the amount of energy and perseverance needed to obtain that success. Teachers' outcome expectancy is their estimate of the outcomes (i.e., performance consequences) of a specific task (Moseley et al., 2014). They may expect a certain outcome, namely, student success, but may not believe that this behavior will be effective in producing that outcome. The literature research of pre-service teachers' beliefs about their strengths and weaknesses regarding teaching culturally diverse students is limited.

It is important for preservice teachers to have a resilient appreciation of self-efficacy to teach all students (Gedzune, 2015). To help pre-service teachers gain a sense of empowerment, field experience and coursework in urban schools should be provided (Colson, Sparks, Berridge, Frimming, & Willis, 2017). Colson et al. (2017) further noted

that when preservice teachers are exposed to field experience and coursework in urban schools, they develop a sense of meaning and belonging, and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession thus promoting quality education for all students. Sandell and Tupy 2016) suggested the cultural plunge where intense exposure to a different culture where majority dominant pre-service teachers are in the minority to promote critical consciousness and cultural understanding.

Teaching efficacy is similar to outcome expectancy; it is also subject-matter or content-specific (Moseley et al., 2014). Teachers may personally believe that they can teach, but they might not possess a high sense of teaching efficiency for students of color, in helping them reach an outcome of academic success. In other words, teacher efficacy is the perception about teacher competency to promote student achievement as an outcome through engaging students to be motivated to learn (Ford et al., 2015). Moseley et al. (2014) conducted a study that examined the link between novice science teachers' teaching efficacy and cultural efficacy in urban schools. The data revealed a recurring theme regarding teacher efficacy as important in creating positive relationships between teachers and students by having positive attitudes toward students and creating learning environments developed by multiculturalism (Moseley et al., 2014).

The study indicated a correlation between cultural efficacy and teaching efficacy through cultural relationships with students. This study also revealed a very strong relationship between the beliefs of teachers in their ability to teach culturally different students and their teaching practices. Moseley et al. (2014) further indicated that when working with students who are culturally different, the beliefs of teachers are openly

related to teaching practices and these practices can cause bias toward these students. If teachers do not feel comfortable or do not believe they can teach diverse students, their practices may lead to a cultural gap in teaching Caucasian and African American students. Teachers who believe in student achievement believe that it can be influenced through skillful instruction. If they truly believe that they can successfully teach all students, and if they have confidence in their own ability, they will assume personal responsibility to make a commitment to do so. This conscious commitment can ultimately produce the beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions needed to promote academic achievement for all students. On the other hand, unconscious teacher attitudes, dispositions, and behavior can be problematic in teaching students from culturally different backgrounds.

A lessened degree of teacher efficacy occurs when bias-based beliefs of colorblindness, racial discomfort, and deficit thinking is present (Fergus, 2017). Fergus further noted that these bias-based beliefs are usually demonstrated in school practices of disproportionate school districts, that the practices and beliefs of teachers operate simultaneously, and that school leaders struggle with trying to address these beliefs. Colorblindness is discussed later in this study.

### **Teacher Interculturality**

The capacities to acknowledge, interrelate, and recognize cultural differences to develop significant learning outcomes for every student is interculturality (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). Smolcic and Katunich asserted that teacher education programs continue to be occupied by middle class Caucasians, middle class who are less likely to



have the experience, knowledge, and cross-cultural background and that field immersion experiences along with classroom practice will assist these teachers in gaining the skills needed to interact with culturally different students. Smolcic and Katunich further suggested that immersion experiences for teachers into other cultures than their own promises positive results as it offers the potential to remove deficit thinking, raise awareness, and create a positive orientation toward others who are culturally different. Little research has been conducted following novice teachers to see what influence cultural immersion or experience has on their attitudes toward teaching culturally different students.

According to Gunay (2016) educators teaching culturally diverse need to be interculturally competent or be able to effectively function in culturally diverse settings by becoming immersed in that culture setting rather than just discussing it. Gunay further noted that in order to become culturally competent or gain cultural awareness teachers should self-reflect their own values and norms; accept the equality of beliefs that are different from one's own beliefs; and convey to culturally diverse students the feeling of being accepted and being non-judgmental. Educators need to become aware of cultural differences and how it affects their diverse students. According to Gay (2013) educators must accept that cultural diversity exists in this country and respect differences without associating them with weaknesses or being patronizing. Gay further noted that education must serve all Americans because everyone does not have the same set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, values, and norms and that one system cannot serve everyone. Every person is unique and brings a different set of values and beliefs into the classroom.

### **Level of Teacher Interculturality Based on Experience**

The level of cultural competence as it intersects teacher experience is important in preparing culturally competent teachers. According to Larson and Bradshaw (2017) teacher experience and other socio-demographics may also be linked with cultural competence. Lopes-Murphy and Murphy (2017) noted if the culturally competency level is low for pre-service teachers, then teacher-education programs need to provide cultural competency training; if the level for in-service teachers is low, both school districts and teacher education programs should enhance these skills; and if teacher-educators' level of competency is low, then training should be provided so that teacher-educators can model cultural competence to their students.

Individuals who are culturally competent are open to other cultures, respect different values and curiosity, want to learn about oneself and others, and are aware of cultural differences (Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2017). Lopes-Murphy and Murphy studied the cultural competency level of three groups of teachers—pre-service, in-service, and teacher-educators to determine their cultural competency level based on location-teacher type group, location, and cross-cultural experiences. Study results revealed that in-service teachers had a greater perception than pre-service teachers regarding cultural competence. The suggested reason for this was because in-service teachers were likely to have more opportunities to interact with diverse students and parents than pre-service teachers. Another result is that Mid-Atlantic in-service teachers scored higher and Midwest pre-service teachers scored the lowest in the location-teacher type category. Based on location alone, Mid-Atlantic average scores were higher than the Midwest

location. Cross-cultural experiences scores exhibited no significance difference among teacher groups for the Midwest location; however, for the Mid-Atlantic location, the differences among teacher groups approached statistical significance.

Cross-cultural experiences directly shape and reinforce understanding and learning of one's culture as well as the culture of others. According to Smolcic and Katunich (2017) direct communication with those who are culturally different in an immersive real-life setting promotes self-awareness and sensitivity and influences critical consciousness of others. Awareness, sensitivity, and critical consciousness are elements needed in understanding others.

### **Teachers' Beliefs**

Teachers' beliefs affect the teaching practices and decisions, behavior, beliefs, and teacher efficacy, behavior, beliefs, and educational practices (Natesan & Kieftenbeld, 2013). Natesan and Kieftenbeld (2013) added that the sole most crucial concept in educational research is teachers' beliefs and that understanding these beliefs about African American students may facilitate in increasing teachers' eagerness to engage in a different environment, improve teacher efficacy, and enhance teaching instruction. Moseley et al. (2014) defined ethnocentric belief as what is true to a person and the beliefs of teachers as influencing teaching practices that may ultimately produce an outcome of unfair and differential treatment for culturally diverse students.

The beliefs of teachers toward African American students is important in its examination. According to Sandell and Tupy (2016) the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge teachers have of students who are culturally different influences teaching and the learning

atmosphere and demographic differences in society creates a cultural gap between teachers and students. Natesan and Kieftenbeld (2013) added that most teachers are European American and that exploring the beliefs of teachers toward African American students is becoming critical because of the hesitation of numerous teachers to teach culturally different students.

Ford et al. (2015) noted that when teachers take time to consider how their own cultural beliefs dictate their classroom instruction, they are more likely to diminish the negative beliefs and be willing to understand and accept culturally diverse students in the classroom. When teachers can include classroom curriculum and instruction based on other cultures as well as their own, they can learn the culture of their culturally diverse students which may assist in understanding other cultures and eliminate negative beliefs. Preservice teachers have egocentric beliefs that is rooted in thinking of oneself and their own experiences. According to Miretzky (2017) preservice teachers' views on teaching are egocentric meaning that one believes that others share the same experiences as he/she does and that preservice teachers also believe in the good student syndrome where they see themselves as successful and believe that teaching their students will be successful as well. There are other unrealistic beliefs shared by pre-service teachers who enter the profession of teaching such as the hero portrayal and the belief that love and a sense of stamina will disrupt the resistance of urban students. Miretzky identified these preservice teachers who believe in the hero portrayal as super-teachers or savior-teachers who go above and beyond normal expectations to rescue students from cruelty, gangs, poverty, and ignorance by using love and stamina to help minority and lower income students

overcome all obstacles and become triumphantly successful. This belief system falls under the category of unrealistic optimism where preservice teachers feel their sense of enjoyment for teaching will endure throughout their profession and that they will not have the problems other teachers have had in controlling and maintaining their classrooms (Miretzky, 2017).

### **Home and Community Support**

Teacher beliefs of parental involvement with the education of their children' may also affect teachers' beliefs of student ability and teachers may believe that parents of Latino and African American students are not adequately engaged in their children's education (Cherng, 2017). Cherng argued that chances are teachers who believe that specific students who have lower academic performance are those who have less educational home support. Based upon findings by Nieto in 1996 teachers have a deficit view of student home support regarding African American parents and believe the absence of parents of African American students in their children's education is valid (Boudreaux, 2016). Boudreaux (2016) conducted a survey study of pre-service teachers using the CABI instrument by Natesan et al. (2012). Two themes evolved: communication with African American parents and an abundance of African American students in special education. Preservice teachers strongly agreed or agreed that African American students referred to special education do not meet the criteria for special education services and slightly over half (50%) agreed that they had difficulty communicating with or getting families of African American students involved in their students' education.

## **Classroom Management**

Ethnic minority students are punished more frequently and suspended from school than ethnic majority students. According to Glock (2017) ethnic minority students received frequent punishment and more negative interaction than their ethnic majority peers and that the differential treatment could not be explained. Glock adds that this differentiation might be the result of teachers' biases according to frequencies of disruptive behavior shown by ethnic minority students and that teachers view the disruptive behavior of ethnic majority students as typical and the same behavior of ethnic minority behavior as atypical or nonconforming. This assumption can become a problem, since it sets minority students up for failure. Teachers from the dominant culture may misinterpret many behaviors displayed by culturally diverse students as behavioral problems rather than as cultural differences, especially those exhibited by African American males. This misinterpretation has resulted in negative outcomes for culturally diverse students. High rates of suspension and dropout rates along with disproportionate numbers in special education have been problematic for culturally diverse students (Ford et al., 2015).

There is a difference in classroom management skills as it relates to years of teaching experience. According to Cherng (2017) veteran teachers with more classroom experience are comfortable in using effective instructional practices than their colleagues who are not as experienced. Cherng further noted that teachers with more experience may have more precise insights of the academic skills of their students based on previous and current achievement than novice teachers. Preservice teachers feel the need to act in an

authoritarian way and feel ill prepared in classroom management and in handling disruptive student behavior. Glock (2017) studied preservice teachers' responses to student misbehavior according to ethnicity of the students were investigated. The results revealed that preservice teachers consistently used more strategies and often harsher ones in disciplining ethnic students than their ethnic majority students (Glock, 2017).

Experienced teachers differ in classroom management skills from pre-service teachers as it relates to the level of teachers' sensitivity. Glock (2017) noted that experienced teachers are less sensitive to the behaviors of disruptive students than pre-service teachers because preservice teachers are younger with more cross-ethnic friendships, grew up in a different more diverse sociocultural environment from their experienced teaching peers with more interaction with ethnic minority peers, and thus possess a lower level of prejudice and tolerance. As it relates to dispensing severe punishment and not processing interventions gradually, preservice teachers are harsher in handling minor disruptions such as talking out loud because of lack of classroom management experience whereas experienced teachers use more milder forms of punishment before resorting to harsher forms of punishment that lead to suspension.

### **Teachers' Attitudes**

Attitudes reveal the negative or positive assessment linked with an object or a social group which may affect how people are judged and perceived (Glock & Karbach, 2015). It is, therefore, important to explore teachers' attitudes toward African American students, as the judgments of teachers might reflect these attitudes. Teachers' attitudes have gone unexamined; despite the fact that these attitudes could be impacting their

relationships with their students and that teachers' beliefs are not in sync with their students (Milner et al., 2013). Attitudes are not static and change depending on the situation or experiences that are encountered. According to Yang and Montgomery (2013) noted that attitudes represent evaluation and emotion of a given topic and changes as one experiences pleasant or unpleasant consequences and that attitudes are reinforced by beliefs which may lead to certain behaviors whether positive or negative. Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward cultural diversity, if they harbor negative attitudes, may restrain their relationship between knowledge and practice by being unwilling to use cultural knowledge in their classroom practicum (Yang & Montgomery, 2013).

Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013) stated novice or pre-service teachers embrace attitudes that are negative toward culturally diverse students who have low-socioeconomic backgrounds which results in lowered student expectations. Banks et al. (2013) further noted that novice teachers often minimize cultural diverse students' academic capabilities when success is attained. Rapid growth in the number of culturally diverse students makes it important for novice teachers to experience opportunities to enhance critical awareness of those who are culturally different by combining field experience within urban settings and multicultural curriculum (Banks et al., 2013).

Kumar, Karabenick, and Burgoon (2015) conducted a study to determine if there was a relationship between the deliberate and reported behaviors of Caucasian teachers and their explicit, conscious attitudes toward minority students. Kumar et al., (2015)'s study indicated that most teachers have very little cross-cultural experience and hide this lack of cross-cultural experience through colorblindness. Implicit attitudes of Caucasian



learners who shared the same cultural group as their teachers were also examined in this study and compared as they related to the teachers' reported behaviors. The findings revealed that teachers' personal beliefs regarding students who did not share their same cultural group were related to their expectations of culturally different students' academic and behavior. If the teachers believed culturally different students were academically challenged, they had low expectations of these students.

Teachers can have cultural deficit attitudes when it is perceived that achievement disparities are because of the culture of the student. The judgment of both novice teachers with limited experience and veteran teachers have been shown to be affected by race demonstrating a possible negative bias against the student's cultural background (Glock & Karbach, 2015). Glock and Karbach (2015) further argued that negative biases in both veteran and preservice teachers might reveal prejudice which is described as attitudes that are negative toward members who belong in social groups.

Glock and Karbach (2015) studied the three measures of Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) and the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to assess the attitudes of preservice teachers. The study tested 65 pre-service teachers regarding their implicit attitudes directed at racial minority students. Both AMP and IAT discovered negative implicit attitudes directed at racial minority students. A higher proportion of pleasing responses was given in the AMP after racial majority pictures were shown than the findings of pleasing responses after racial minority pictures were shown. Stereotypical beliefs that are openly assessed by preservice teachers are more positive when challenged with a misbehaving racial minority student and it has been revealed that these students

are perceived less positively when they are a member of a typical social group or gang (Glock & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2013). In conclusion when preservice teachers are challenged with a racial minority student who confirms to their expectations, they may assume negative implicit attitudes which can possibly lead to adverse judgments, even though the student's academic performance is the same as to that of a racial majority student.

### **Cultural Barriers**

Cultural barriers are impediments that diverse students may encounter and may affect their academic success. African American students, mostly African American males are often faced with repercussion from differences from their culture and that of the school, cultural differences from their teachers, implicit bias, stereotype threat, and colorblindness. An examination of teachers' beliefs in how implicit bias, stereotype threat, and colorblindness may shape the beliefs of teachers is discussed.

**Cultural Differences.** The continuum of cultural competence is a range of responses as they relate to cultural difference. Responses range from cultural destructiveness, which devalues the cultural capital of a culture of people, to cultural proficiency, a response which has high regard for culture (Lewis Chiu et al., 2017). Lewis Chiu et al. (2017) observed that those persons who are culturally proficient explore and make known practices for interacting persons from a background culturally different from their own. Cultural differences should be understood and knowledge of differences should be viewed as beneficial. Lewis Chiu et al. (2017) stated understanding both societal constructs which are systematic and maintain deficit thinking of the nondominant

culture, and critically reflecting on one own's biases and prejudices are first steps of developing consciousness and identity for dealing with differences.

Cultural difference on its own may serve as a major barrier in the classroom, academically and socially. A clash of cultures often unconsciously happens in the classroom between the homes of low-income students of color and their mostly Caucasian middle class teachers (Goldenberg, 2014). Cultural differences should not be treated as being inferior or as a deficit. The cultural difference theory discusses cultural deficiency in a manner that would be acceptable to people of the dominant culture. According to Goldenberg the dominant culture references the mainstream system and the ideas and social practices widely accepted and frequently based on the group with the most power which are Caucasian Americans and nondominant culture where people of color are not dominant group members. Cultural difference has been a popular theme in the literature for the past 25 years and serves as an explanation for why children do poorly in school when their home culture differs from the dominant culture (Castagno, 2013).

Castagno further noted that if the culture of the student matches the dominant culture in school, the student is likely to be successful in school; those whose culture differs from the school culture are prone to fail and be ostracized from school. A framework based on cultural difference serves to maintain power and privilege, as cultures different from the dominant would be seen as inferior to what is considered the norm. Cultural capital is important for educators to consider as students bring it into the classroom as assets and it should be considered to serve the needs of all students.

Assimilation of culturally diverse students to the American system and elimination of one's inherent culture is no longer an expectation. According to Lopes-Murphy and Murphy (2017) the expectation that all students assimilate to the American system has become outdated and that teachers should understand their students' culture, develop relationships to connect with their students, and provide their students with the educational experiences that is culturally relevant to them.

Despite the importance of understanding students who are culturally different from teachers, teachers feel unprepared and not sure of what to do when working with culturally diverse students. Lopes-Murphy and Murphy noted that there are teachers who feel uncomfortable to work with culturally different students, do not know about the cultural contributions of diverse groups to their content area, and perceive cultural diversity and their content area as separate entities. Sharing and learning the culture of others is vital. According to Molina (2013) individuals should not be culturally isolated, especially when cultural competence is key to helping close the achievement gap.

A study of 35 preservice teachers to discover their perspectives and knowledge about cultural awareness and cultural diversity was conducted by Russell and Russell (2014). The majority of preservice teachers in the study disagreed or responded neutrally to a question about difference between their own and student culture. One-half of preservice teachers indicated they did not identify their students' ethnic group and had a preference for teaching students with the same ethnic or cultural background as their own. They indicated being comfortable around people who held different values than their own. Findings revealed that preservice teachers interact with culturally diverse

students. The findings also emphasize the importance of addressing colorblindness. When preservice teachers do not recognize their differences, implicit bias may occur and may deny students of recognizing how culture impacts beliefs. Not recognizing cultural differences can unconsciously promote negative stereotypes for culturally diverse students.

**Implicit Bias.** According to Fergus (2017) all racial and ethnic groups are limited in their social contact with each other. The Public Religion Research Institute (2014) revealed that among Caucasian Americans of their social contact with others, 91% are Caucasian Americans, 83% are African Americans, and 64% are Hispanic Americans. A quantitative research study indicated the importance of cross-racial interaction experiences where in diverse neighborhoods, workplace, and congregations Caucasians who lived in diverse environments developed an affinity toward interracial marriage (Fergus, 2017). Fergus further suggested that the combination of limited social interactions and the demographic gap consisting of the population growth of minorities and the majority of Caucasian female teachers reveal that African American students are likely attending schools where these teachers have limited lived experiences of social interaction. This limited social interaction has affected the decision making in the disproportional placement of African American students in special education and suspension from school. Limited social interaction also yields a lack of these students in gifted programs. A concern that is recognized among policymakers, practitioners, and researchers is that bias-based beliefs are used primarily in the decision-making process by practitioners and teachers to identify and place minority students in these types of

educational programs (Fergus, 2017). Understanding this as a form of bias or teachers' misperception may help eliminate the disproportionality of students in these programs.

Research that address educators' beliefs of students from different cultures is lacking. Authors do acknowledge the lack of implicit bias research in education (Glock & Kovacs, 2013; Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2014). Implicit bias study discusses various types of influence on how one perceives and treats others. This approach is helpful for gaining an understanding about how attitudes relate to decisions made about students, without regard to grading, tracking, or direct evaluations (Glock & Kovacs, 2013; Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2014). When teachers instruct under constraint, they may begin to manifest implicit biases (Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2014). Further research is needed to ascertain and analyze the beliefs and reactions of teachers; implicit attitude research can be used for this purpose. The current study could advance the knowledge obtained in recognizing implicit bias.

African American children, specifically males, are perceived as larger threats than other students just because they are (Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2014). The Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity further noted that even though Caucasian students act out more frequently than African American students, African American students are more prone to disciplinary actions because of Caucasian teachers. The Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity attributed culturally deficit thinking as leading educators to make negative assumptions about students of color based on the implicit bias that these students and their families do not value

education. It is imperative that educators become aware of their implicit biases, even though they consciously may have the best of intentions of treating all of their students equitably.

**Stereotype Threat.** Stereotyping can be a contemporary explanation for the lack of cultural awareness and academic disparity (Worrell, 2014). It is a strong phenomenon in today's social psychology literature. Stereotyping produces a threat—the fear of being viewed negatively or doing something that would confirm that stereotype (Worrell, 2014). Stereotypical threat also has an impact on academic performance. Academic performance stereotypes for marginalized students such as African-Americans, American Indians, and Latinos are negative, whereas academic stereotypes for nonmarginalized students such as European Americans and Asians are positive (Mello, Mallett, Andretta, & Worrell, 2014). Academic performance for marginalized groups is impacted negatively by stereotype threat and as Mello et al. (2014) pointed out when a member is part of a stigmatized group and is demonstrating a negative stereotype of that group, his or her awareness of this negative stereotype often produces a decline in performance. According to Mello et al. (2014), African-American college students who have experienced stereotyping had lower academic scores than their counterparts not exposed to stereotype threat. Teachers often compare Whiteness with greater academic potential and perceive African American students as aloof and not concerned about school (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). African American teachers similarly reported that their Caucasian colleagues often expressed and seemed to accept stereotypes of African American students as being more athletic and having fewer academic skills than Caucasian

students. McGrady and Reynolds further noted that the accepted explanation of Caucasian teachers' lower ratings of African American students compared to Caucasian students suggest that Caucasian teachers are predisposed by racial stereotypes and classify African American students as having worse classroom behavior and lower academic performance than Caucasian students.

Teachers' beliefs of their students are felt and internalized by the students. They should therefore take a closer look at the cultural capital that each student brings into their classroom and not subject their students to stereotype threat. When teachers come to understand the effect that stereotype threat has on African American students, they can begin to change how they perceive their African American students.

**Colorblindness.** Colorblindness is seen as removing race, gender, and other social identities in describing people, treating individuals for whom they are regardless of their social identities, and emphasizing commonality among individuals (Fergus, 2017). Carroll (2014) noted if race is nonexistent, then there can be no oppression, inequity, privilege, or other such problems, such as in the world of education, where teachers focus on notions of deficit. There is a sense of there are no differences in educating students in the classroom and is viewed and presented to students as a well-intentioned belief by educators. Fergus (2017) explained that many teachers and administrators build a well-intentioned belief of the colorblindness perspective among students believing that for example, if African American students absorb this belief it would be culturally advantageous for them.



Colorblindness occurs when race and racism are denied, altered, and diminished by individuals (Johnson & Jackson-Williams, 2014). Johnson et al. further noted that such beliefs, embedded in U.S. society, are used to dismiss racial inequality and that they dictate that everyone has a choice and equal opportunity in reaching their personal goals and status in life. Therefore, colorblindness is seen as a legitimate belief in racial equity.

McCoy, Wagner, and Luedke (2015) noted that colorblindness is viewed as the belief that race is nonessential, so that Caucasian teachers could attempt to interact with all students. Teachers should learn to see race, not view it as unimportant, and understand it is imperative to acknowledge the background and identity of the student. In providing the same treatment to every student so as to not appear to be racist, Caucasian teachers may disempower students from sharing their cultural backgrounds and identities (McCoy et al., 2015). It is possible that teachers can form positive relationships with diverse students and recognize the diversity at hand. Being color-blind means not being aware of White privilege and is not a healthy attitude in forming a positive relationship in a cross-race relationship (McCoy et al., 2015). Teachers should become critically conscious and understand that colorblindness is a cultural barrier for African American students.

Colorblindness is generated by a lack of knowledge and understanding pertaining to culture and racism. McCoy et al. (2015) noted that a colorblind perspective is used by Caucasian faculty members when engaging with students. Johnson and Jackson-Williams (2014) found that moving beyond colorblindness came about because of the development of building relationships with students of color, sharing the same marginalization experiences as African Americans, and working in diverse organizations (Castagno,

2013). Wang, Castro, and Cunningham (2014) added colorblindness is based on the belief that race does not matter, should not matter; that beliefs in meritocracy which expresses the belief that anyone can attain success through their own hard work; and that these beliefs of meritocracy and individualism may be associated with a person who shares society's view of racial color-blindness.

Hachfeld et al. (2015) conducted a study where 433 beginning teachers were questioned before and after classroom preparation to investigate the relationship professional competence has with cultural beliefs, multiculturalism and colorblindness. Results from this analyses revealed that higher motivational factors such as self-efficacy and passion for teaching and more positive values such as not agreeing with negative stereotypes was among participants with multicultural beliefs, and that more beginning teachers reported eagerness to modify their instruction. Beliefs that are colorblind revealed no correlation to self-efficacy, enthusiasm, and negative stereotypes. It also showed no relationship to reported eagerness to modify their teaching for culturally diverse students.

### **Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity is a social construct that may shape the beliefs of teachers. The identity development of teachers can help build a connection with students who are culturally different. This connection is critical in developing a positive relationship when teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds. According to Lambeth and Smith (2016) whether teachers or novice or veteran, all teachers need to know about their culturally diverse students because schools are filled with students whose lives and

experiences are very much different from their teachers, who are mainly Caucasian, middle class, and mono-lingual English. More importantly, teachers who may recognize, interact, and acknowledge cultural differences may be able to understand their cultural identity.

Berry and Candis (2013) defined cultural identity as both invisible and visible self-construct domains of oneself that influence one's being and are not bound to ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, skin color, and intellectual and physical. Cultural identity is defined as one's own consideration of multifaceted, codependent, and collaboration of values, ethnicity, language, race, social status, and behaviors that inundate and affect our lives (Berry & Candis, 2013). Cultural identity is a sense of belonging, the identification of self with a particular group based on various cultural categories. Categories might include ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, or religion (Hsueh-Hua Chen, 2014). A definition in its purest form of cultural identity is a sense of security, belonging and self; a shared sense of well-being of others; and how they relate to others' beliefs (Social Report, 2016).

Teachers need to learn their own cultural identity and experiences, as well as those of their students, in order to realize that Caucasian Americans also have a cultural identity (Berry & Candis, 2013). Students who possess strong cultural identities are able to create positive interactions with their teachers. Teachers who can relate and recognize the importance of the cultural identity of marginalized students empower students in building resiliency against social inequities. Fasching-Varner (2013) found nine preservice teachers who discussed racial issues with a Caucasian interviewer and used the

phrase--you know--implying to the interviewer that they understood and have a strong sense of the dynamics of race, White privilege, and White identity. Increasing knowledge of cultures other than the mainstream culture through implementing multicultural education and cultural practices can reduce deficit thinking and increase respect for those cultures.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This review of the literature elaborates and synthesizes research regarding culture awareness, teacher efficacy, teachers' beliefs, teacher efficacy, interculturality, cultural barriers, and cultural identity. The experience level of novice and veteran teachers was also researched as to its influence on the type of relationships developed with African American students. Studies revealed that field immersion or experience of interacting with culturally diverse students had a positive relationship in teaching these students and a willingness to adapt teaching practices. Each section has provided information relevant to the research question. Identity development formation was discussed to contextualize the influences and processes teachers encounter when constructing their cultural identity and how it impacts their African American students. The following section details the methodology used in describing the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem this study addressed was that poor scores on standardized tests on the part of African American students created a problem for a local urban high school in the Midwest. The purpose of the study was to compare the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers to explore the impact that the length of teaching interculturality has on teachers' beliefs toward diverse students. This quantitative study examined novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs as their beliefs relate to teachers' beliefs, school climate, classroom management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. The section on methods below outlines the methodology to be used to gather the data to assess the cultural beliefs of teachers in a large urban school district. A description of the quantitative methodological approach to be used to collect data was presented in this section. The research design and approach, setting and sample, instrumentation and materials, data collection and analysis, and protection of participants are discussed. The section ends with the examination of my role as the researcher.

#### **Setting**

Teachers in a large urban school district were invited to be surveyed. According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE, 2016) there are 1,021 teachers in the school district where 90.5% of teachers are Caucasian; 5.4% are African American; 2.5% are Hispanic; 0.7% are Multiracial; 0.5% are American Indian; 0.4% are Asian, and 0.1% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The teacher count by years of experience reveals that there are 213 (novice teachers (20.9%) with 0 to fewer than 5 years of

experience and the remaining 808 (79.1%) veteran teachers have 5 or more years of experience which represent the two populations used in the study.

### **Research Design and Approach**

According to Creswell quantitative research is a means for measuring theories by examining the relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative comparative cross-sectional research design was chosen because this study compared the difference between the scores of novice teachers and veteran teachers in a local district to measure their beliefs as measured by the CABI (Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory) survey by Natesan et al. (2012). The purpose of the study was to examine and measure the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers thus providing insight on the impact that the length of teaching interculturally has on teachers' beliefs.

This cross-sectional survey study is a comparative, between-group design that measures teachers' beliefs at two levels: novice and veteran teachers. Scores from the CABI survey Natesan, et al. (2012). The survey measured eight belief factors: teachers' beliefs, school climate, classroom management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy are the dependent variables in the study. The independent variable is the grouping variable. Two groups of teachers were compared, novice and veteran. *Novice* teachers were teachers with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience and *veteran* teachers had 5 years or greater of teaching experience. The scores of the 28 items of the CABI survey are the dependent variables and were analyzed. This research is based on the understanding that teacher participants have varying levels of cultural awareness and beliefs based on

experience and number of years of interaction with diverse students. The quantitative design is appropriate because this study will examine a relationship among variables as it is a comparison of the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers using scores based on the eight categories of the CABI survey. Generalization dominates quantitative research. Quantitative research predominantly assumes a positivist worldview or paradigms are tied to research techniques firmly, and that quantitative research paradigms emphasize the importance of generalizability and reliability (Delice, 2010).

This study utilizes a survey approach to collect data. According to Creswell (2014) the survey design produces a numeric indication of opinions or attitudes for a population. This survey approach to data collection was chosen as it assesses the beliefs of a large number of novice and veteran teachers using a large number of 28 survey items.

## **Methodology**

### **Population Selection**

**Sampling method.** This study utilized a volunteer sampling approach. The sample derived from the surveyed population of teachers and consisted of the number of voluntary respondents of one group consisting of novice teachers and the other group consisting of veteran teachers located in the school district. A request was made on the survey that teachers indicate their level of experience of being either a novice teacher or a veteran teacher to identify and form these groups.

**Sample size and sample eligibility.** The Raosoft sample calculator was used to calculate the desired sample size. Using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error

of 5 the desired sample size for a population of 213 novice teachers is 138 with a margin of error of 4.96%. The sample size of 808 veteran teachers is 261 with a margin of error of 4.99% (Sample Size Calculator by Raosoft, Inc., n.d.). When calculating the sample size for a study, three factors are important. The first factor is the power of the test, which measures the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis and is usually set at 80% (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). For the purpose of this study, a power of 80% will provide me with the ability to reject a null hypothesis. The second factor is the effect size, which measures the magnitude of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2013.). For the purpose of this study, a medium effect size was selected because this size effect would provide evidence of a relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Creswell, 2014). The level of significance is the final factor of importance. The level of significance is the chance that a result is not likely to occur randomly, but rather is likely to be attributable to a specific cause (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). The probability of rejecting a true null hypothesis was equal to 5%; therefore, the level of significance was 5%. The criteria for eligibility to respond to the survey was that the respondent had to be a teacher.

**Recruitment strategy.** The recruitment strategy for this study is an email (see Appendix A) requesting participation of teachers who are interested in understanding the importance of appreciating the cultural differences of their students and the role it plays in the schools. All teachers were welcomed to participate in the survey. The survey was set up in Google Docs and responses were sent to my Walden University email address.



### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

I chose to use the CABI survey because the survey has been used in other research studies to measure the cultural beliefs of teachers and it is the best fit for this study. According to Natesan et al. (2012) no other studies of a large-scale have measured teachers' cultural beliefs toward African American students. Descriptive knowledge from a large population was obtained (Lauer et al., 2013). Five of the eight items relate to teacher beliefs toward African American students and three of the items concern teacher beliefs representing underserved students (Boudreaux, 2016).

Permission to use the CABI survey was given through a letter (Appendix B) to me by Dr. Norvella Carter, one of the authors of the CABI instrument. The CABI measured the cultural beliefs of teachers. The CABI survey was developed as the first stage of quantitative measurement development in the cultural beliefs of urban teachers through a factor analysis by Natesan et al., (2012). Eight factors were generated to reflect the areas that affect the learning environment for African American students and underserved students (Natesan & Kieftenbeld, 2013).

According to Natesan et al. (2012) the CABI survey proved to be a valuable instrument in measuring teachers' beliefs toward African American students as research supports teachers' beliefs have a potential influence on the achievement of African American students academically. The CABI survey consists of 28 Likert-type questions that pertain to teachers' beliefs about African American students that require responses with answers ranging in four levels from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The overarching perspective of the survey is teachers' beliefs regarding cultural

diversity. A question asking them to list the number of years of experience was asked to determine their experience status as novice or veteran. Each of the eight factors of the 28-item CABI analyzes and interprets underlying descriptive themes. The factors and corresponding items are listed in Table 1. The complete survey is presented in Appendix C.

Table 1

*Factors of the Culture Awareness and Beliefs Inventory*

Factor	Item
Factor I Teachers' Beliefs (5 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I believe African American students consider performing well in schools as "acting- White".</li> <li>2. I believe African American students have more behavior problems than other students.</li> <li>3. I believe African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.</li> <li>4. I believe students in poverty are more difficult to teach.</li> <li>5. I believe African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.</li> </ol>
Factor II School Climate (2 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. I believe my contributions are appreciated by my colleagues.</li> <li>7. I believe I have opportunities to grow professionally as I fulfill duties at my ISD.</li> </ol>
Factor III Classroom Management (3 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.</li> <li>9. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.</li> <li>10. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups</li> </ol>
Factor IV Home and Community Support (4 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. I believe my ISD families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.</li> <li>12. I believe my ISD families are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.</li> <li>13. I believe the district has strong support for academic excellence from our surrounding community (civic, church, business).</li> <li>14. I believe "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.</li> </ol>
Factor V Cultural Awareness (3 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. I believe is important to identify with the racial groups of students I serve.</li> <li>16. I believe I am comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from my own.</li> <li>17. I believe cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.</li> </ol>
Factor VI Curriculum and Instruction (4 items)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. I believe the in-service training in past years assisted me in improving my teaching strategies.</li> <li>19. I believe I am culturally responsive in my teaching behaviors.</li> <li>20. I believe cooperative learning is an integral part of my ISD teaching and learning philosophy.</li> <li>21. I believe frequently used material within my class represents at least three different ethnic groups.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Factor	Item
Factor VII Cultural Sensitivity (3 items)	22. I believe in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students 23. I believe there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored. 24. I believe a child should be referred "for testing" if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.
Factor VIII Teacher Efficacy (4 items)	25. I believe some students do not want to learn. 26. I believe there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure. 27. I believe teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel 28. I believe in-service training focuses too much on "multicultural" issues.

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

Data were archived electronically. Collected data and all materials will be kept on an USB flash drive at my home in a locked storage box for 5 years and then destroyed. Data will be available upon request. A survey format was chosen as the form of data collection as it is easier to collect and has a rapid turnaround. The survey is an economical instrument and provides a rapid turnaround in data collection (Creswell, 2014).

Teachers were given 3 weeks to respond to the survey and were reminded to complete the survey to increase participation. A reminder to respond was sent out after one week and two weeks following the initial survey request. Data were collected through the Google Forms web survey forum. Individual responses were sent to my Walden University email address.

## Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative data were coded through the Google Forms application. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  test was used for this study to test whether two independent samples of observations were from the same or identical distributions. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  test is a non-parametric test. There are no assumptions about the distribution of scores. However, there are other assumptions: the sample drawn from the population is random, mutual independence that an observation is in one group or the other, and an ordinal scale of measurement are assumptions (Rovai et al., 2013).

The independent variables for this study consisted of two samples, novice and veteran teachers. Sample groups were not equally distributed because out of the 1,083 nominal grouping teacher populations, 213 were novice teachers and 808 were veteran teachers. An advantage with this test is that the two samples under consideration do not necessarily need to have the same number of observations or instances (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). The dependent variables for this study consisted of 28 items of the CABI survey which are based on an ordinal scale of valid values of “A” being Strongly Agree, “B” being Agree, “C” being Disagree, and “D” being Strongly Disagree. A separate test for each of the 28 items was conducted.

To test for differences in mean ranks, the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for two independent groups was used. Dependent groups (length of experience) were categorized as 0 to fewer than 5 years, novice teacher; and, 5 or more years, veteran teacher. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  test was best suited for this study as the Mann-Whitney test uses data from two separate groups to evaluate the difference between two populations (Gravetter

& Wallnau, 2013). The calculations for the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test required that the individual scores in the two samples be rank-ordered and would reveal that if there is a real difference between the two samples that scores in one sample would be generally larger than scores in the other sample (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). Gravetter and Wallnau (2013) further stated that if the scores from the two samples are combined and all scores are ranked, then one sample would have a concentration of larger ranks and the other sample would have a concentration of the smaller ranks.

A report for demographic and survey response data was presented on ordinal scales. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and presented. Mean ranks on the scales and survey items on data gathered from the CABI survey from novice teachers were compared to the mean ranks of the scales and survey items gathered from the data of veteran teachers to determine whether there are differences in cultural beliefs of novice and experienced teachers.

Effect size was calculated as the difference in mean ranks between the two groups consisting of novice and veteran teachers (Rovai et al., 2013). The effect size provided an indication of the absolute magnitude of the effect used in measuring the mean difference. A difference of 0.9 or greater is considered to have had a large effect.

Inferential analysis was used to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as “acting White”?

- a.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as "acting White".
  - b.  $H_{A1}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students consider performing well in school as "acting White".
2. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students?
- a.  $H_{02}$  There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students.
  - b.  $H_{A2}$  There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students have more behavior problems than other students.
3. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students?
- a.  $H_{03}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.

- b.  $H_{A3}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.
4. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach?
- a.  $H_{04}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach.
  - b.  $H_{A4}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that students in poverty are more difficult to teach.
5. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers?
- a.  $H_{05}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.
  - b.  $H_{A5}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.
6. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues?



- a.  $H_{06}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues.
  - b.  $H_{A6}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their contributions are appreciated by their colleagues.
7. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at the Intermediate School District (ISD)?
- a.  $H_{07}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at the ISD.
  - b.  $H_{A7}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have opportunities to grow professionally as they fulfill duties at the ISD.
8. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline?
- a.  $H_{08}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.

- b.  $H_{A8}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.
9. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management?
  - a.  $H_{09}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.
  - b.  $H_{A9}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom.
10. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups?
  - a.  $H_{010}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.

- b.  $H_{A10}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.
11. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that their ISD families of African American students are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students?
- a.  $H_{011}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their ISD families of African American students are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.
  - b.  $H_{A11}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their ISD families of African American students are supportive of the districts mission to effectively teach all students.
12. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that their ISD families are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students?
- a.  $H_{012}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that their ISD families are supportive of the district's mission to effectively teach all students.

b.  $H_{A12}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that my ISD families are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.

13. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business)?

a.  $H_013$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business).

b.  $H_{A13}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the district has strong support for academic excellence from the surrounding community (civic, church, business).

14. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status?

a.  $H_014$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.

- b.  $H_{A14}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.
15. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve?
- a.  $H_{015}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve.
  - b.  $H_{A15}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that it is important to identify with the racial groups of students they serve.
16. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own?
- a.  $H_{016}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own.
  - b.  $H_{A16}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from their own.

17. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning?
  - a.  $H_0$ 17: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.
  - b.  $H_A$ 17: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.
18. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving their teaching strategies?
  - a.  $H_0$ 18: There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving their teaching strategies.
  - b.  $H_A$ 18: There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training in past years assisted them in improving their teaching strategies.
19. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that they are culturally responsible in their teaching behaviors?

- a.  $H_{019}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are culturally responsible in their teaching behaviors.
  - b.  $H_{A19}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that they are culturally responsible in their teaching behaviors.
20. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of their ISD teaching and learning philosophy?
- a.  $H_{020}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of their ISD teaching and learning philosophy.
  - b.  $H_{A20}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that cooperative learning is an integral part of their ISD teaching and learning philosophy.
21. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups?
- a.  $H_{021}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups.

- b.  $H_{A21}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that frequently used material within their class represents at least three different ethnic groups.
22. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students?
- a.  $H_{022}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.
  - b.  $H_{A22}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, they would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.
23. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored?
- a.  $H_{023}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.



- b.  $H_{A23}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.
24. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences?
- a.  $H_{024}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.
- b.  $H_{A24}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.
25. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that some students do not want to learn?
- a.  $H_{025}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that some students do not want to learn.
- b.  $H_{A25}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that some students do not want to learn.
26. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure?

- a.  $H_{026}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.
  - b.  $H_{A26}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.
27. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel?
- a.  $H_{027}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.
  - b.  $H_{A27}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.
28. Is there a difference in cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues'?
- a.  $H_{028}$ : There is no significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues.'

- b.  $H_{A28}$ : There is a significant difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural beliefs in the belief that in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues.

### **Threats to Validity**

Validity is based on the content of the data instrument and study design. Zohrabi (2013) noted that the quality of data collection instruments is very critical because researchers draw conclusions based on the information obtained from using these instruments. According to Zohrabi (2013) content validity is the type of validity in which different components, skills and behaviors are satisfactorily and efficiently measured and that research instruments and the data might be reviewed by research field experts.

Content validity was previously established for the CABI in a study conducted by Roberts-Walter (as cited by Natesan et al., 2012). The CABI was administered to a group of experts to examine the content validity of each of the CABI components. The jury of experts agreed that the CABI measured what it was supposed to measure and constructs that influence beliefs were addressed in the instrument with the factors being adequately represented (Natesan et al., 2012). In addition, the survey established construct validity of the CABI using factor analysis. This type of validity check assessed the numbers of factors associated with the CABI. To establish construct validity, exploratory factor analysis was done.

External reliability is concerned with the replication of the study (Zohrabi, 2013) and this study can be replicated with teachers who teach culturally diverse students. Cultural assessment survey questionnaires and other similar instruments are popular and

can be generalized to the field of education. In the same study by Roberts-Walter (as cited by Natesan et al., 2012), the internal consistency reliability procedure was used to establish reliability of the CABI. To determine the internal consistency reliability for the CABI, the survey used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The alpha coefficients were computed for each subtest of the CABI as well as for the total test. All of the reliability coefficients were found to be significant at the .05 level or less. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for scores of the 28 items on the CABI instrument was 0.83 (Natesan et al., 2012). Natesan et al. further noted that omission of any item did not increase the alpha value. Thus, internal consistency was previously established for the CABI instrument.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I made every effort to protect the rights and anonymity of the participants in the study. Participants were not asked to disclose their names. The IRB application was submitted and approved by the Walden University Institutional Review Board. Teacher participation was on a voluntary basis.

The email sent to teachers requesting their participation in the survey will include an informed consent briefing. Participants were informed of their rights and the researcher will take measures to guarantee confidentiality by not requesting the identity of the participants. The researcher will not divulge any information that would be detrimental to the employment status of participants or herself.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I am a teacher and have taught in the school district for over 35 years. I currently serve as a member of the District Equity and Intercultural Committee. The committee's

goal is to create cultural awareness in the school district. I am also a member of the Advanced Education Committee (AdvancEd Committee) that serves as an advisory board at one of the local high schools and as the school improvement team. I am not in a supervisory position over the study participants and have only served in an advisory capacity for my fellow colleagues when seeking help in interacting with students who are culturally different from their own culture. Biases were managed, as I attempted to not interject any personal opinion or statements.

### **Summary**

This research study examined the effect experience of interculturality has on the beliefs of teachers. A comparative cross-sectional design was used. The independent variable grouped teachers for comparison between novice and veteran teachers. Data collection from the administration of the CABI (Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory) survey compared the mean rank of scores between novice teachers and veteran teachers assessing eight factors represented on the survey. By comparing the mean rank of scores of novice teachers and veteran teachers, the current study may reveal whether experience and interaction over a length of time between teachers and their African American students make a significant difference in the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers.

Developing a generalization of cultural values and beliefs may create an awareness of culture in school districts. Data collected in this study assisted in providing an explanation of how culture characterizes itself in schools and how it shapes the beliefs

of teachers. Because the data was collected without the identities of teachers, teachers remained anonymous. Section 4 describes the results of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Setting

I administered the CABI survey by Natesan et al. (2012) to participants. The sample population included 1,021 teachers in an urban district in the Midwest. There were a total of 211 teachers responding with 164 being veteran teachers (77.8%) and 47 being novice teachers (22.2%). The research tool used to administer the survey was Google Forms.

Responses for research items from the CABI survey included *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. The CABI survey items ranged from topics regarding teacher beliefs, school climate, classroom management, and home and community support to topics regarding cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. There were a total of 28 research questions or survey items.

### Results of Data Analysis

The results of the 28-item survey are presented in Table 2, which shows the mean scores and standard deviation for each of the research question items.

Table 2

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Survey Questions*

CABI item	Mean score	Std. deviation
1. I believe African American students consider performing well in schools as "acting- White".	1.97	.74

2. I believe African American students have more behavior problems than other students.	2.04	.76
3. I believe African American students are not eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.	1.78	.70
4. I believe students in poverty are more difficult to teach.	2.5	.86
5. I believe African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasians peers.	1.47	.64
6. I believe my contributions are appreciated by my colleagues.	2.99	.71
7. I believe I have opportunities to grow professionally as I fulfill duties at my ISD.	2.96	.80
8. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.	3.05	.67
9. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.	3.23	.62
10. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups	3.28	.67
11. I believe my ISD families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.	2.84	.59
13. I believe the district has strong support for academic excellence from our surrounding community (civic, church, business).	2.72	.69
14. I believe “all” students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.	2.52	.85
15. I believe it is important to identify with the racial groups of students I serve.	3.08	.71

(table continues)

CABI item	Mean score	.Std. deviation
17. I believe cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school’s yearly program planning.	3.39	.67
18. I believe the in-service training in past years assisted me in improving my teaching strategies	2.60	.70



19. I believe I am culturally responsive in my teaching behaviors.	3.16	.53
20. I believe cooperative learning is an integral part of my ISD teaching and learning philosophy.	3.17	.60
21. I believe frequently used material within my class represents at least three different ethnic groups.	2.76	.74
22. I believe in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.	1.75	.69
23. I believe there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.	1.92	.77
24. I believe a child should be referred "for testing" if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.	1.85	.73
25. I believe some students do not want to learn.	2.55	.84
26. I believe there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.	3.32	.63
27. I believe teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.	2.18	.72
28. I believe in-service training focuses too much on "multicultural" issues.	1.96	.66

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There were belief items where teachers showed an overwhelming agreement or disagreement with at least 90% of the responses being strongly agreeable and agreeable or strongly disagreeable or disagreeable. Teachers agreed or strongly disagreed with 197 out of 211 of them *believing that they have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management*. This belief item, however, was found to be statistically significant with  $p = .000$ . Another belief item where teachers agreed or strongly agreed with 193 out of the 211 was *believing that they were able to effectively manage students from all racial groups*. This belief item also showed a statistically significant difference between veteran and novice teachers with  $p = .006$ .

There were two additional belief items where teachers showed an overwhelming consensus of agreement or disagreement. Teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with 193 out of 211 of them stating *African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers*. Teacher agreed or strongly agreed that there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.

A belief item of particular interest was the statement “*all*” *students are treated equitable regardless of race, culture, disability, gender, or social economic status*; 111 teachers in the study either disagreed or strongly disagreed (53%), and 100 agreed or strongly agreed (47%). Belief items that were close to an equal split in teacher beliefs were that *students in poverty are more difficult to teach* with 114 of the 208 responses (59%) being *agree* and *strongly agree* and 94 of the 208 responses (41%) being *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. Another similar response was the belief item where teachers believed *some students do not want to learn* with 112 of the 210 (53%) teacher responses being *agree* or *strongly agree* and 98 of the 210 (47%) teacher responses being *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

Teacher beliefs regarding classroom management showed a significant difference in the understanding of issues surrounding classroom management and effectively managing students from all racial groups; veteran teachers had higher mean and rank of sum scores than novice teachers. One of the two curriculum and instruction belief items that appeared to be of importance where both veteran and novice teachers strongly disagreed and either disagreed (182 out of 208 or 88%) was that *in-service training focuses too much on “multicultural” issues*. The other belief item in the curriculum and

instruction factor showed a low percentage of teachers strongly agreed or agreed with only 134 out of 211 (63%) that *they use materials within their class that represents at least three different ethnic groups*.

I conducted Mann Whitney *U* tests using SPSS to evaluate if there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores for each of the 28 cultural belief survey items of novice and veteran teachers. All belief items with the exception of two classroom management beliefs items showed no significant difference in scores between novice and veteran teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis which suggested that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers cannot be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The effect size for each of the 28 belief items was determined, and all items had a small effect (.1 = small, .3 = medium, and .4 = large).

Table 3 shows the mean rank and sum of mean ranks for the 28 belief items in the CABI survey. Novice teachers are represented with the “1” and veteran teachers are represented with “2”.

Table 3

*Mean Ranks and Sum of Mean Ranks for CABI's 28 Items*

CABI items	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Means	Sum of mean ranks
1. I believe students consider performing well in school as "acting White".	1	162	108.84	17631.50
	2	47	91.78	4313.50
	Total	209		
2. I believe African American students have more behavior problems than other students.	1	164	107.85	17687.00
	2	47	99.55	4679.00
	Total	211		
3. I believe African American students are not as eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.	1	161	107.27	17271.00
	2	47	95.00	4465.00
	Total	208		
4. I believe students in poverty are more difficult to teach.	1	161	106.04	17073.00
	2	47	99.21	4663.00
	Total	208		
5. I believe African American students do not bring as much strength to the classrooms as their Caucasian peers.	1	164	107.76	17673.00
	2	46	97.43	4482.00
	Total	210		
6. I believe my	1	164	104.83	17192.00

contributions are appreciated by my colleagues.	2	47	110.09	5174.00
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(table continues)

CABI items	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Means	Sum of mean ranks
7. I believe I have opportunities to grow professionally as I fulfill duties at my Intermediate School District.	1	162	102.97	16680.50
	2	47	112.01	5264.50
	Total	209		
8. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline]	1	164	109.32	17928.00
	2	47	94.43	4438.00
	Total	211		
9. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.	1	164	113.02	18535.50
	2	47	81.50	3830.50
	Total	211		
10. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.	1	164	111.48	18282.00
	2	47	86.89	4084.00
	Total	211		
11. I believe my	1	162	107.86	17473.50

Intermediate School	2	46	92.66	4262.50
District families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.	Total	208		

(table continues)

CABI items	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Means	Sum of mean ranks
12. I believe my Intermediate School District families are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.	1	164	107.45	17622.50
	2	47	100.93	4643.50
	Total	211		
13. I believe the district has strong support for academic excellence from our surrounding community (civic, church, business).	1	163	105.67	17225.00
	2	47	104.89	4930.00
	Total	210		
14. I believe "all" students are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.	1	164	105.19	17251.50
	2	47	108.82	5114.50
	Total	211		
15. I believe it is important to identify	1	161	100.70	16213.50
	2	47	117.50	5522.50

with the racial groups of students I serve.	Total	208		
16. I believe I am comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from my own.	1	164	104.11	17074.00
	2	47	112.60	5292.00
	Total	211		

(table continues)

CABI	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Mean scores	Sum of mean ranks
17. I believe cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.	1	163	103.47	16866.00
	2	47	112.53	5289.00
	Total	210		
18. I believe the in-service training in past years assisted me in improving my teaching strategies.	1	160	100.46	16073.50
	2	46	114.08	5247.50
	Total	206		
19. I believe I am culturally responsive in my teaching behaviors.	1	163	104.25	16993.00
	2	47	109.83	5162.00
	Total	210		
20. I believe cooperative learning is an integral part of my ISD teaching and learning philosophy.	1	161	105.54	16992.00
	2	47	98.61	4536.00
	Total	207		
21. I believe frequently used material within my	1	157	103.28	16214.50
	2	47	99.90	4695.50



class represents at least three different ethnic groups.

Total 204

(table continues)

CABI items	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Mean scores	Sum of mean scores
22. I believe in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.	1	162	103.30	16734.50
	2	45	106.52	4793.50
	Total	207		
23. I believe there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.	1	164	107.65	17655.00
	2	47	100.23	4711.00
	Total	211		
24. I believe a child should be referred "for testing" if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.	1	161	103.30	16631.00
	2	47	108.62	5105.00
	Total	208		
25. I believe some students do not want to	1	163	104.50	17033.50
	2	47	108.97	5121.50

learn.	Total	210		
26. I believe there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.	1	163	107.89	17585.50
	2	47	97.22	4569.50
	Total	210		

(table continues)

CABI items	Novice and veteran teachers	No. of teachers	Mean scores	Sum of mean rank scores
27. I believe teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.	1	164	106.27	17428.50
	2	47	105.05	4937.50
	Total	211		
28. I believe in-service training focuses too much on "multicultural" issues.	1	161	105.89	17048.00
	2	47	99.74	4688.00
	Total	208		

Item 9 relating to classroom management *I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management* showed a significant difference of ( $p = .000$ ; effect size of 0.24955), and Item 10 *I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups* showed a significant difference of ( $p = .006$ ; effect size of 0.18699) between the scores of veteran and novice teachers. Therefore, in both cases, the

null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference in the mean rank and sum of ranks of veteran teachers (1) and novice teachers (2) in Items 9 and 10 as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

*Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks for CABI Classroom Management Items Nos. 9 and 10*

Item	Teachers	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
9. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.	1	164	113.02	18535.50
	2	47	81.50	3830.50
	Total	211		
10. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.	1	164	111.48	18282.00
	2	47	86.89	4084.00
	Total	211		

The mean rank scores and sum of ranks scores of the items 9 and 10 in the table shown above showed a significant difference with veteran teachers being higher than novice teachers indicating that veteran teachers feel more confident in understanding the issues surrounding classroom management and in effectively managing students from all racial groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis for both items 9 and 10 was rejected.

#### **Evidence of Sampling Validity**

Sampling validity (Krippendorff, 2012) is evidenced by a match between participants and the population based on the independent variable. Both the population and sample represented three times as many veteran as novice teachers. Furthermore, survey invitations were sent to only certified teachers generated through the school district's email list. Paraprofessionals and other support group staff members were not

subjects of the sample. The time of the survey was conducted in the spring or end of the school year ensuring that teachers experienced some type of interaction with students who were culturally different at least a school year or 9 months: 59% of the student population were students of color and so teachers experienced some type of interaction with a student who was culturally different from them.

### **Summary**

Novice teachers and veteran teachers in the study shared the same beliefs of teachers' beliefs, school climate, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity and teacher efficacy. These beliefs are ones that can be instilled in another person without direct one-to-one interaction. This study revealed that interaction and socialization with those who are culturally different in the case of classroom management resulted in the situation where as field and personal experience increased the belief system of cultural diversity was supported. In conclusion this study exemplified the grounded theory of the central belief that as one's experience with other cultures grows cultural competency increases and that individuals who have a limited cultural worldview or access to socialization with one culture are unable to experience the difference between their own belief of culture and that of others who are culturally different.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The CABI survey was administered to compare the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers in an urban district where the majority of the students are students of color and the majority of the teachers are Caucasian. The overarching research question was as follows: Is there a difference in the cultural belief system between novice and veteran teachers as it relates to 28 items on the CABI survey? Addressing the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers was important as the field and personal experience, background, and prior cultural knowledge of teachers affect their beliefs.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

There were no significant differences between novice and veteran teacher beliefs on 26 of the CABI 28 survey items; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Items 9 and 10 regarding classroom management, however, showed a significant difference; therefore, the null hypothesis for both items 9 and 10 was rejected. The findings of this study revealed that the teachers in this urban school district believed they were culturally responsive; however, some of them lacked the cultural knowledge and skills needed to serve students who may be culturally different regarding classroom management. The two items classroom management items regarding a clear understanding of issues surrounding classroom management and how to manage students from all racial groups were an important concern derived from this study. Veteran teachers with more classroom experience may be more comfortable with using management skills than novice teachers who may be ill-prepared in classroom management and handling students who are disruptive. Novice teachers may feel the need to be more authoritative and not

have a clear understanding of the issues of classroom management for all students. Interculturality or field experience may be the factor that may influence the different scores of classroom management between veteran and novice teachers. Veteran teachers through field experience and length of time learn what management strategies work best with students who may be culturally different and that different management strategies may have to be used. Novice teachers may be reluctant or are unsure of what classroom management strategies work for culturally different students.

A low percentage of teachers believed they use resources such as course materials that represent at least three different ethnic groups. A greater number of cultural related resources such as minority study courses for students, culturally enriched learning materials, and professional cultural development training for teachers would assist teachers in gaining cultural knowledge. Cultural resources would provide the cultural knowledge needed for both teachers and students to create cultural awareness, discover their own cultural identity, and provide the cultural knowledge to be able to interact with those who are culturally different. This study also revealed a desire of teachers for professional cultural development training to enable them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to become cultural competent teachers.

Conducting in-service training on multicultural issues which would include classroom management skills appeared to be important to teachers and would be beneficial for both veteran and novice teachers. Understanding and obtaining cultural knowledge of students who may be culturally different may provide a clearer

understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management skills that would lead to an environment where “all” students regardless of cultural differences would learn.

There was no significant difference in the *belief of how novice and veteran teachers felt about students in poverty being more difficult to teach*. Banks et al. (2013) stated novice or pre-service teachers hold negative attitudes toward culturally diverse students from low-socioeconomic homes which result in lowered student expectations. Banks et al. (2013) further noted that novice teachers often minimize cultural diverse students' academic capabilities when success is attained. Rapid growth in the number of culturally diverse students makes it important for novice teachers to experience opportunities to enhance critical awareness of those who are culturally different by combining field experience within urban settings and multicultural curriculum (Banks et al., 2013).

In a study similar to the current report it was found that there is no considerable difference in novice and veteran teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs. The cultural beliefs of pre-service teachers where of the 68 participants 52.9% were teachers with less than one year of experience and 47.1% were teachers with more than one year experience were analyzed using the CABI survey (Boudreaux, 2016). Whether they were novice or veteran teachers most respondents nearly 80% indicated a non-stereotypical view of African American students. The response to experiencing a struggle in engaging African American families in the education of African Americans students yielded a lower response with 49% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing and a little over a half 50.8% strongly agreeing or agreeing. This study yielded a much stronger favorable response to



the belief that the *district families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students*. The responses from this study yielded a much favorable response 163 out of 208 (78%) participants either strongly agree or agree that African American families are supportive of the school's mission to teach all students.

Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah, and Ringlaben. (2015) investigated 80 preservice teachers about their beliefs toward culturally diverse students. The study showed that preservice teachers are extremely sensitive to the trials culturally diverse students encounter in the classroom. Findings suggested that preservice teachers are willing to study and to be aware of multiculturalism for them to teach with ease. Preservice teachers demonstrated significant understanding about the necessity to encompass multicultural education as future teacher educators. Before becoming professional teachers, preservice teachers' awareness and knowledge of multicultural education varied subject to their experience as well as their cultural bonds. In this study there was no significant different between novice and veteran teachers in the belief that *in-service training focuses too much on "multicultural issues"*. The responses revealed that 182 out of 208 strongly disagreed or disagreed that there was too much focus on multicultural issues.

There are other unrealistic beliefs shared by pre-service teachers who enter the profession of teaching such as the hero portrayal and the belief that love and a sense of stamina will disrupt the resistance of urban students. Miretzky identified these preservice teachers who believe in the hero portrayal as super-teachers or savior-teachers who go above and beyond normal expectations to rescue students from cruelty, gangs, poverty, and ignorance by using love and stamina to help minority and lower income students

overcome all obstacles and become triumphantly successful. This belief system falls under the category of unrealistic optimism where preservice teachers feel their sense of enjoyment for teaching will endure throughout their profession and that they will not have the problems other teachers have had in controlling and maintaining their classrooms (Miretzky, 2017). This study revealed a significant difference in the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers in managing their classroom. The beliefs of *having a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management and managing students from all racial groups* showed a significant score of .000 and .006 respectively.

In the Boudreaux (2016) study in which pre-service teachers were surveyed using the CABI survey, two themes evolved: communication with African American parents and an abundance of African American students in special education. In the 2016 study by Boudreaux preservice teachers strongly agreed or agreed that African American students referred to special education do not meet the criteria for special education services and slightly over half (50%) agreed that they had difficulty communicating or getting African American families involved in their students' education. This study found the same results regarding referring African American students to special education service. The survey item of believing *a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences* showed no significant difference where 177 of the 208 responses strongly disagreed or disagreed that a child should be referred for testing if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences thus showing the same results in Boudreaux 2016 study. Unlike Boudreaux study this study felt African American families were involved in their students'

education. The responses from this study yielded a much favorable response 163 out of 208 (78%) participants either strongly agree or agree that African American families are supportive of the school's mission to teach all students.

Previous studies revealed that there is a difference in classroom management skills as it relates to years of teaching experience. Cherng (2017) stated that veteran teachers with more classroom experience are comfortable in using effective instructional practices than their colleagues who are not as experienced. Cherng further noted that teachers with more experience may have more precise insights of the academic skills of their students based on previous and current achievement than novice teachers. Preservice teachers feel the need to act in an authoritarian way and feel ill prepared in classroom management and in handling disruptive student behavior. Glock (2017) studied preservice teachers' responses to student misbehavior according to ethnicity of the students. The results revealed that preservice teachers consistently used more strategies and often harsher ones in disciplining ethnic students than their ethnic majority students (Glock, 2017).

Experienced teachers differ in classroom management skills from pre-service teachers as it relates to the level of teachers' sensitivity. Glock (2017) noted that experienced teachers are less sensitive to the behaviors of disruptive students than pre-service teachers because preservice teachers are younger with more cross-ethnic friendships, grew up in a different more diverse sociocultural environment from their experienced teaching peers with more interaction with ethnic minority peers, and thus possess a lower level of prejudice and tolerance. As it relates to dispensing severe

punishment and not processing interventions gradually, preservice teachers are harsher in handling minor disruptions such as talking out loud because of lack of classroom management experience whereas experienced teachers use more milder forms of punishment before resorting to harsher forms of punishment that lead to suspension. This CABI research study revealed a significant difference in the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers as it relates to classroom managements and supports other studies in that experience provides more interaction with students producing a lower level of prejudice and tolerance. It also supports the fact that veteran teachers use milder forms of punishment before resorting to harsher forms of punishment. The study showed a significant difference with classroom management with a significant difference of .000.

A study of 35 preservice teachers to discover their perspectives and knowledge about cultural awareness and cultural diversity was conducted by Russell and Russell (2014). The majority of preservice teachers in the study disagreed or responded neutrally to a question about difference between their own and student culture. One-half of preservice teachers indicated they did not identify their students' ethnic group and had a preference for teaching students with the same ethnic or cultural background as their own. They indicated being comfortable around people who held different values than their own. Findings revealed that preservice teachers interact with culturally diverse students. The findings also emphasize the importance of addressing colorblindness. When preservice teachers do not recognize their differences, implicit bias may occur and may deny students of recognizing how culture impacts beliefs. Not recognizing cultural

differences can unconsciously promote negative stereotypes for culturally diverse students.

This CABI research study comparing the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers also revealed the same results of the Russell & Russell 2014 study in that teachers felt at ease with people who are different from them in terms of values or beliefs. Unlike the previous study of Russell & Russell (2014) both novice and veteran teachers in this study agreed about the importance of recognizing racial groups of students they serve. Based on these findings, as well it would seem that both novice and veteran teachers interact with students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for Action**

School district leaders can use this study to develop professional cultural development in a first-year cultural training program for training novice teachers the cultural practices in classroom management. In-service workshops can be conducted to enhance cultural teaching practices for veteran teachers. School districts can offer teacher professional development in the form of cultural diversity training workshops to assist teachers in understanding how awareness of cultural differences play a major role in building a positive belief system, appreciating and developing positive relationships between teachers and students, and how becoming culturally competent can equip teachers in developing a positive belief system about cultural diversity. A positive belief system is the attitude needed to develop the skills and practices to narrow the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students.

Teacher respondents in this study believed that resource materials should represent at least three different ethnic groups. State educators can benefit from this study by developing curriculum and state standards that would specifically address the needs of diverse students, by mandating cultural diverse classes, and by assuring that resource materials represent all students.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study compared the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers in an urban setting. This study revealed that there was a significant difference in classroom management between novice and veteran teachers. A study which delves into the classroom management practices of novice teachers and veteran teachers can be explored.

Assisting teachers in developing skills and practices for classroom management for diverse students will aid them in creating an environment that is conducive to learning for all students. This study in teacher classroom management skills will assist teachers in determining if teacher attitude and bias play a role in their tolerance for misbehavior based on the diversity of students. Number of referrals by race and gender can provide information to support any bias that may exist among teachers.

African American children, specifically males, are perceived as larger threats than other students just because of who they are (Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2014). The Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity further noted that even though Caucasian students act out more frequently than African American students, African American students are more prone to disciplinary actions of Caucasian teachers. McGrady and Reynolds (2013) noted that the accepted explanation of

Caucasian teachers' lower ratings of African American students is that Caucasian teachers are predisposed by racial stereotypes, a predisposition that African American students' behavior and performance are worse than Caucasian students. This study would assist in dispelling these stereotypes.

### **Implications**

This study made a unique contribution to the importance of developing beliefs that support learning for all students. It added to the literature as to what role teaching experience plays in developing a positive belief system through years of experience by comparing the beliefs of novice and veteran teachers. This study assisted in understanding the difference of cultural beliefs between novice and veteran teachers and how their beliefs affect their relationship with diverse students.

This study was significant in that it contributed to the importance for teachers to identify and understand that their cultural perceptions were shaped by their social background, personal experiences, and years of teaching experience and that their cultural perceptions may unconsciously determine educational responses that impact the academic achievement of students who may be culturally different. Identification of teacher beliefs assisted teachers in becoming aware of their cultural perceptions, valuing cultural differences, overcoming the barriers that prevent African American students from experiencing equal academic opportunities, and producing positive changes for African American students academically.

This study contributed to the understanding of cultural awareness between novice and veteran teachers and the importance of interculturality or teaching experience in

building positive, caring relationships with culturally diverse students. The findings assisted teachers in determining if experience or immersion into a culture different from the teacher's culture shaped their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs toward their African American students and guides their teaching practices for culturally diverse students. This study also assisted teachers in understanding how awareness of cultural differences can play a major role in building positive beliefs, appreciating and developing positive relationships between teachers and students, and how becoming culturally competent can equip teachers in developing the attitude needed to develop the practices and skills needed to contract the gap of achievement between Caucasian and African American students.

This study contributed to the importance for teachers to identify and understand that their belief system is shaped by their social background, personal experiences, and years of teaching experience. It is important for teachers to understand that their belief system may unconsciously determine educational responses that impact the academic achievement of students who may be culturally different. Identification of teacher belief systems assisted teachers in becoming aware of their belief system, valuing cultural differences, overcoming the barriers that prevent culturally diverse students from experiencing equal academic opportunities, and producing positive changes for students who may be culturally different.

This study contributed to the understanding of cultural awareness among novice and veteran teachers and the importance of interculturality or teaching experience in building positive, caring relationships with culturally diverse students. The finding



assisted in determining if experience or immersion into a culture different from that of the teacher shapes their cultural belief system. It also assisted teachers in understanding “one shoe does not fit all” in educating today’s youth.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion interculturality or field experience can make a difference in the beliefs of teachers in discovering their cultural identity and recognizing cultural differences. Cultural beliefs are shaped by cultural knowledge which is obtained from interacting with those who are culturally different. The ultimate goal for both novice and veteran teachers is to obtain both intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence is one’s skill to reason and perform interculturally correct while intercultural sensitivity is one’s capability to distinguish, appreciate, and understand cultural differences. Intercultural sensitivity further entails developing a positive emotion regarding cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behavior.

Significant difference in the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers may arise as veteran teachers through field experience and length of time gain cultural knowledge and skills in what strategies work best with diverse students and in building meaningful teacher-student relationships. This study was grounded in theory through Bennett’s Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which exemplified the central belief that as one’s experience with other cultures grows cultural competency increases.

With the changing student demographics increasing in diversity and the teacher workforce remaining White, it is imperative that school leaders recognize the connection

between the cultural beliefs of teachers and the academic success of all students. The importance of cultural knowledge and awareness and the role it plays in the belief system of teachers should be a priority in achieving intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence which is the ultimate successful behavior when encountering cultural difference.

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## Appendix A: Sample E-mail Invitation

Colleagues:

Hello, my name is Janet Cook Riley and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am also a teacher in the [redacted] system. You are invited to take part in a research study that will examine your cultural beliefs. The purpose of this quantitative comparative cross-sectional study is twofold. First, this study will compare the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers in urban schools toward African American students.

This study will contribute to the understanding of the cultural beliefs of novice and veteran teachers and the importance of interculturality or field experience in building positive, caring relationships with culturally diverse students.

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

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as being uncomfortable in discussing delicate issues such as race. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or well-being.

This study can possibly encourage, enlighten, and empower you as teachers by allowing you the opportunity to explore how your life experiences shape your beliefs, values, and attitudes. This study also assists you in becoming sensitive to the needs of your students by understanding the need to learn your own culture as well as the culture of others. It will inform you of the critical consciousness that is needed to form a positive relationship with culturally diverse students.

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by applying a password only known by me on the hard drive of the computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

If you have questions, you may contact me via [redacted]. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is [redacted]. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

Please find a link to the survey below requesting participation in this cultural awareness study. You are not required to disclose your name. The only information that is requested is the number of years of teaching. All submissions will be sent to my email at Walden University. Thank you for your time and support in this matter.

## Appendix B: Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory Survey Items

1. I believe African American students consider performing well in school as “acting White”
2. I believe African American students have more behavior problems than other students.
3. I believe African American students are not as eager to excel in school as Caucasian students.
4. I believe students who live in poverty are more difficult to teach.
5. I believe African American students do not bring as many strengths to the classroom as their Caucasian peers.
6. I believe my contributions are appreciated by my colleagues.
7. I believe I have opportunities to grow professionally as I fulfill duties at my ISD.
8. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.
9. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.
10. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.
11. I believe my ISD families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.
12. I believe my ISD families are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.
13. I believe the district has strong support for academic excellence from our surrounding community (civic, church, business).
14. I believe ‘all’ students in my ISD are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.
15. I believe it is important to identify with the racial groups of the students I serve.
16. I believe I am comfortable with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from my own.
17. I believe cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school’s yearly program planning.

18. I believe the in-service training in past years assisted me in improving my teaching strategies.
19. I believe I am culturally responsive in my teaching behaviors.
20. I believe cooperative learning is an integral part of my ISD teaching and learning philosophy.
21. I believe frequently used material within my class represents at least three different ethnic groups.
22. I believe that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.
23. I believe there are times when 'racial statements' should be ignored.
24. I believe a child should be referred 'for testing' if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.
25. I believe some students do not want to learn.
26. I believe there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.
27. I believe the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.
28. I believe in-service training focuses too much on 'multicultural issues'.

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## Appendix C: Permission to Use the Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory

March 29, 2018

Hello Janet:

Please forgive my delay. Attached please find two documents that I believe can assist you.

Dr. Carter and I enthusiastically give you permission to use the CABI in your research. Your proposed research will make a significant difference in the field of education. The beliefs of teachers about students of color and most specifically of African American learners are important. Our goal is to support teachers in the effective teaching of learners. Helping them understand how they and others think, while we also support them in becoming more culturally responsive is important.

Linda Brown went home to glory this week. She truly etched in history the mandate for desegregated schools in the 1954 and 1955 Brown v Board of Education decision. Ironically, almost 64 years later, we are still fighting for the quality education of African American children. In her memory, I applaud your effort to contribute to our better understanding how to make the radical changes needed.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Dr. Gwendolyn Webb-Hasan  
Associate Professor – Educational Administration and Human Resource Development  
Associate Director – Educational Leadership Research Center  
Texas A&M University  
Harrington 523 MS 4226  
College Station, Texas 77843  
[gwebbj@tamu.edu](mailto:gwebbj@tamu.edu)

“Agitate to Educate.... It takes an entire village to educate a child, but we must first reconstruct the village...”