AND STILL WE RISE: A CRITICAL NARRATIVE OF THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

by

BOBBY B. GUEH

(Under the Direction of DERYL F. BAILEY)

ABSTRACT

Maya Angelou said, “You may write me down in history with your bitter, twisted lies, you may trod me in the very dirt, but still, like dust, I'll rise”. Despite the growing diversity of schools, and the need for more social emotional support of students from minoritized groups, the school counseling profession continues to lack diversity in practitioners, despite a major push for social justice and advocacy in the profession. This lack of diversity is seen specifically with the underrepresentation of Black male school counselors, while their experiences as school counselors are absent from the literature. In the spirit of social justice, critical race theory was utilized as a theoretical framework, and thematic narrative analysis, the goal of this research was to evoke the voices of Black male school counselors, critique the impact structural racism has had on their personal and professional journey, excavate their resiliency and perseverance, and ascertain their perspectives on strategies to recruit Black men into the profession. Findings from this research provided insights into the experiences and thoughts of the participants personally and professionally. A total of 10 Black male school counselors from school districts around the Southeast of the U.S. served as storytellers for the research. The data

analysis consisted of narratives of each participant to identify recurring themes. The analysis revealed themes that were categorized as structural racism, and themes categorized as counter-narratives that have a significant influence on the personal and professional experiences of Black male school counselors. Themes that were extracted from their experiences included feelings of racial fatigue, tokenism, code switching, burden of their identities, resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and community building.

INDEX WORDS: School Counselor, Black males, Critical Race Theory, Narrative Theory, social justice, advocacy, resilience

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BOBBY B. GUEH

BA, South Carolina State University, 1999

MA, The College of New Jersey, 2003

Ed.S, The College of New Jersey, 2007

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2020

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Major Professor:	Deryl F. Bailey
Committee:	Anneliese Singh
	George McMahon

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2020

DEDICATION

"Seek God's will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." The path to my Ph.D. has been a life-changing journey, and it is a path that I believe I was destined to travel, despite feelings of imposter syndrome and inadequacy at times. My first dedication of this journey is to God, Olodumare, Ancestral Spirits the Great Ase', Osun, Ogun, Obatala, Shango, who planted this seed in my soul and provided me with all of the strength I needed to see it through to the end. As I continue on my personal and professional paths into the future, I am grateful for the protection of the ancestral spirits, who will continue to guide the winds that soar me through valleys and summits of this life and beyond.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family. Without their overwhelming support and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. I would like to thank my amazing wife, Kia, for the endless motivation, sacrificing time, and being my number one cheerleader. You were able to provide a constant voice of peace and focus during a time of frustration and uncertainty. You were right by my side during my journey down this path and we were able to grow intellectually, personally, and spiritually. You pushed me and kept me from discouragement. You kept me in prayer and constantly reminded me that this was achievable, even after suffering a stroke. You were there for me on my most lonely days, and days that I did not believe in myself. You know me better than any other person in this world, and I thank the Almighty God that you have been that angel in my life. I love you. I would like to thank and dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Rev. Dr. Daniel

Grimes Gueh, and Musu E. Gueh. Words cannot express the gratitude and deep appreciation that I have for you. We came to this country from Liberia in the mid-80s. Foreigners in a strange land, not knowing how our destiny and journey would end, but one thing we did know, that it began on the foundation of faith, and you built that foundation for me and my siblings. As parents, you provided me with a sense of pride, purpose, and instilled in me a drive to succeed. You were able to stress the importance of education, goals, and hard work. You two were able to expose me to the different aspects of life, which helped me to develop into a well-rounded individual. I know you made sacrifices and committed selfless acts I will never understand, but please know I am forever grateful. I love you both greatly.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my three children, Zaquan, JJ, and Sundiata. I know these few years have been difficult with me going to classes, locked in my room doing school work on the weekends, and sometimes missing your games, but I hope this sacrifice will be an example for you all to always strive to reach your dreams and be your best self. I love you boys. I also dedicate this dissertation to my siblings (Mary, Kamah, Daniel, Gradia and MB). You all have been the fuel that has continued to push me to new levels in my life. We came to this country from Liberia clueless and lost, but have all found a way to reach a piece of the American dream, despite where and what we came from. I am proud of all of you, and I am grateful to be your brother. Love you all.

Finally, I thank all my extended family and friends. As a son of the Mother Land, the village is the most important thing for survival. My extended family and friends have been that village for me. Sincere appreciation for your unwavering love and support. Special thank you to the African United Methodist Church family, for the church has

been part of my village of support that has provided me with the encouragement and support needed to be where I am today. I end this dedication with a prayer as I dedicate this journey as an offering to our venerable ancestors for leaving on the torch of hope for generations to come, and it is my honor and responsibility to leave the torch on for the next generation after me.

My uplifted Ancestors, guides, fierce protectors, and healers, please stand with me, child of the Bassa people. Be with me at this moment, and guide me along the journey that I have ended, and now beginning. I am root of your root, and soil of your soil. We call those who have gone before, those Ancient Ones, loved ones who have left this plane, spirit helpers, all. We have reaped the harvest of your labor and stored them for time to come. Bone of your bone, and blood of your blood. Strengthen and protect me as I carry the torch to the next generation. I have not forgotten my commitment to our lineage, and I vow never to forget.

Ase'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many persons have helped, motivated, and encouraged me along this journey, and there may be someone that I have forgotten to acknowledge. Please charge it to my head, and not my heart. However, I must first recognize a man who has become a friend, mentor, and my Committee Chairperson, Dr. Deryl F. Bailey for his outstanding guidance and counsel over the years. Dr. Bailey's work in the counseling profession for over 30 years, and commitment to imparting his knowledge on his students and those he mentor is second to none. His genuine care for me as a person and my development as an academia, has left a lasting mark on me. I recall speaking with him after suffering a stroke midway in this journey and had to take time out for my health, and he simply told me "I'm concerned more about you being here than anything, take care of yourself". I am forever grateful to his humanity and genuine love and care. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Anneliese A. Singh, and Dr. George McMahon, whose consistent guidance as members of my dissertation committee, instructors, and role models in our beloved profession. Their words and unique wisdom has guided me through this journey and I am eternally grateful.

I want to recognize my cohort who has played a critical role in me getting through this journey. Due to suffering a stroke during this journey, I had the privilege of working with two different cohorts. The first group to recognize is (Natalie, Sarah, Regina, Alex, and Travis). This group started this journey with me in 2015, and although I did not finish with them, we remain friends and they have been motivating voices for me to complete this race. My current cohort (Brent, Jennifer, Raven, Zy, Bre, and Becca). You all accepted and welcomed me warmly in when I returned to the program after my stroke.

They have shown me nothing but love and support as I continued this journey, that I never thought I ‘d be finishing today. I offer my deepest appreciation and acknowledgement to my Lanier High School Family, Dr. Reuben Gresham, the principal who hired me the same year I entered this program, and Dr. Christopher Martin, who succeeded and has been a major support for me as I finished this journey. Specifically, my heart and love go out to my school counseling family at Lanier High School (Angela, Tracy, Teresa, Kris, Jenn, Joanna, Madeline, and Joy); for without their support at work, and helping me balance work and school, I would not have completed this journey. I also would like to acknowledge the Sugar Hill community that has also helped with balancing Ph.D. life with my kid’s basketball practices, track practices, football practices, and helping with taking my boys to and from sporting events, when I could not do it. I offer deep appreciation to my school counseling family in GCPS, who was led by Dianne Thompson when I first moved in this county from New Jersey, and was followed by Dr. Tinisha Parker. The words of encouragement, motivation, and support for my journey has not gone unnoticed. Sincere thank you to my Nesbit Elementary school family, and counseling department (Amanda, Joe, and Joan). Sincere thank you to my Fisher Middle School Family, and counseling department (Jill, and Elisa).

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the ten participants of this research, for without their narrative and stories, this work will not have been completed. I offer deep appreciation and sincere thank you to my Godfather Bruce Morris for his encouragement and unwavering support and the impact he has had on my life. I express my deepest appreciation to Mr. Randy Morrison, who is, next to my father, the man I admire the most. As my high school basketball coach, later my supervising counselor as I completed

my counseling intern, and mentor; just watching how you are and how you treat others has been the most impactful thing you've given me. The most humble and patient person I know. I thank you for your undying love and support. I end this acknowledgement with recognizing the boys, who became men with me, and are the brothers who have been riding with me my whole life. Lil Bruce, Black, Dog, Micah, Paul, Molu Kamara, Sincere, Frank White, Laling, Uzzy, Big E Bomar, and Erone. You brothers are indeed Brother Making Moves, and the lifetime bond we have formed is a blessing from the Most High.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I, too, sing America…

--Langston Hughes, "I, Too"

The above epigraph is the opening line from "I, Too", a poem by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes originally published in 1945. Although simple in construction, this poem portrays a critical analysis of Black people living in the pre-Civil Rights era. The poem echoes a universal call from African Americans at the time, who wanted to fully participate in the American dream (Newton, 2009). Despite their concerted cries to be recognized as part of the American structure, their voices were sometimes ignored or muted in the societal chorus, which is dominated by a majority White culture (Jones, 2016). Black people were killed and often lynched for speaking out for themselves, they were lynched for making any progress, they were lynched for trying to educate themselves, and they were lynched for standing up for themselves. The brutal legacy of slavery and forced migration of Africans from the "Motherland" (DeGruy, 2005), which was instituted by a White racialized system, terrorized and truncated the advancement of African people in this United States. Franz Fanon (1952) writes, "A normal Black child, having grown up with a normal family, will become abnormal at the slightest contact with the white world. We could see that the symptoms were residues of emotional experiences, for which we call *psychic trauma*" (p. 122). DeGruy (2005) further noted, "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a condition that exists when a population has experienced multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery,

and continues to experience oppression and institutional racism today" (p.121). The racialized structures and systems in the U.S. have aided in the social and political exclusion of the representation of Black people in critical aspects of society (i.e. education, law, and justice, business) (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Specifically, this research aims to address this systemic exclusion by giving voice to the untold narratives of Black male school counselors, who are underrepresented in the school counseling profession, by no fault of their own, but a byproduct of structural racism and segregation (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 2009). Currently, there is a major underrepresentation of Black males in the school counseling profession, and there has been no systematic efforts to bring awareness to their unique narratives, despite the oppressive educational system they were educated in, and now work in (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Friere, 1996). In this research, Critical Race Theory (CRT) will provide a critical theoretical lens in which the oppressive narrative that has defined knowledge and power for Black males will be exposed (Crenshaw, 2011; Jennings & Lynn, 2005).

The state of exclusion which Black men often find themselves, has a deep history that is woven into the oppressive structure of the U.S. (Brown & Donnor, 2011; Fanon, 1952).The desire to disrupt this infamous institution within the educational system led me down this path to examine the experiences of Black males in the school counseling profession. With the theoretical guidance of Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995), the research focused on exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of Black male school counselors in relation to their underrepresentation in the school counseling profession. After conducting the research, it was evident that the experiences of Black male school counselors was absent from the literature, especially the impact social-cultural privileges

adversely has on their personal and professional experiences (Arredondo & Perez, 2003). Chapter 1 contains the problem statement, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, brief overview, and chapter summary. The chapter also contains the research questions, and terms/definitions.

Problem Statement

To begin this critical journey into the lack of diversity and the need for more multicultural representation in the school counseling profession (Ratts et al , 2016), especially Black males, one must examine the more than four hundred years of racial oppression and White supremacy that has suppressed African Americans in the U.S. (Brown & Donnor, 2011; Newton, 2009). In August of 1619, a ship appeared on the shore of Point Comfort, in Virginia, and it carried more than 20 Africans who were enslaved and sold to colonists (Clarke, 1998). That was the beginning of the forced migration of African people from their homeland, and displacement across the Caribbean and the U.S. began the insidious system of physical and psychological enslavement (Brown, 2005; Bertocchi, 2016; Fanon, 1952). The system of slavery was one of the most profitable economic profit for the U.S., where labor-intensive cash crops, such as tobacco, sugar and rice, could be grown (Bowman et al, 2018). Beyond the free labor that enslaved Africans provided by their captors, there came along the psychological dismantling of the sociocultural identity of African people (Davis, 2020, Fanon, 2004). In his classic work of Black liberationist writing, Black Skin, White Masks, Frantz Fanon (1954) gives the following characterization of the troubled psychological relationship between Blacks and Whites:

> When the Negro makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an actual person. The goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth. (p. 154).

Treatment of slaves also ranged from mild and assistive, to cruel and sadistic (DeGruy, 2005), where they were frequently beaten or killed for trying to seek liberation. Similarly, husbands, wives, and children were frequently sold away from one another and punishment by whipping was not unusual as a means to control them (Davis, 2020). In the classic narrative of *Olaudah Equiano*, first published in 1789, Equiano refers to White people as cruel, greedy, and mean, and was surprised by the way they relate to each other, as they are even cruel between themselves, not only to the slaves (Paul, 2009). However, as he meets more white people and learns about their culture he comes to the conclusion that the white men are not inherently evil but that institutional slavery has made them cruel and callous (Paul, 2009). In Granfield's (1996) *Amazing Grace*, the depiction of an ordinary Christian hymn "Amazing Grace", captures the consciousness of an entire historical period; where Christian preacher and slaver John Newton infamously personifies the oppressive relationship that existed between slaver, an oppressor, and the slaves exploited (Agbaw, 2006). Despite growing up with Christian principles and values, he neglected his spiritual values for materialistic gains, which involved the enslavement of Africans (Agbaw, 2006). Convicted by his values, and haunted by his malice actions, he experienced a spiritual awakening, and wrote the lyrics to the Christian hymn

"Amazing Grace", which has become an ode to transformation, and liberation for many in the Christian faith (Agbaw, 2006).

President and founder of National Black Panthers Huey Newton wrote, "the struggle for personal and collective liberation against the inhumane treatment of Black people was often a fleeting illusion, and a revolutionary struggle in the U.S.". Black people experienced a long history of oppression that has historical ramifications that explicate the challenges that confront Black communities today (Davis, 2020). The institution of structural racism and lingering White supremacy has made the advances of Black people challenging and often limits their personal and professional experiences (Bell, 1995). One of the major systems for which the institution of racism has limited and affected Black people, is the educational system.

Racialized Education

The demographics and ethnic makeup of the public school systems has maintained a diverse student population for many years, yet students of color find themselves being educated by educators who do not look like them (Billingsley, 2012). Students of color are faced with learning from teachers that do not look like them, and also learning through a curriculum that is not inclusive of their cultural narrative in a positive light (Jenkins, 2006; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) study on a critical race approach to education submits that while some may attribute low academic performance of poor students to their condition of poverty, they argued that the cause of their condition of poverty should be interrogated, which will lead one back to the oppressive nature of systemic racism seen in the educational system.

Not only is the racial and ethnic diversity of educators becoming a critical need in schools, there is also a gender gap, more specifically, Black male educators absence in education (Bryan & Ford, 2014). Bryan & Williams (2017) articulated in their study that currently Black men represent 2% of teachers in the U.S., and there needs to me more focus on educational research regarding the lack of diversity of teachers and among males in K-12 to. For example, the need for more Black male teachers in schools have been a growing concern for several decades, and Black male presence in other educational positions (i.e., administrators, principals, school counselors) is also becoming a growing conversation (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). For the purpose of this research, the researcher found that the Georgia Department of Education reported that out of 3,881 school counselors in Georgia, 161 are Black males (Georgia Department of Education, 2017). According to the literature reviewed for this research, the disparity in Black male's presence in the counseling profession can be linked to the historical legacy of racism that is inherent in the American culture (Iverson, 2007; Jenkins & Lynn, 2005). Furthermore, more than ever before, Black male students need social and emotional support and more role models in our educational system (Jett, Stinson, & Williams, 2015), and for many years, educational systems have tried to increase the academic success of Black male students by recruiting more Black male teachers (Pabon, 2014). In this research, I proposed that we shift the paradigm and change the narrative, and begin recruiting more Black males into the school counseling profession.

School counseling is a critical part of the structure of schools because of the focus on the social and emotional well-being of students (Ratts et al, 2016). A large body research indicated that students are impacted by many social, psychological, and

environmental factors (Teale & Scott, 2010). On the contrary, Noguera (2003) reported that only focusing on the social-emotional needs of students does not automatically yield enhanced student academic success. An increasing body of research highlighted the need for schools to also target racial, cultural, and socioeconomic factors (Noguera, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Beyond school counselors to address these pivotal social-emotional areas in the lives of our students, counselors must also rely on their personalities, cultural experiences, values, beliefs, and emotions (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Although school counselors are trained to work with all student groups, Black male school counselors are uniquely positioned to relate to the cultural and socio-cultural experiences of Black students, but not many Black men are pursuing the field of school counseling; causes relating to historical marginalization (Davis, 2020). The effects of having a common face, background, and role model, along with the training to address the social and emotional needs of students can be potentially invaluable to resurrecting the academic performance of Black male students (Irvine, 2002).

The school counseling profession has endured many changes throughout the years. An increase of more Black males in the profession, will begin a paradigm shift of increasing counseling practitioner's representation from diverse backgrounds promoting a more social justice counseling practice (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). As change agents, school counselors play a significant part in the educational system (Griffin & Steen, 2011).They can help to ensure that systems are equitable, culturally responsive, supportive, and that the children of our nation are well educated, and emotionally equipped to be prosperous in this democratic society (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Kim, 2006).

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to examine the personal and professional narratives (Moen, 2002) of Black male school counselors and what they suggest are good strategies for recruiting more Black males. The use of qualitative research design in this research is appropriate (Creswell, 2014) because the research focused on the meaning and narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) of Black male school counselors and their experiences. Although scares in research and literature, this research aim is to add to the body of knowledge and understanding of the experiences of Black males in the school counseling profession, factors related systemic issues, and thoughts on recruiting efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession. Further, I seek to illuminate the role structural racism has on the experiences of Black male school counselors by conceptualizing this research through the lens of critical race theory (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, 2011).

Research Question

This research will be guided by the following main research goal and subsequent questions sub-questions:

The aim of this research is to elicit the voices of Black male school counselors regarding their experiences working as a school counselor, and recommendations for recruitment.

1) What are/were the personal/professional experiences of Black male school counselors?

    a) How can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed?

Significance of Research

The significance of the current qualitative research explored the perceptions and lived experiences of Black male school counselors, and the role structural racism has played in their underrepresentation (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008) in the school counseling profession. The hope is that the findings will signal a critical alarm to professional school counseling organizations, educational leadership, counselor education programs, and policy makers. By discovering the motivation of Black males (Harper, 2009; Jones & Jenkins, 2012) to enter the school counseling profession, and examining why there is a shortage of Black males in the profession, educational leadership and academic proponents can implement plans and policies to hopefully increase Black males representation in the field.

Moreover, there is a paucity in the research and literature on Black male school counselors. Consequently, there is no research that focuses on the experiences, and absence of Black males in the profession. The counseling profession is currently dominated by women, specifically White women (Willyard, 2011). Furthermore, diversity in the field is lacking, and social justice continue to be intentionally perpetuated, and carried out with the conscious intent of maintaining the privileged social status and position of the dominant group at the detriment of marginalized groups (Diangelo, 2018; Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Developing a diverse pool of school counselors allows school districts greater opportunity to recruit more counseling staff that will fit the racial and ethnic demographics of a diverse school system (Hallinan, 2001). As research has revealed, students achieve at a higher rate when they are working with educators of the same race (Irvine, 2002).

Along those same lines, organization leaders emphasize that managing and increasing diversity is an important task for all leaders of an organization (Yukl, 2006). When the diversity of an organization increases, the diversity of members perspectives and worldviews increases; consequently, the level of creativity and cultural responsiveness increases (Yukl, 2006). When the primary customers or clients served by an organization or institution comes from diverse backgrounds, there is an ethical responsibility for the organization to not only invest in training of tolerance and acceptance, but also intentionally recruit more diverse workers (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Yukl, 2006). Likewise, through active recruitment for diverse employees, mentorship, and effective professional development for all employees, school leaders can ensure that the level of cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness is present in the culture of the school (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Arredondo & Perez, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this research is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT orientation focuses on the socio-historical context of where clients find themselves, and then provides various tenets and interventions to confront the dominant discourse (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). One of the primary tenets of CRT is that racism is an ingrained part of the everyday life of U.S. society and urges that society face those realities (Crenshaw, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Unique to CRT is that *racial realism* is the central concept of understanding the pervasive inequities in American society (Bell, 1993). These inequities are harnessed in the centrality of White supremacy, which is the notion of White domination and Black inferiority (Bell, 1993; Lynn, 2002). Experienced in the arenas of law and justice, education, politics, economics,

and social life, racism is inherently woven into the fabric of American culture causing incongruence in freedom and liberty that is promised by the constitution for all people (Bell, 1995). Therefore, the lens from which I approached this research, is harnessed in this social justice frame (CRT) (Arrendendo & Perez, 2003), which allowed the researcher the ability to unearth racialized socio-historical systems from which Black males have experienced oppression and marginalization through the metanarrative of American society (Bell, 1993; Prasad, 2005). Despite the pervasive narrative of the underrepresentation of people of color in the American education system, CRT as a conceptual framework that provides a voice for the marginalized and oppressed to confront racism (Harris, 2002; Delgado, 2009; Lynn, 2010), and further disrupt other intersections of power and oppressive pedagogy (Friere, 1996). A deeper exploration of the theoretical framework will be discussed in chapter 3.

Definitions of Terms

School counselor. Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with with unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Professional school counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student achievement. The goal of the professional school counselor is to be an advocate for all students and address systemic inequities (i.e. racism, marginalization, oppression,) that have been barriers for all students, especially students of color (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

African American and Black: The two terms will be interchangeably used to describe persons of African ancestry. The researcher will use Black (with a capital "B" unless

lowercase by cited authors) as a default, but will use the term “Black” when citing its usage in literature. African American will also be used as an identification of Black people who were forced to migrate to the United States from Africa and were victims of the “Maafa” (the African Holocaust) (Brown, 2005; Clarke, 1998; Fanon, 1993).

Storytellers/participants. Both of these terms will be used interchangeably throughout the research, as to commit to the narrative tradition, the participants in this research are storytellers, who are tasked to tell their story/narrative about their experience as a Black male school counselor (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Moen, 2002; White, 2009).

Black Males. Black man (noun). A male member of a racial group originated from Africa or African ancestry (Fanon, 1993; Clarke, 1998).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): A theoretical framework that focuses on studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power. CRT gives permission to challenge and disrupt the deeply embedded personal attitudes and public policies that continue to insulate African Americans from certain careers, educational and social experiences because of the color of their skin (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Bell, 1992).

Narrative Theory (Inquiry). The narrative theory is a process that states that one’s beliefs come from self-stories. Those stories could be centered in deficit thinking created by racialized systems, or created by trauma experienced through oppression (Johnson & Christinsen, 2014; White, 2009; Singh & Hayes, 2012).

Qualitative Research. Qualitative design demonstrates a different approach to scholarly inquiry than quantitative research. The focus of qualitative research is on meaning

making, that is formulated by open-ended questioning interview process; and the researcher develops themes and patterns that can be interpreted to answer the research questions. This method supports a critical lens to research in providing participants a platform to illuminate their voice (Crewell, 2014; Johnson & Christinsen, 2014).

The Researcher. The phrase will be used to refer to the person conducting this rresearch—

Bobby Gueh.

Chapter Summary

The American educational system has faced a dramatic shift in student demographics over the past two decades (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005), yet the makeup of educators has not made significant changes to be more diverse, and effectively serve students of color (National Center for Educational Information, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005), which prove to be a social justice issue (Ratts, 2011; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The school counseling profession is part of that trend, and suffers from a lack of diversity, while perpetuating oppression and inequity in U.S. schools (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). This paradigm is even more prevalent when considering the limited amount of Black males who are school counselors (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013). The current qualitative research explored the perceptions and lived experiences of Black male school counselors concerning the disproportionality of Black males in the school counseling field.

Although there has been little to no research on the absence of Black males as school counselors, several factors have been cited as reasons for the disproportionality of Black males (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013) in the profession. Some reasons

include low social status, systemic racism, low salary, few peers, lack of exposure to counseling, teaching and counseling being perceived as women's work, and personal educational experiences (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). All of which has been directly or indirectly the consequence of a racial structure that has been created to subjugate and exclude Black men from some social settings (Nieto, 2001; Pyke, 2010; Hanks, Solomon, & Weller, 2018). Similarly, the literature reviewed for this research, showed that these reasons are also some of the same factors Black males have not pursued the counseling profession (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013). This research has the potential to shift the paradigm of the school counseling profession (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005), whereas providing literature on Black male school counselor's experiences and awakening a dialogue on why the profession suffers from a lack of diversity, and how racial structures still impacts society today.

In conclusion, chapter 1 contains an introduction that provided the purpose of this research and the problem it aims to address. It also highlighted the significance of the research and the methods through which the research was conceptualized. In chapter 2, an exploration of the literature was investigated as it relates to the history of racial structures (i.e. the educational system) and its impact on Black people, the school counseling profession, Black males in the counseling profession; included was a look at the historical background of the counseling profession. In addition, an examination of the career choices of Black males was examined, the literature on diversity in the counseling profession was explored, and the literature on recruitment. Langston Hughes legendary poem echoed loudly, "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table when company comes". Black males have been left on the margins of the American educational system for too long. It is time

to answer the call to action, and shift the diversity paradigm in the school counseling profession.

Chapter 2: Relevant Literature and Historical Context

Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes? Shoulders falling down like teardrops, Weakened by my soulful cries, Still I Rise? ~ Maya Angelou

Introduction

The primary problem stated in chapter one echoed the pervasive effects of institutional racism on the experiences of Black people, specifically its impact on the low number of Black men in the school counseling profession. Chapter 1 further discussed the significance of the study being an opportunity for the research to open an awareness of systemic oppression that is seeing in education (Carter, 2007), and its impact on Black males. The selected literature in this chapter serves four main purposes. First, a historical examination of the perpetual role of race and racism in the educational disparities in the U.S. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Second, an exploration of the theoretical framework critical race theory (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Crenshaw, 2011) and narrative tradition (White & Epston, 1990) that aided in guiding this research. Third, an examination of the school counseling profession (Steen & Rudd, 2009), and concludes with literature on recruitment. Specifically, this chapter reviewed literature related to: (a) History of Blacks in education (b) History of the counseling profession, (c) career choices (d) school counseling (e) and recruitment. The literature informs the research purpose of understanding the lived personal and professional experiences of Black male school counselors (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013; Hallinan, 2001).

To explore this disparity in the educational system (Ferguson, 2003), the researcher investigated the narratives of 10 Black male school counselors'

personal/professional experiences, their decision to go into the field, the impact they have made as school counselors, and suggested recruitment strategies. The literature review explored topics related to the history racism has played on why there is a disproportionality of Black men in counseling (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999), specifically school counseling. The research ultimately aimed to increase the awareness and interest of educational leaders, counselor education programs, and counseling professionals in supporting the recruitment, training, and retention of Black males in the school counseling profession. I begin the chapter with a discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Bell, 1995) and Narrative Tradition (NT) (White & Epston, 1990). CRT provides a lens through which the literature and findings of the research is interpreted, as well as to provide a social justice context, and to examine the role of race and racism (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), and NT provides the platform in which storytellers narrated their stories (White & Epston, 1990). The chapter concludes with an overview of the research methodology and a summary of the literature.

Theoretical Framework and Tradition

In this study, CRT provided a methodological framework for interrogating racial systems and exposing oppression which affected the experiences of the participants (Ladson-Billings, 1998), and Narrative Tradition (NT) provided a process of storytelling for the storytellers to share their unique narratives (Moen, 2002; Morgan, 2002). Narrative tradition will be explored in more details in chapter 3.

History of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Throughout the literature on Black males and Black male educators (Harper, 2009; Washington, 2010), critical theories are often utilized as a theoretical framework to examine social arrangements through the lens of power, privilege, domination, and oppression (Prassad, 2005; Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Critical theories' (CT) epistemological foundations can be traced to the founding of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt (Prasad, 2005), which set the base for a wide range of integral traditions that are unified in the effort of critical critique (Prasad, 2005; Crenshaw, 1995). This commitment to critical examination remained united in the critical traditions (Prassad, 2005), despite the various transformation it endured, one of which has its roots deep in Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (Crenshaw, 2011). Critical Legal Studies originated during the late 1960s and early 1970s when a number of lawyers and law professors around the country realized that the gains that were made by the Civil Rights Movement and other struggles for liberation had begun to fade (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). During this time, Black people achieved their greatest social political gains from local elections, street protests, and lobbying (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). With limited representation in the legal arena of the Civil Rights Movement (Bell, 1995), and the increased covert racial domination of Black people in politics and the criminal justice system (Crenshaw, 2011), Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and other legal scholars of color began to use their legal influence to present a critique of colorblindness in the law while emphasizing and highlighting the perspectives of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The leading figure and principle agitator of the CLS movement was Derrick Bell, who was a renowned professor of law at New York University (Crenshaw, 2011; Brown & Jackson, 2013). As a practicing lawyer, and paramount participant in the civil rights

movement, Bell not only noticed the overt racism and everyday social disparities of Black people (Bell, 1995), but he brought critical awareness and confrontation to the racialized judicial system in America as seen in his involvement in the infamous Brown vs. the Board of Education case (Bell, 1995). Through his critical theory principles (Bell, 1995), one of which is *Interest Convergence* (Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013), Bell proposed an analysis of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision which he argued that due to the U.S. ongoing social political appearance to the world at that time, no conflict of interest actually existed (Bell, 1980). It was the interest of the U.S. government to appear as the all unifying democratic nation, despite the many years of documented lynching, and brutal treatment to Black people (Delgado, 2009). Bell's early work helped to illuminate how self-serving political and economic construction of laws in the U.S., on the surface, appear to be in the interest of racially marginalized people (Crenshaw, 2011; Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013). The foundational work of Critical Race Theory was set by these early critiques of the legal system in the U.S. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007), yet CLS failed to challenge the systemic racism and liberalism that is embedded in the legal system (Crenshaw, 2011).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) origin is unique. It finds its genesis steeped in two movements' critical legal studies and radical feminism (Martinez, 2014). CRT made its original debut at a first-ever workshop held at in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1989, led by Kimberle Crenshaw (Delgado & Stefancic; Crenshaw, 2011). CRT sought to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power, and was created as a response to critical legal studies (CLS), the legal movement that challenged liberalism, but did not enforce the conversation of racism (Crenshaw, 2017). CLS scholars argued that race did not exist

in the framework of the legal system (Martinez, 2014), however, the omission of the perspectives of the racially subordinated groups is a detriment, because subordinated groups in any social system have knowledge that the privileged lack (Harris, 2012). Matsuda (1987) famously argued that civil rights scholarship and practice should 'look to the bottom' of society for leadership and insight (as cited in Harris, 2012).Critical Race Theory and intersectional feminism/antiracism emerged as a product of ideological tension between race liberals and their more left radical critics (Crenshaw, 2017). This struggle on the issues of racial domination, marginalization, frustration, and the dissatisfaction with CLS led to CRT being born, issues of race forming its epicenter (Crenshaw, 2011). The tenets of CRT varies depending on the scholar (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007), but for the purpose of this research, the hallmark tenets will be reviewed.

***Permanence of racism*.** This tenet was originated by Derrick Bell. Bell purports that CRT regards racism as so deeply entrenched in the social order that it is often taken for granted and viewed as natural (Delgado & Stefancic 2007). CRT scholars emphasize that racism does not necessarily operate in overt and explicit form, but operates covertly in a sociopolitical context where it is becoming more entrenched in the fabric of U.S. society (Bell, 1992). Racism can be evident in the social process of people of color and be unnoticed by them and the dominant culture (Gillborn 2005; Ladson-Billings 1998). This unawareness of racism (Bell, 1995), infiltrates through the legal, educational, political, and other structures of society (Delgado, 2009).

Interest convergence. – This tenet of CRT was also originated by Derrick Bell and remain on of the hallmark tenets today (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). The progress

and systemic gains of Black people are only able to become reality, when it benefits the systemic gains of White people (Bell, 1980). Material determinism is critical to this tenet as it promotes the advancement of both White elites and working-class Black people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007).

Counter storytelling. Counter storytelling is the method of telling a story that challenges the dominant narrative that has been placed on people of color, with the awareness that racism is a critical part of the experience (Bell, 1995). Many early writers believed strongly in the need to develop a "voice of color" and in the spirit of naming one's own reality counter the dominant narrative (Bell, 1995). Some of the early writers like Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris, and Patricia Williams, produced parables, or chronicles as a style of writing a critical critiques, yet liberating the voices of the people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Harris, 2012). The concept of storytelling was expanded by Daniel Solorzano and Tara Yosso to include the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, and other forms of identity (Harper, 2009). Three style of storying proposed are personal stories, other people's stories, and composite stories (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). For the purpose of this research, composite stories will be utilized as it entails relying on data collected from multiple persons of color who have experienced a particular context (Harper, 2009). What differentiate this style of storytelling from its original form, is that it is pursuant of the actual stories of individuals who have been oppressed, not a fictional account or anecdote of the marginalized (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Whiteness as property. Due to race and racism, Whiteness becomes the status quo, and Blackness become non-representative of the culture, further exacerbating the normative benefit of being White (Harris, 1993). Conformity becomes accepted, and

cultural pride becomes problematic (Harris, 2002); for example, Professor Cheryl Harris reflects on her grandmother, who was a fair skinned Black woman, living a double life of being Black at home, but fortunate to work in a majority White environment and was given a preverbal pass as a White woman, and did not have to experience some of the direct hatred her Black counterparts experienced at the workplace (Crenshaw et al, 1995).

Intersectionality. While CRT is centrally concerned with the structures and relations that maintain racial inequality, it does not operate to the exclusion or disregard of other forms of injustice. It is recognized that no person has a single, simplistic unitary identity. Intersectionality', as originally advanced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, speaks to an understanding of the complex and multiple ways in which various systems of subordination can come together at the same time (Crenshaw, 1989). Adopting an intersectional framework allows for the exploration of differences within and between groups taking account of issues such as historical and socio-political context while still maintaining awareness of racial inequalities (Gillborn, 2015). In his study, (Gillborn, 2015) explored the intersecting roles of race, class, and gender in the development and arrangement of dis/ability in education. He concluded that intersectionality is a vital aspect of understanding race inequity but that racism retains a primacy for critical race scholars (Gillborn, 2015). Kimberle Crenshaw further contested that way to approach intersectionality is to examine how courts frame and interpret the stories of Black women (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw (2006) argued:

> My objective here was to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism

> factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the women, race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. I build on those observations here by exploring the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural and political aspects of violence against women of color.

Intersectionality being a critical part of the CRT movement (Delgado, 2009), has provided a framework for the critical examination for a broader impact of how race clashes with other identities, causing critical injuries of racial domination and oppression (Gillborn, 2015).

Critical Race Theory has developed to be a powerful theoretical framework to conceptualize research on Black men (Brooms & Perry, 2016). Placing the voices of Black men at the center of this research in relation to their perceptions, meanings, understandings, and experiences has the potential to better illuminate research on their lived experiences in an oppressive society (Mutua, 2006; Young, 2004). Brooms and Perry utilized CRT as a framework in their study of Black males experiences and responses to the killing of Black men (Brooms & Perry, 2016). Brooms and Perry findings revealed the men's perceptions and experiences with racism and stereotyping, the strategies that they employ in response to being stereotyped and profiled, and their reflections on the recent killings of Black men led to feelings of hurt, disbelief, fear, and frustration (Brooms & Perry). Similarly, CRT challenges the master narrative that has been constructed for Black men, and the stories of *Niggers* that is often reinforced through literature disrupted (Haper, 2009).

One advantage of CRT is that its framework operates from an understanding that racism is a permanent part of the society in which we live (Bell, 1993; Yosso, 2005; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). This recognition of the normalcy of racist practices is necessary for social justice action because it is extremely difficult to reduce inequities if we allow the masking of racism (Arredondo & Perez, 2003). Additionally, by CRT acknowledging that racism exists, it allows race and racism as possible explanations for unfair practices (Crenshaw, 2017; Harris, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Bell, 1993; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). One way of accomplishing this is through the use of storytelling and counter-storytelling (Delgado, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Decuir & Dixon, 2014; Lynn, 2002). CRT places marginalized groups in the center where their stories can be told (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT is an innovative scholarly movement that puts race at the center of its analysis on the dominant culture and practices that injures people of color, including intersections of Black women and men (Crenshaw, 2006). Similar to the civil rights movement in terms of issues, the CRT movement extends its perspective to include economics, history, social context, group and self-interest, feelings and the unconscious (Bell, 1995). For the purpose of this study an exploration of CRT in the mental health profession, and educations will be conducted.

CRT in mental health

Although CRT found its roots in the law and legal arena (Crenshaw, 2011), but it has also taken a critical form in fields of mental health (Brown, 2003). A critical look at the impact of racism and oppression on Black people mental health could be seen in the early works of Frantz Fanon who work was dedicated to connecting oppressive social systems to the psyche of the oppressed (Fanon, 1952). Fanon suggested that colonized subjects were dehumanized (Fanon, 2004), and due to this colonization they experienced psychological trauma (Fanon, 1952). The psychological trauma experienced by oppressed groups (Hilton, 2011), leads to feelings of suppressed anger expression, delusional denial tendencies, extreme racial paranoia (Brown, 2003), and inferiority (Fanon, 1952). Mental health problems such as these and undocumented others can only be recognized given awareness of the social and personal implications of the racialized impact (McGee & Stovall, 2015; Brown, 2003). In his study to explicate how mental health problems can be produced by racial stratification, Brown (2003) found that suppressed anger expression is a mental health problem that might have initially arisen as a survival strategy when Blacks were enslaved, hence when this anger is suppressed, and not allowed to be addressed, they are deemed the "angry Black person". The covert and colorblind liberalism (Crenshaw, 2017), often ways heavy on the daily lives of Black students, who have to navigate White institutions. In their study to evoke CRT research on the mental health and survival of Black students at a (PWI), McGee & Stovall (2015) reported the experience of one of the Black students in their study, "the White professor will often pat me on the head and tell me good job when I accomplished something minimal. After two weeks of bearing this behavior and hoping it would change, Janet asked the lab manager

for more substantive duties. He replied, well, coming from a third-tier college, and a black one for that matter, we realize you are woefully unprepared. However, being the first black girl in the lab should be seen as a major accomplishment" (p. 504).

Critical race theorists recognize that racism and discrimination adversely affect the mental health of black students and faculty by diminishing their academic self-concept, confidence, and mental efficacy (McGee & Stovall, 2015). The stress and emotional strain on Black students caused by racial actions is what William Smith calls "*Racial Battle Fatigue*" (Smith, 2007), which is a theoretical framework for examining the response to trauma and the experience of stress symptoms often manifested as anger, isolation, withdrawal, frustration, and avoidance (McGee & Stovall; Smith, 2007). This emotional trauma and mental health burden can also found in the lives of Black men and boys.

Black males' mental health. The socio-cultural and emotional challenges faced by Black males, including financial and career expectations from families is major burden for Black men and boys (Kunjofu, 2002). Black men and boys are exposed to more psychosocial stressors than other racial and gender groups over their lifespan, increasing their vulnerability to poor social and emotional health outcomes (Lee & Bailey, 2006; Williams, 2003; Moore, 2000). While Black boys try to understand and navigate the social inequities within public schools (Jenkins, 2006), they are still expected to operate and function like other students who do not carry the additional burdens of racial and social inequalities (Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2009). Whether racist incidents are micro-aggressions or major threats like hate crimes, or police brutality (Hanks, Solomon, & Weller, 2018), the cumulative direct and indirect racialized

experiences have direct physiological consequences that put black males at risk for a host of mental health problems (Clark, Anderson, & Williams, 1999; Crocker, 2007; Harrell, 2000).

According to research in JAMA Pediatrics, from 2001 to 2015, the suicide risk for Black boys between the ages of 5 and 11 was two to three times higher than that of White boys, (Bridge, 2018). This concerning trend continues through adolescence as reported by the Nationwide Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and the rates of attempted suicide, including attempts, are two times higher among Black males compared to White males (Kann et al., 2017). The particular way depression presents itself in males combined with racialized trauma (Harrell, 2000), and the underdiagnoses of black boys with depression, may intersect to cause further disparities for Black boys in society and education (Bridge, 2018; Moore, 2000; Crenshaw, 2006).

CRT in Education

The educational system in the U.S. has become a battle ground for social justice and CRT education for over two decades (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Credited for being the "Mother of CRT in Education" is Gloria Ladson-Billing (Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013), who argued that racialized educational experiences for students of color is pandemic, even detrimental to their educational attainment (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The social construction of race, and race primacy intersected with gender and class is critical for educational equity (Gillorn, 2015; Crenshaw, 2006). Further, a number of education scholars have drawn on counter-storytelling as a method to radical claims and systemic changes about race and education (Love, 2004). Tara Yosso and Daniel

Solorzano invoked this approach to examine educational policies in the U.S. (Yosso et al. 2004) and they further articulated this method to analyze dropout rates for Chicano/a students from elementary to graduate school (Yosso, 2013). Gloria Ladson-Billings has drawn specifically on Bell's narrative-based discussion about 'black schools' to imagine a world where black schools are resource-rich environments where black students excel (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The use of CRT in education as a theoretical framework is paramount in explicating the disparities and oppressive experiences of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2011).

In their article, DeCuir and Dixon (2004) shared a response from an African American student regarding racism, "Everybody knows that racism exists and that people are racist. So when it comes out, the faculty and students aren't that surprised that it is there" (p. 26). Racism is prevalent in all aspects of society, with schools not being an exception (Hallinan, 2001). There are several ways CRT tenets can be utilized to analyze race and racism in the educational setting. For example, counter-storytelling can help students of color explain how they feel uncelebrated at a school that's dominated by the dominant culture (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). The permanence of racism can be illustrated by Black students speaking out on racial inequities in discipline policies and other unfair racist treatment (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Whiteness as property relates to schools policies and practices that restricts students of color from celebrating their culture and also limiting advancement in certain academic placement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). DeCuir and Dixon (2004) illustrated interest-convergence when students of color are recruited to certain schools for the indirect purpose of elevating the school's athletic success at a predominately White

school. While the Black students are receiving a better education at a more affluent school, the school benefits from their athletic prowess (Harper et al, 2013; Harrison, 2007; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Lastly, the critique of liberalism is manifested when schools recruit and hire a Black staff to meet the diversity status quo and become the token expert on all things Black and multicultural (Iverson, 2007). The experiences of participants in this study being the only Black male school counselor in their schools, or sometimes the only Black male in the school, is another example of the added burden of tokenism and "racial fatigue" (Roth, 2004; Smith, 2007). CRT sees school curriculum as a culturally specific weapon designed to maintain a White supremacist master script for people of color, students and staff (Freire, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

For this research, CRT provides a social justice theoretical lens that is committed to both critique and change (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009), and Narrative tradition will be used to amplify the emic voice of the participants (Singh & Hays, 2012). Both CRT and NT are centered in a commitment to extract the stories and counter-story of marginalized groups and to work with individuals and collective groups to counter the dominant discourse (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; White, 2009; Reissman, 2007), or "*restory*" dominant plot lines (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Narrative Tradition

The inception of narratives can be traced back to traditional African practices of storytelling. The "griot" or storyteller is revered among people of African descent, thus, narrative interviewing can be a culturally appealing method for gathering the life stories of African Americans in identity research (White & Dotson, 2010). Likewise, other

narrative work date back to early philosophers who were wager to find ways to depict meaning and purpose through narrative stories (Clandinin, 2013. Narrative inquiry extends this philosophical foundation into a methodology that is used to explore, understand, and express lived experiences of participants through observing and listening to participant's stories through oral, written, and art-based forms that become interpreted texts (Clandinin, 2013). Seated in the social constructivist approach to counseling, counselor using narrative theory see life as a process of storytelling (White, 2009). Narratives theory has a long history that is inspired by French philosopher Foucault, and is assertive in the analysis of social power (White, 2009). Michael White and David Epston are the names commonly associated with NT (White, 2009). One of the central concepts of NT is stories (Morgan, 2002), which is fundamental to this study of Black male school counselors; in hopes to extract meaningful narratives that will address the issue of Black male school counselor shortage. Stories are in the forms of the dominant story, and in contrast, NT help clients develop alternate stories (White, 2009).

Another central concept in NT is the externalizing conversation (Morgan, 2002). This is the viewpoint that problems are separate from the individual, and with this thought, the therapist can focus on the individual strength of the client (Morgan, 2002). People live multiple stories, but often live captive to the dominant stories of society. Black male students have been the victims of the majoritarian narrative (Harper, 2009) and NT provides a counseling approach that allows an opportunity to "re-author" (Morgan, 2002) their narrative. Re-authoring conversations invites clients to examine events, experiences, and make meaning of a new reality that disrupts the dominant discourse (Epston & White, 1990).

Furthermore, NT has proven to be an effective research tool by more scholars to analyze the experiences of Black men (White & Dotson, 2010). In their study, Bukoski and Hatch (2016) utilized narrative analysis to examine longitudinal, qualitative data from first-year Black males as they transition into community college through their second semester. They found that positionality is critical to understanding the success of Black males in institutional structures, and in many instances, they leveraged normative constructions of masculinity, resilience and confidence for success (Bukoski & Hatch, 2016). Likewise, in his narrative research study on the experiences of successful Black male college students, Harrison (2014) found that intrinsic motivation and ethnicity were critical in the overall college experience and success of Black male students. Similarly, Hall and Fields conducted research on the narratives of Black adults about microagressions and related health stress. The study was a categorical and narrative analysis that discovered that participant's experienced various mental and physical symptoms that were attributed by racial micoagressions (Hall & Field, 2015).

The goal of the narrative tradition in this study is to examine the stories and narratives about Black male school counselors and their lived experiences (Singh & Hays, 2012; White & Epston, 1990). Communicating in narrative form is essential and is shaped by stories that are recollected and shared with others (Reissman, 2007; Singh & Hays, 2012). Most critical in this approach to research is the applicability of an individual's historical data to be a driving force of change for a larger group and larger system (Singh & Hays, 2012; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The narratives from Black male school counselors in this study has the propensity to provide scholars and researchers greater awareness of their experiences, which in turn, can lead to more robust

literature and research. Furthermore, school districts, counselor education programs, ASCA, and other state and local agencies can utilize this information to recruit, train, and retain more Black males into the school counseling profession. Before diving into recruitment, a history of Black people in education is considered.

History of Blacks in Education

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. often conveyed in his many inspiring speeches that "education is the great equalizer", which is the bedrock to social and economic development. Education has been the conduit in which Black people are able to achieve the American Dream (Hefner, 2004). That conduit has been filled with the debris of hate and residue of racial oppression (Jenkins, 2006) for centuries. Upon arrival to the shore of the Virginia colonies in 1619, the fate of Africans was already determined (Tolman, 2011). With the mechanism of racial oppression, Africans were to remain enslaved, second class citizens, uneducated, poverty stricken, and dependent on the hands of their masters, their enslavers (Taylor, 2000; Clarke, 1998; Newton, 2009). With education being one way to attain freedom and liberation (Newton, 2009), White slave owners, and White government officials prohibited the intellectual development of Africans for centuries. Black people were not permitted to read books as slaves, and they were also not permitted to attend formal schools (DeGruy, 2005). In Frederick Douglass's "Narrative *of the Life of Frederick Douglass*" he recounts, "I would at times feel that learning to read was a curse rather than a blessing. It has given me a view of my wretched condition. To make matters worse, it was unlawful to teach a slave to read". Throughout the narrative, Douglass vacillates about the desire to be more educated, and the feeling of

losing hope entirely. The desire to learn, but the fear of learning, is a script that is pervasive in the history of Black people educational experiences in the U.S.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plessey v. Ferguson* established the separate but equal doctrine, which was far from being equal. Racial segregation further enhanced the foundations of an inferiority complex by Black people and superiority mindset by White people (Fanon, 1995). The system of *Jim Crow* segregation (Alexander, 2012) was designed to separate the races, and control the advancement of Black people. This system of oppression (Crenshaw, 1995), meant to keep Black people subjugated behind in all social and educational development, remained law until the 1960s, despite the Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall's push to overturn it in the landmark *Brown v Board of Education* decision in 1954 (Bell, 1980). The court held, "that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal and that they violated the Constitution's 14th amendment and must stop" (Constitution Rights Foundation, 2014, para. 18).

Despite this giant leap for racial equity with the 1954 decision, Bell (1992) argued that the victory for people of color had less to do with moral consciousness and empathy for Blacks, and more to do with serving a political purpose for elite Whites. Although Bells' insights on this issue proved to be radical and challenged mainstream thoughts, he was later proven to be right as a result of research conducted by Mary Dudziak, a legal historian (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT interest conversion tenet speaks to this as it acknowledges that White people being beneficiaries of civil rights legislations as it relates to educational changes, and White individuals are not inclined to display active energy to reduce racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998; McCoy, 2006). Systemic

racism has a direct correlation to the educational experience of people of color, and it is still seen in today's social and educational system (Davis, 2020).

Racism in the U.S.

Racism is the belief that racial groups have superior or inferior characteristics resulting in different treatment because of that belief (Baez, 2000). Racism is not passive, and it implies power and acting upon the belief of the superiority of one group over another which creates a sense of inferiority within minoritized groups (Better, 2008; Tolman, 2011). Racism affects individuals and groups in critical ways (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Crenshaw, 2011, Bell 1995), for the purpose of this research, I will highlight three of the critical forms of racism.

Individual Racism occurs by individual actions of racism, stereotype, microaggression, that projected by the dominant group and happens in various aspects of society (Better, 2008). Some of these actions include racial slurs, denying someone of a different race access to one's establishment because of their race, avoidance of another race, and even hate crimes (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). An example of denying service could be a Black man waiting to catch a taxi, and he is constantly passed by taxis who drivers are of the dominant race. The individual thought, and deed that is committed is an individual choice (Carter, 2007). Another kind of racism that is more embedded in the collective system is institutional or structural racism.

Institutional racism takes place through the implementation of policies, procedures, practices, rules, and regulations that harm one or more races due to the fact that these groups are different from the dominant group (Baez, 2000; Thompson-Miller &

Feagin, 2007)). Within a hegemonic society, this is seen through the acts of exclusionary practices like (i.e. voters exclusion, Jim Crow laws) that limits people of color entrance into some of the important institutions of human advancement (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). Although voting and other segregatoin practices have been overcome, there are still implicit practices like fair housing, hiring practices, and financial predatory lenders, that impacts people of color dailey (Alexander, 20112).This type of racism may be intentional or unintentional actually appearing neutral and unnoticed by some minorities, yet they have a harmful (Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

Societal Racism exists when the cultural norms, beliefs, habits, practices and assumptions give preference to one race over another (Feagin & McKinney, 2003). The preference given to the dominant culture may exist in everyday living or even in basic activities in society. When a child from a minoritized group is watching cartoons or shows that have no cultural representation of them (Fanon, 1995). When students of color are being taught by the majority of individuals that do not look like them, and learning from text books that's not representative of their culture (Lynn, 2002; Crocker, 2007). When your race is depicted as being evil, and a White culture is depicted of being good, creates negative self-worth, inferiority complex, and trauma that can lead to emotional and psychological problems for people of color, or psychic trauma (Fanon, 1993).

Racism exists in all aspects of U.S. society occurring overtly and covertly (Iverson, 2007), with societal racism lingering in the everyday lives of Black people. With racism being a deep seeded institution woven into the U.S. cultural practices, directly or indirectly (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007; Carter, 2007; Crocker, 2007), there is a residue of racism that needs to be mentioned in this research.

***White Privilege*.** The discussion of race and racism is often a difficult conversation to have, for some Black people, but especially for White people. Diangelo (2018) shared, "I am a White American raised in the U.S. I have a White frame of reference and a White worldview, and I move through the world with White experiences. Being seen racially is a common trigger of White fragility, and thus, White people must face the first challenge; name our race" (p. 1). The mere conversation of racism or any experiences that triggers a discomfort, leaving the racial comfort and privilege of being White, is *White Fragility* (Diangelo, 2018).

White fragility is not necessarily a weakness (Diangelo, 2018), but when White people continue to protect their racial status and emotions, and maintain their racial status and White privilege (Wise, 2008). White privilege is the advantages White people receive by the virtue of being White and benefiting from the over 400 years of racial oppression and free labor of Black people of the world (Wise, 2008; Fanon, 2004). Whites have these advantages simply based on the color of their skin; doors that are open for them are not open to other people (Diangelo, 2018). There are systems in place that allow for maintaining White privilege (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), with the power and identity that accompanies it (Harrell, 2000). Such systems exist culturally, socially, legally, and organizationally, enabling White people to hold on to that power and authority in society (Cokely, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Whites exercised their power over other groups such as when Indigenous people of this land called the U.S., were removed from their sacred land and their children were removed from their homes (Clarke, 1998). Blacks were treated as property by holding them as slaves and their families were separated (Kendall, 2001; Crocker, 2007). These events maintained

White privilege historically, and today the benefits of marginalizing and suppressing certain groups, still has its effects today, as indigenous tribes of this land are sequestered to live on reservations and experience some of the worst social and emotional traumas (Duran, 2006; Brave Heart & DeBruyn). Lastly, Black ghettos and urban slums remain to be the bedrock for which poverty, drugs, violence, and police brutality ravishes the Black community because of institutional racism, societal racism, and White privilege (Wise, 2008).

Black males in education

For the purpose of this study, an examination of Black boys in education will explored in the literature. The educational experiences of Black boys in public schools remains a topic of research, critical critique, and scholarly discourse (Harper, 2009, Harper et al, 2013). Although the conversations surrounding Black boys are paramount, and an array of initiatives has been established to address the achievement gap between Black male students and other racial counterparts, they are still kept behind major school achievement data in result of systemic oppression (Bailey, 2003; Ferguson, 2003; Lee & Bailey, 2006; Noguera, 2005; Pabon, 2014; Moore, 2000). One such program that has had over thirty years of success in providing a developmental and comprehensive approach to working with Black boys is Project: Gentlemen on the Move (PGOTM) (Bailey, 2003). Bailey (2003) proposed, "The mission of PGOTM is to develop and nurture excellence in Black males through empowerment and transformative process" (p. 16). The success of this program can also be noted in its holistic approach of providing the student's opportunities to experience academic and social success, high expectations, family involvement, and realistic goals that are tracked by all stakeholders (Bailey,

2003). Along with research and initiatives like (PGTOM) to address the challenges facing Black male students, recruiting more Black males in the educational profession, specifically school counseling profession, as a way of mitigating some of the social emotional challenges facing Black boys has become paramount (Bryan & Ford, 2014).

Black males underrepresentation in education

Historically, the public school teacher population of the United States has been predominantly White and female, whereas the demographics of the P-12 student population remain diverse, becoming more racially and ethnically diverse with an increase in Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial populations (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Furthermore, in school districts around the country, males are underrepresented in the educational profession; this is especially true for Black males (Bryan & Ford, 2014). Black males are also underrepresented in other educational positions (i.e. administrators and school counselors) as well. For example, the Georgia Department of Education reported that, out of 3,881 school counselors in Georgia, 161 are Black males (Georgia Department of Education, 2018). There is a drastic disparity in the number of Black male school counselors relative to other school counseling professionals in a time when Black male students are consistently at the bottom of all major school achievement reports (Noguera, 2012; Fergurson, 2003).

More than ever before, Black male students need social and emotional support throughout the educational system (Jett, Stinson, & Williams, 2015). For many years, the educational system has tried to increase the academic success of Black male students by recruiting Black male teachers (Pabon, 2014), yet there remains a gap between Black

male students ' school achievement and other male student groups (Noguera, 2012). The current research aimed to propose a paradigm shift, and begin the dialogue on recruiting more Black males into the school counseling profession. With more Black male school counselors connecting with Black male students, there is the potential to address their social and emotional needs, which in turn, may increase their academic success (Allen, 2018; Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2009).

History of Counseling

Historically, counselors have provided society with the unique ability to address the social and emotional needs of individuals navigating mental health challenges. The early counseling practices, psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic approaches, were all pioneered by White men (e.g., Sigmund Freud, B.F. Skinner, and Carl Rogers). Although these therapeutic movements lacked diversity in practitioners, they formed significant theoretical foundations for counseling (Cherry, 2019). Today, males have become rare in the helping professions (Willyard, 2011). However, the counseling profession and social psychology did not always lack male influence (Kenny, 2016). On the contrary, men often rose to prominence in the field, while women frequently experienced discrimination and gender-based oppression (Daniels, 2019). In describing this point, much of the history of psychotherapy is written from the perspective of privileged White men advocating a particular theory (Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2004). This is not because women had no interest in the field of psychology, but was largely because women were systematically excluded from pursuing academic training and practice during the early years of counseling (Cherry, 2019; Evans, 2010). Furthermore, the absence of men in the counseling and therapeutic professions is

being documented more today, but there is still a gap in the literature regarding the disproportionality of Black men in the counseling profession, more specifically school counseling (Henfield et al, 2013). The absence of Black men in the counseling profession is due to centuries of being left out of the history of what the practice of counseling is (Crocker, 2007; Carter, 2007). The concept of counseling has been a practice in Black cultures for centuries before the Eurocentric practice of counseling that is prevalent today ((Bandjes, Swartz, & Cembi, 2017).

African Healing Practices

For centuries, Black people have been involved with African healing practices which predates European or Western counseling practices (Edwards et al, 2004). Since ancient African times, indigenous African tribes have utilized spiritual forms of healing to reach a state of spiritual and emotional health. Psychology, in its original form, is concerned with the breath, energy, consciousness, soul, or spirit of life (Edwards, 2004), which is the goal of counseling and therapy. Such an essential and spiritual form of psychology, is still practiced internationally today, and has its roots in African communal spirituality and spiritual community (Edwards 2004). Healing has been a source of spiritual awakening, and a dualistic construct of the ancestors and living (Bandjes, Swartz, & Cembi, 2017). It is a firm belief in traditional African healing practices, that spiritual healing powers be nurtured and incorporated for the promotion of health and liberation. The persons responsible for and who practiced these special ordained skills, were both men and women (Edwards, 2004). This practice of spiritual healing has always been the special province of the shaman, traditional healers, diviners, psychologist and priest, (Bandjes et al, 2017). Despite the rich history of African healing practices and its

long history, when one thinks of counseling and psychology, the continent of Africa is not even thought of (Boyd-Franklin, 2019. Part of what White supremacy and colonialism (Fanon, 1952) have done is to create an evil and dark narrative of the continent of Africa. Africa is the dark continent and there is nothing good that can come out of that land (Fanon, 1952).

Colonialism, which was the infamous continuation of the transatlantic slave trade (Clarke, 1998) and ravished the African continent for over one hundred years, was a vicious racial institution that expanded White dominance around the world. This system, created by countries in Europe, as well as the U.S., infiltrated African nations and took control of the power, politics, financial, social and cultural traditions (Fanon, 2004) . Within this system, colonizers would enter into an African nation and declare prominence by manipulation, sometimes through religion, or sometimes by brute force (Clarke, 1998). For example, White colonizers, some Christians, would enter into an African tribal village and deem all the African spiritual healing traditions and practices evil, and the way to true eternity was through their religious faith (Telleyowan, 2006). These practices of White supremacy and colonialism lasted decades, and are still impacting the continent of Africa today (Fanon, 1952).

Black male psychologist

Despite the underrepresentation of Black men in psychology and counseling, Black male psychologists have made some impact on the field throughout its history. For example, Richards (2016) reported:

> Francis Cecil Sumner (1895-1954) is better known for being the first African American to ever earn a Ph.D. in Psychology. What is not so widely known is that he was also the first African American to have earned a doctorate from any American University. Francis Cecil Sumner was a pioneer for future Black psychologists. He started the psychology program at Howard University and went on to teach other prominent future Black psychologists such as Kenneth Clark. He was also a pivotal leader in education reform and completed vast amounts of research that counteracted racism and bias in psychological studies of African Americans…. Francis Cecil also did a lot of research in the areas of discrimination and social injustice, but his greatest contribution to the field may have been becoming the first African American psychologist and paving the way for Black men would follow him. (para. 1-3)

Francis Sumner, known as the "Father of Black Psychology" was a revolutionary advocate for social justice and equity in the field of psychology, and he used his platform to provoke systemic change. Sumner's focus in psychology was "race psychology" wherein he studies how to understand and eliminate racial bias in the administration of justice. He wanted to combat the Eurocentric methods of psychology that were used during his time. Sumner analyzed the way the education system treated African Americans. His ideas aligned with Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. Sumner believed that the department of psychology should separate from philosophy and the school of education within the university system. He was one of the first people in academia to contribute to the fields of psychology, religion, and the administration of justice together (Weber, 2018). Supported by the immense contributions of these pioneers

in psychology and counseling, counseling expanded beyond the psychotherapeutic setting and into the school setting.

***Franz Fanon*.** Frantz Fanon was a psychiatrist, intellectual, and revolutionary born in the French colony of Martinique. Fanon wrote about the effects of colonialism and oppression in books such as "Black Skin, White Masks" and "Wretched of the Earth." His writings, as well as his support of the Algerian War of Independence, have influenced anti-colonial movements across the world, including in South Africa, Palestine, and the United States. Fanon was a prominent psychological analyst of colonialism and oppression during the 20th century (Macey, 2000). Scorned by the horrors of the racial hatred he experienced as a child, Fanon devoted his life to the liberation of people who were oppressed and was suffering under the hands of colonialism (Hilton, 2011). Fanon's analysis of colonialism and its impact on colonized subjects argues persuasively that culture is a major element in the resistance to colonialism, and decolonization (Hilton, 2011). His contribution to liberation psychology is far reaching and has provided indegenous people of the globe with the revolutionary spirit to fight for their freedom.

Dr. Joseph White. Dr. Joseph White was professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine, and "godfather" of Black Psychology. While Dr. White main focus of study was psychology, he dedicated his life to supporting disadvantaged students of color by creating curriculum that catered to their cultural needs. Dr. White commitment to Black liberation exuded through his many works on *Black Psychology*. He viewed Black families as having inherent strengths, and he challenged the Eurocentric definition of family based on a White middle class nuclear

home (Boyd-Franklin, 2019). Dr. White believed in the inclusion of the Black father in the counseling relationship and debunking the absent Black father myth. He argued that "Contrary to the stereotype of their unwillingness to be present in their children's lives, many Black fathers have a major role in child rearing and a great deal of power in African American families" (Boyd-Franklin, 2019. p. 107). Other salient contribution to Black Psychology was the African-centered psychology and how it functions to facilitate health, mental health, and the process of healing (Parham et al., 2011). African-centered psychology has its foundations in African spirituality and spiritual energy, which incorporates the role of religion in the counseling and healing process (Nwoye, 2010). The viability of African healing practices and its contribution to counseling will be discussed later in this chapter. The origins and counseling and psychology later morphed into other aspects of society, specifically the school system.

Professional school counseling history

School counseling, or vocational guidance as it was known in its inception, has become a prominent branch of the helping professions (Gysbers, 2002). From its roots in the Industrial Revolution, school counseling was conceived to provide vocational guidance, and it was often a teacher who inherited the position of counselor in addition to other duties (Schimmel, 2008). Guidance and counseling emerged in the 1920s with the primary purpose of assisting students with occupational selection and placement (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In the 1930s, an attempt was made to organize guidance in the school setting, and educational, vocational, and personal-social services were identified as the main aspects of the counseling paradigm (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In 1957, the launch of Sputnik by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics inadvertently

advanced the development of professional school counseling. The United States was stunned, and in response, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 (Lambie and Williamson, 2004). In response to the "space race" between Russia and the United States, NDEA created federal funds that were allocated to high schools across the country to support the implementation of counselors in schools (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), with the intentions that career guidance by counselors will produce a stronger workforce. These two events were the catalyst for pioneers like Frank Parsons, Jesse Davis, and Clifford Beers to revolutionize counseling, shifting from a focus on psychoanalysis and individualistic counseling to vocational counseling, and subsequently, to what is now known as comprehensive school counseling (Gladding, 2013). Men have played a paramount role in the historical, theoretical, and practical underpinnings of counseling and psychology, yet today, few men work in these helping professions (Evans, 2010). Though the school counseling shift was led by White men, there remains a lack of adequate cultural diversity in school counseling throughout public schools (Knowles & Bryant, 2011).

Helping Professions. Despite the contributions of men in the counseling and psychotherapeutic professions, there has been a drastic reduction in the number of men pursuing the counseling profession (Willyard, 2011). The question now is, why? Why has there been such a drastic shift in the field? Why have so many men left the profession of counseling, and not enough men pursuing the profession? Within a field that was dominated by men at its inception, it is intriguing and even concerning that there are counseling education classes with only two or three men in the class (Evans, 2010). Evans (2010) further maintained that additional male students in counseling programs

would provide a broader perspective and more diversity of thought within these classes. Men have been abandoning the field of counseling and psychology in droves; so that the profession is now totally dominated by female practitioners (Carey, 2011). In most counseling classes, there are only one to two or three men, for a variety of reasons, many of them stereotypical; men have avoided the counseling field because society has historically placed expectations on the identity of men, and some of those identities may not fit the nurturing and caring identity of being a counselor (Starck, 2016). This suggests that the stereotypes placed on men have played a role in emasculating the foundations of counseling and therapy by diminishing men's attraction to the counseling profession (Carey, 2011). In sum, the absence of men in the counseling and therapeutic professions is being documented more today, but there is still a gap in the literature regarding the disproportionality of Black men in the counseling profession, more specifically school counseling. The underrepresentation of Black men in the counseling profession is due to centuries of racialized barriers socially and career choices, which is an institutional issue propelled by racism (Crocker, 2007; Carter, 2007).

Career Choices

Before exploring the literature regarding Black men entering the counseling profession, it is important to explore men and their career choices. The counseling profession is losing its appeal and men are pursuing other professions that are thought to be more convenient for them to pursue (Behrend, Thompson, Meade, Grayson, & Newton, 2007). How men and women see themselves concerning their work is influenced by cultural and social factors (Niederman & Moore, 2000).

Similarly, there are expectations woven into some cultures, which favors men to be more aggressive, which may contribute to men pursuing certain careers (Bentson, 2000; Gefen & Straub, 1997). The American man's career experiences are influenced by family and worldviews, as well as inner conflicts and anxieties (Newton, Grayson, & Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, there are more pressures on men than ever to pursue jobs and careers that would return increased financial dividends, and for some, more power and status (Newton et al., 2005). Power, status, gender expectations, influence, and financial stability, are some of the factors that the literature suggests to influence men's career choices (Newton et al., 2005). On the other hand, Reskin and Bielby (2005) asserted that sex differentiation and social stratification of the division of labor is not solely driven by the desires of the individual. Today men are generally interested in pursuing careers in technology, medical, and business fields due to social and economic pressures (Reskin & Bielby, 2005).

Despite the expectations and pressures from society to pursue more economically appealing careers, men are needed more than ever in the counseling and helping professions (Willyard, 2011). Consequently, the degree to which counseling preparation programs are prioritizing efforts to attract diverse groups is paramount (Heinfield & Washington, 2013). The purpose of this research focused on Black males in the school counseling profession. Several topics are relevant to understanding the shortage of Black men in school counseling: (a) the career experiences of Black males, (b) racism and social inequalities, and (c) diversity in counseling will be explored.

Black males career experience*s*

The process of Black men choosing a career takes place throughout their lifespan as they make career decisions that have social-cultural, and economic consequences (Correll, 2001). Cultural beliefs and societal norms about gender roles and expectations are significant factors in the career choices of Black men (Ridgeway & Correll, 2000). Accordingly, studies have shown that women, in general, are likely to choose their profession based on intrinsic motives, whereas men tend to choose a career based on extrinsic motives (Bielby & Bielby, 1992). As a result, that gender differences might vary with age and marital status if they reflect approaches to anticipated work-life balance (Barbulescu and Bidwell, 2013). Regardless of the rationale, gender segregation, the tendency for women to work in systematically different occupations and industries than men, is a central feature of most modern organizations (Reskin & Bielby, 2005). This produces the expectation that men follow certain career paths and achieve high economic status. Along those lines, historically Black men's career expectations are even more complex due to the racist structures they have experienced throughout history (Cornelius, 2013).

Racial implications and social inequalities. Race is a socially constructed concept that was used to reinforce the rationale for the enslavement of persons of African descent for economic purposes during the Atlantic Slave Trade (Carter, 2007). The invention of race as an ethnological human stratification (DeGruy, 2005), and the racism that has followed it has created a historical chain of dehumanizing traumatic events that continue to hinder human progress (DeGruy, 2005). Though its origins are based on faulty science, the creation of this human hierarchy is now a lived socio-political reality

that has severe consequences for people of color (Noguera & Akom, 2000). Black men have continually faced the socio-economic inequities of this hegemonic system (Prasad, 2005), especially regarding discriminatory practices in employment and career aspirations (Harper, 2009).

Due to structural racist practices and White supremacy, Black men have endured periods in history where they were unable to get certain jobs because they faced systematic discriminatory practices like "Jim Crow" laws, or did not have the freedom to self-determine their career choices (Alexander, 2012; Roscigno, Williams, & Byron, 2012). During Reconstruction and the post-slavery period, Black men were in search of jobs but lacked the training needed for many job opportunities (DeGruy, 2005). The predominant jobs available to Black men from the Reconstruction Era through the Civil Rights Movement were factory and blue-collar jobs, although a small number of Black men held positions in academia and politics, or positions where they did not have to utilize manual labor (Taylor, 2000). Along the same lines, (Hanks, Solomon, & Weller, 2018) found, Black families have a fraction of the wealth of White families, leaving them more economically insecure and with far fewer opportunities for economic mobility. Even after considering positive factors such as increased education levels, African Americans have less wealth than Whites, and less wealth translates into fewer opportunities for upward mobility (Eitle & Eitle, 2002; DeGruy, 2005).

In considering this statement, many newly freed Black families believed that the government would provide economic security through various government programs (Tolman, 2011). Unfortunately, the "forty acres and a mule" that was promised, never happened (Wise, 2008). The result has had a profound expectation in Black families.

Black boys, being the future breadwinners of the family, go into fields that would provide them the opportunity to earn higher wages and increase status and wealth (Harper, 2009). Black boys are encouraged to be doctors, lawyers, engineers, and bankers. However, individuals who are not equipped with the academic acumen to go into these academically driven fields, are told all too often that they are going to be the next *Michael Jordan* (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). The two sports with the largest percentage of Black males are and the lowest chances of becoming a professional in that sport are basketball and football (Powell, 2008). Unlike most sports, they have access to these sports and they cost little to maintain. Some use their athletic abilities to identify themselves and move towards increased social status (T. Eitle & Eitle, 2002). They look to professional sports for validation to this end, and less emphasis is put into academic fields or furthering their education (Harrison, 2007).

Furthermore, Black men are continually regarded as criminals, irresponsible fathers, descendants of dysfunctional families, drug addicts, materialistic, self-destructive and lack any moral compass (Anderson, 2008). This litany of racialized and stereotypical stigmas, in conjunction with marginalization through structural racism and socio-cultural expectations of Black men and boy's career choices (Crocker, 2007), suggest that Black men in the counseling field is a phenomenon with significant critical race theory implications and social justice underpinnings (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Solorzano & Yosso (2002) argued that social justice commitment in research should include the elimination of racism, sexism, poverty, and the empowering of minority groups. Moreover, the American Counseling Association (*ACA Code of Ethics)* states in Section E.5.b that counselors have an ethical obligation to provide multicultural competent

services (ACA, 2005). Counselors are also ethically bound to advocate with and on behalf of clients at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels should such situations arise (Ratts, 2011).

Additionally, ACA (2005) suggested that their mission is to enhance the quality of life in society, and practice of counseling to promote respect for human dignity and diversity. In the same vein, according to the *2016 Standards* of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), accredited counselor education (CE) programs must demonstrate "systematic efforts to attract, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students and to create and support an inclusive learning community" (p. 4). If this is the call by leading professional counseling organizations, and scholars in the counseling profession, it is puzzling why many minority groups are not represented in the counseling profession (Forbat, 2004). More diverse groups in counseling is especially important as diverse ethnic counselors possess a unique advantage when working with similar ethnic clientele, allowing them to advocate for clients and families of their cultural group in ways that others cannot (Kim, 2006).

School Counseling

Counselor Education Programs

School counselors work in complex school settings with unique job requirements and expectations that involve unique training, including management of large caseloads and the ability to address the academic, career, and personal/social wellbeing of all students (CACREP, 2016). In most cases, to become a school counselor, a Master's

degree must be obtained from an institution approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016). As stated in the school counseling contextual dimension line (a) of the CACREP Standards, there is a responsibility of counselor education programs to infuse the counselor role as advocates and promote systemic change. The concern is, are counselor education programs truly representative of systemic change and multiculturalism? Is there an intentional focus on including in the curriculum the plight of minoritized groups (i.e. Black men, Black women, Lantix group, Asian groups, LGBTQ group, and Indigenous groups) (Pieterese et al, 2009)? If so, is it done with equity and honest critique of the racial systems that these marginalized groups live in (Spanierman & Smith, 2017)?

To date counselor education programs remain very exclusive with a major disproportionality of ethnic groups, and the damage White researchers have done to keep marginalized groups out of the curriculum (Sue, 2017). Sue (2017), further points out, color-blind training models based on White middle-class male values continue to perpetuate the legacy of White supremacy and domination in the academy. The field needs to expand training in advocacy and other antiracism-related skills and to better prepare White-allies training for the challenges and negative reactions that their advocacy will challenge them with (Spanierman & Smith, 2017). Attracting, enrolling, and retaining a diverse body of students is a growing concern at U.S. universities (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013). Counselor education programs being the gatekeeper of the profession, and the incubator of school counselors that will be working with a very diverse population of students and families, have a moral responsibility to the field and

be more intentional in its inclusivity of curriculum, and recruitment (Cross & Reinhart, 2017).

School counseling training. Furthermore, school counseling preparation programs provide coursework and training to help school counseling students learn to develop and practice comprehensive counseling programs (Kozlowski & Huss, 2013; Pieterese et al, 2009). Counseling education programs help school counseling students develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes, including an understanding of developmental theories, counseling theories, career counseling theories, social justice theories, and multiculturalism (ASCA, 2012). School counseling programs also prepare future school counselors to deal with and address mental health concerns, including prevention and intervention strategies for addressing academic, personal/social, and career development to enhance success for all students (ASCA, 2012). Extensive training through school counseling programs equips future practitioners with tools to address the litany of social-emotional challenges faced by students (Kozlowski & Huss, 2013). With professional training in school counseling and cultural relatedness, Black male school counselors may have the opportunity to make a great impact on the lives of Black male students. This connection can be the catalyst for increasing academic self-efficacy, motivation, and a sense of belonging (Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008).

Increasing the number of Black males in the counseling profession is paramount, as Black males are behind in every major school achievement category (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005, Ferguson, 2003), and the enduring legacy of social inequalities toward Black males remains a major concern (Harper, 2009). Training more Black males in the education profession has the potential to change the narrative of Black male student

achievement in public education (Bryan & Ford, 2014). The impact of Black male school counselors on Black male students has the potential to encourage positive behavior, and a greater sense of self in the lives of Black boys (Allen, 2018).

Diversity in counseling

The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA, 2010) *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* require school counselors to possess multicultural competencies to address various cultural and developmental issues as they relate to and affect the school counselor, students, and all stakeholders. Likewise, the American Psychological Association (APA) reported that currently, only 1.5% of its members are African-American (Young, 2017). Consequently, a significant challenge most mental health consumers face after choosing to seek counseling is finding a competent, trustworthy professional counselor who is a cultural, ethnic, gender, or religious match (PRWEB, 2004). The counseling relationship is such a critical one for clients, and the more they feel connected and comfortable with a counselor, there is a better chance for healing and growth (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Martin, 2002). Many people and cultural groups experience the counseling process differently, and those experiences have shaped their views and opinions of the counseling profession (Washington, 2010). With limited exposure to counseling, the high prevalence of microaggressions, and subtle forms of racism present today, it is understandable why many people have historically disregarded the practice and use of counseling, especially African Americans (Young, 2017). Young (2017) further found:

Regarding the two psychologists, I spoke with, Dr. Sandra Levy, who is White, and was supported in her career because she had attended therapy for family issues as a child. Dr. Robert Samuels, a Black therapist, was supported similarly, but there seemed to be less of an openness about family issues – he mentioned that he didn't find out his mom attended therapy until he was in college and it came as a surprise. There also weren't a lot of figures for him to look up to in this career. There weren't any Black public figures speaking openly about therapy and when he was attending Princeton, there was only one Black psychologist on staff. (para. 2)

Multiculturalism and social justice forces in counseling have produced an important paradigm shift in the counseling profession, to include more multicultural and social justice counseling (Ratts, 2009). National policies and funding like Title I (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), have been implemented to address the educational inequities that exist in schools, but systemic injustices still remain (Griffin & Steen, 2011). The demand to be more culturally aware and responsive in practice is critical, and it requires radical social justice action and pedagogy that enables educators to collaborate with students to help them advocate for themselves, and name their world (Freire, 1996). The need for multi-culturally competent counselors is increasing as the population of various ethnic minority groups grow (Ahmed, Wilson, Henrickson, & Jones, 2011). There are numerous amounts of cultural, ethnic, and racial differences that are daily realities for culturally diverse clients, such as incidents of racism, discrimination, marginalization, racial violence, and gender biases (Martin, 2002; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The practice of multiculturalism in counseling aims to acknowledge these

realities, which members of the majority culture may not be aware of or responsive to (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005).

Despite shifts in counseling practices, multicultural awareness, and social justice activism, there is still a shortage of diverse counseling practitioners, especially Black men in the school counseling profession (Washington, 2010). Consequently, students of color often find themselves in search of counselors that look like them in a range of student service departments (New, 2016). As a cultural broker, the ethnic diverse counselor can use the self as an instrument by (1) endorsing the utilization of counseling services, (2) modeling health, and (3) developing other bicultural counselors (Kim, 2006). These methods are ways in which the field can move beyond the textbook knowledge of multiculturalism, while implementing practical measures to reach often unreachable populations (Kim, 2006).

According to (Martin, 2002; Moore & Owens, 2007), the essence of this argument supports the claim that ethnic diverse school counselors are uniquely positioned to positively affect Black students' academic performance, career development, and social-emotional growth (as cited in Bryan & Gallant, 2012). However, it is important to note that Black males are often reluctant to utilize counseling services including mental health and school counseling services (Moore, 2000). Negative perceptions and expectations of counseling are common explanations for their underutilization of counseling services (Moore, Henfield, & Owens, 2008). Despite the mistrust of mental health providers and counselors that often exists among minoritized groups, the ethnic diverse counselor can take on the role of a cultural broker, and leverage their cultural connections in creating a counseling relationship based on shared socio-cultural experiences (Kim, 2006).

Social Justice and Advocacy in School Counseling

The school counseling profession has aggressively called for more social justice and advocacy in the last several decades (Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahon, 2010). Despite this fervent call, schools remain in an industrialized formation of education, where students have to fit a certain standard, despite their unique cultural values they bring (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Alina Ruiz, 2014). School systems that fail to be culturally responsive to students from marginalized groups risks the chances of being inequitable in scheduling practices, communications style, advising, and pedagogy (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Freire,). Social justice in counseling represents a multifaceted approach in which counselors strive to collaboratively promote human development and the common good through addressing challenges related to both individual and distributive justice (Goodman et al, 2004). Being a social justice counselor or advocate involves valuing and advocating for the rights and well-being of socially disadvantaged or devalued people in society (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001).

Social justice. Social justice has become a critical weapon of critiquing social inequities within various fields, and has taking shape in the counseling profession for decades. Although social justice counseling is not a new idea in counseling as it has been occurring for a while (Smith, Reynolds, & Rovnak, 2009), Ratts (2009b) makes a case to consider social justice as the "Fifth Force" of counseling. Ratts (2009b) further purported, "A theory of social justice counseling provides counselors with a theoretical framework for understanding the role oppression plays in shaping human behavior and the means to actualize advocacy in counseling" (p. 161). Vera and Speight (2003) argued that counseling in the traditional way in the office without expanding counseling to address

the social dynamics of individuals can actually be harmful to clients. The counseling office has, therefore, been reconceptualized from the traditional four walls of an office to include clients' homes, schools, neighborhoods, and larger community (Ratts, 2009b). With more and more accountability placed upon school counselors and their impact on student achievement (Dahir & Stone, 2009), it is difficult to talk about closing the achievement gaps in education and the experiences of marginalized groups without inevitably discussing issues of oppression (Ratts et al, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2011). Ratts et al (2016) developed the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies to illustrate intersections of identities and the various ways that power, privilege, and oppression permeates into the counseling relationship. This model also emphasizes a merging of systemic issues into the micro level of advocacy, and also encourages counselors to strengthen their advocacy of diverse clients (Ratts et al, 2016).

With more and more accountability placed upon school counselors and their impact on student achievement (Dahir & Stone, 2009), it is critical that social justice practice be infused in school counselor training programs. In a study using grounded theory methodology, Singh et al (2010) found, (a) using political savvy to navigate power structures, (b) consciousness raising, (c) initiating difficult dialogues, (d) building intentional relationships, (e) teaching students self-advocacy skills, (f) using data for marketing, and (g) educating others about the school counselor role of advocate, were strategies utilized by school counselors who identified as social justice advocates in their school counseling practice. The study further developed a checklist counselor education programs can utilize to develop social justice action in school counselors in training (Singh et al, 2010). Social justice cannot stand alone without the actions of advocacy.

Advocacy counseling. There are many examples of advocacy in the context of historical world events. One can consider advocacy in the spirit of Yaa Asantewaa who was an influential Ashanti queen of Ghana at the beginning of the twentieth century, and led a gallant effort in what is known as the Asantewaa War of Independence, where she was the brave leader who led her people and defeated the British, protecting the sacred (Golden Stool) of the Ashanti people (West, 2019). Harriet Tubman could also be considered an advocate for freedom as she led hundreds of Africans to freedom. Similarly, Malcolm X could be called an advocate for justice as he provided Black people with a sense of pride and radical love for their culture. We could also look to W.E.B. DuBois and his advocacy for social change in the advent of the Niagara Movement that led to the formation of the NAACP. The examples of advocacy and the historical change that came as a result of advocacy is numerous. For the focus of this study, advocacy in counseling is primary. Kiselica and Robison (2001) historical research on the history of advocacy in counseling heighted Clifford Beers advocacy work for the mentally ill, and Lawrence Gerstein who advocated for oppressed people in Tibet. These early examples of advocacy provided the blueprint on what advocacy should look like, which the primary goal is to influence systemic change for oppressed groups (Smith, Reynolds, & Rovnak, 2009). Recognizing the growing significance of advocacy in the profession, ACA President Loretta Bradley promoted advocacy as her conference theme and subsequently President Jane Goodman created a taskforce to develop advocacy competencies (Ratts, Toporek, & Lewis, 2010). In 2003, the ACA Governing Council officially approved and adopted the advocacy competencies that were developed by Goodman's taskforce (Ratts, Toporek, & Lewis, 2010). These competencies focused on the role of counselors as

advocates working with and/or on behalf of their clients who were struggling with systemic barriers (Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009). There are a litany of studies that have conducted to demonstrate strategies and ways school counselors and educators can advocate for students.

In a study by Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd (2018), highlighted that school counselor as an important role to play in the process of advocacy by working closely with other stakeholders to advocate for transgender, intersex and genderqueer (TIG) students. For example, in communities that are less accepting of gender non-conformity, close work with administration is essential for successful advocacy (Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd (2018), which is advocacy on behalf of students (Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009). Likewise, Washington (2015) study on the use of hip-hop and rap music being utilized as a tool for social justice advocacy to advance Black male student's educational barriers confirmed that when leveraging the platform of Hip Hop, Black male students can actively partake in efforts to resist and transform the multitude of interfacing micro and macro level oppression in the educational system.

Social justice advocacy in counseling involves not only systems change but also the implementation of empowerment strategies in direct counseling with students providing direct and indirect student advocacy in a wide range of issues (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009; Ratts, Toporek, & Lewis, 2010). It further promotes that school counselors extend counseling to the community, organization or school community to address systemic barriers within schools or the immediate community negatively effecting marginalized students (Ratts, D'Andrea, & Arredondo, 2004). Finally, as change agents in the systems that affect their own students

and clients most directly, school counselors are encouraged to take advocacy to the macro level of social political involvement, examples such as writing advocacy briefings regarding an issue, invitations to testify at hearings, appearing in mass media (e.g. talk shows, podcasts) to speak on behalf of system issues that are negatively affecting their students (Ratts, 2006; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Ratts, D'Andrea, & Arredondo, 2004).

Black Males in School Counseling

In 2013, the Washington Post reported that President Obama's administration was committed to providing 1,000 new school resource officers, school counselors, and other mental health workers to schools around the country (Strauss, 2013). Despite this increased commitment to the field of school counseling on the part of the administration, there are still limited school counselors around the country with the appropriate qualifications and credentials (Hobson, Fox, & Swickert, 2000). This issue is even greater when we consider the low number of Black males in the profession. According to the 2016 *Standards* of CACREP, accredited counselor education programs must demonstrate "systematic efforts to attract, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students and to create and support an inclusive learning community" (p. 6).

Additionally, The Education Trust highlighted the discrepancy in school counselor preparation and practice and set forth the Transforming School Counseling initiative to address this disparity and better prepare school counselors, especially in working with underrepresented and low-income youth (Martin, 2002). Although the efforts of the Educational Trust, ASCA, and CACREP have brought attention to the need for more transformative school counseling programs, there is still a great deal of

transformation that needs to happen within counselor education programs to bridge the gap between preparation and practice for school counselors (Steen & Rudd, 2009). Ultimately, there is still a critical need to recruit and retain more diverse students in counseling programs as the number of Black male school counselors remains inadequate (Heinfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013).

The vast majority of counselors in a variety of fields are White (Bryan & Ford, 2014). Demographic information provided by ACA suggests that there are a limited number of counselors from diverse backgrounds with their membership, consisting of only 1.1% Native Americans, 1.5% Asian Americans, 3.4% Latinos, and 5.9% African Americans (ACA, 2005). The 11.9% of ACA counselors from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds is in sharp contrast with the overall racial distribution of the United States, which is 14% African American, Asian American 5%, Latino American 16%, Native Americans 1%, and 6% Other Race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The numbers in the aforementioned demonstrate the growing diversity of the American population. Similarly, The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported, 48% of students enrolled in the public education system in the United States are students of color (NCES, 2016, p.5). From these statistics, it is evident that the diversity of counselors is not commensurate with the growing diversity in the student population. Consequently, at-risk African American students will most likely work with a school counselor who is of a different racial background then they are (Heinfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013).

The literature on this topic is limited, with little to no specific research on the experiences of Black male school counselors. Hence, the onus is on the profession to provide additional research and awareness (Spanierman & Smith, 2017), to address the

recruitment, training, and retention of Black males in the school counseling profession. Although there is no literature or strategic initiative on the recruitment of Black men in the school counseling profession, there is vast literature on the recruitment of Black male teachers that can be models for recruiting Black men in the school counseling profession.

Black males in education generally expressed frustration that their primary interaction with colleagues was to receive assistance in redirecting students' misbehavior, as opposed to support with teaching content (Bristol, 2014). Black male teachers and school administrators are in a position where they have to sometimes address students in a confrontational manner, whether it is regarding academics or disciplinary actions (Kinsler, 2011). On the contrary, school counselors have the unique training and responsibility to address the social and emotional well-being of their students, leaving them out of disciplinary roles (Martin, 2002; Moore, 2000; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Hence, school counselors are positioned to contribute directly to the social-emotional wellbeing of students, which is paramount to student educational outcomes that can increase overall school achievement (Carey & Harrington, 2010). Thus, Black male school counselors can create a safe space for Black boys where they are empowered, mentored, and receive social-emotional support that identifies with their background and experiences social justice (Allen, 2018; Griffin & Steen, 2011).

These alarming statistics are similar at all levels of social status for Black males (Williams, 2003). Black male school counselors have similar racial and social experiences as Black male students, which could be a significant connection for Black boys in a counseling relationship (Noddings, 1992). Furthermore, a Black male school counselor, being a cultural broker, can also provide specific counseling skills in the

school system to address social and emotional challenges faced by all students, especially Black boys (Kim, 2006). Hence, school counseling training and preparation is a vital component of the process of recruiting more Black males in the school counseling profession, as they have the potential to be effective support for the social and emotional wellbeing Black boys (Allen, 2018; Bridge, 2018).

Recruitment

Before the strategies for recruitment were explored, a question that was considered was why there were so few teachers of color? Much of the shortage problem starts with the low rates of academic achievement of Black boys and their general experiences with the educational system (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Between their times in kindergarten and graduating high school, Black boys experience racial biases, unfair discipline practices, and some teachers may even hesitate to work with Black boys due to fear (Ferguson, 2003; Ogbu, 2003; Kunjufu, 2002). They face the constant uphill battle of being a minority, being singled out, and teachers having low expectations of them (Ferguson, 2003). Therefore, these occurrences can become problematic impediments for Black boys and cast a negative outlook on their future aspirations (Kunjofu, 2002). Making it difficult for Black males to want to return and work for an educational system that has continually oppressed them (Kunjufu, 2002).Despite these challenges, and high school completion rates of Black students significantly low compared to their White counterparts (Fashola & Slavin, 1998), more Black males are going to college than are in prison (Toldson, 2008), which is contrary to popular belief. With the paradigm shift of more Black males attending institutions of higher education, there has been increased attention in recruiting Black men into the teaching profession (Bryan & Williams, 2017).

Brockenbrough (2017) suggested that Black men can be the perfect role models for Black boys in schools and communities. Consequently, there are growing initiatives to recruit more Black male teachers in our schools to be role models for Black boys. Although this is a pervasive trend, Brockenbrough (2017) argued that this "savior-like" anointing of Black male teachers as role models has the potential to validate masculinity and substantiate Black patriarchy in the educational context. There is a growing body of literature on masculinity politics that examines males as being role models for all youth (Brockenbrough, 2017). Despite the growing scholarship of Black men arbitrarily serving as role models for Black male students (Lynn, 2002), Brown's (2009) work has explored various culturally responsive teaching styles that aids in the success of Black male students. In his exploratory study of Black male teacher recruitment, Callender (2018) stated, "more Black male teachers = higher achievement outcomes + lowered exclusion rates + increased aspiration" (p. 2). These arguments, while opposing, are situated on the continuum of the need for more diversity in education (Bireda & Chait, 2011), especially in the case of recruiting more Black males. In response to President Obama's My Brother's Keeper program, which is a national mentoring initiative to support Black and Latino males, growing attention has been given to the academic and social needs of Black boys in public schools and society at large (Bryan & Williams, 2017).

Black Male Teacher Recruitment

With the growing need to support Black males' educational experiences and close the achievement gap (Ferguson, 2003), scholars have been moved to increase the two percent of Black males who currently work in the teaching profession (Bryan & Williams, 2017). However, Goings and Bianco (2016) suggested that pre-service exams

like the Praxis I and II presents major hurdles for Black males pursuing the teaching profession. The Praxis I is an examination that focuses on the candidate's skills in math, reading, and writing, while the Praxis II content exam evaluates a candidate's content knowledge, while the pedagogy test focuses on a candidate's knowledge of educational theory and application (Petchauer, 2012). Black students have been found to score lower on the Praxis I and II than their White counterparts (Nettles et al. 2011). Consequently, 42 % of Black students majoring in education at the undergraduate level graduate within 6 years compared to 49 % of Hispanic and 73 % of White education majors (U.S. Department of Education 2016). Therefore, these tests can potentially serve as gatekeepers for Black males pursuing the teaching profession (Nettles et al. 2011) Furthermore, Warren (2013) found that pre-service teacher education programs marginalize Black males, as they often face micro-aggressions and other forms of discrimination that reduce the desirability of the profession. In a pre-collegiate teacher recruitment program conducted by Goings and Bianco (2016), they found that Black male students did not want to pursue the teaching profession due to their negative school experiences.

Despite many challenges in bringing more Black males into the teaching profession, there are various opportunities and initiatives to increase their presence in schools. Black Males to the Blackboard is an initiative that was created by the Obama administration to increase the proportion of Black males in the teaching profession to two percent (Bristol, 2014). Call Me Mister, a nationally recognized program founded at Clemson University (Jones & Jenkins, 2012) to recruit Black males to the teaching profession, is making significant gains in supporting Black males pursuing the

profession. Pathways to Teaching is a pre-collegiate program (Goings & Bianco, 2016) that targets Black males and other students of color, allowing them to explore teaching as a profession and to engage the students in courses on Urban Education. These courses promote their understanding of equity and inclusion in the educational system. Another pre-collegiate program is the Black Male Teaching Initiative (BMTI), which is a collaborative initiative between Indiana University of Pennsylvania, California University of Pennsylvania, Community College of Allegheny County, and Park Point University to encourage Black males in both middle and high school to become teachers (Goings & Bianco, 2016). These various programs are vital in the effort to recruit more Black males who can offer culturally relevant support for Black boys, in the school setting (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). However, teacher education programs still bear the responsibility to be more progressive in this fight.

Bryan and Williams (2017) suggested, that teacher education programs should (a) be intentional about preparing teachers to teach in a culturally relevant practices, (b) intentionally recruit and retain more Black males as candidates for the teacher education programs, (c) partner with Black male teacher recruitment initiatives, and (d) conduct more collaborative research on the experiences of Black male teachers to improve knowledge and understanding of the effects of Black male teachers on Black male students. The aforementioned strategies and recruitment programs are important steps in the greater discourse surrounding the recruitment of more Black males in the education profession, there are still other creative strategies to consider.

Bireda and Chait (2011) suggested (a) federal oversight of teacher education programs reporting diversity efforts, (b) statewide funding initiatives to fund teacher

preparation programs aimed at low-income teachers of color, (c) increasing federal financial aid for low-income students wanting to pursue teaching as a profession, and (d) forming strong relationships with school districts to identify motivated Black male students who may be interested in the profession. Bireda and Chait (2011) also suggested the benefits of "Grow-Your-Own programs, which partner with institutions of higher education to prepare paraprofessionals, other school staff, or other members of the community who are not certified as teachers to teach in the district" (p. 5). Although early outreach teaching programs may face challenges in recruiting students, who may not be sure about their career choices, they do offer opportunities to expose students of diverse backgrounds to the teaching profession (Bireda & Chait, 2011). In considering the recruitment practices for the school counseling profession, the literature on general recruitment practices is also valuable in the efforts to increase diversity in the school counseling field.

Recruitment Strategies. The literature suggests several definitions for recruitment. For example, recruitment is the process of searching the candidates for employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization (Devi & Banu, 2014). Lewis suggested, along the same lines, that recruitment is the function that generates a pool of applicants who have the desire to become part of an organization, from which suitable candidates can be selected (as cited in Bogtova, 2017, p. 4). It is not only an activity that satisfies the needs of a company, but it is also an action that influences the future of the organization and the sustainable development of diversity and inclusivity of employees (Sarma, 2008). According to Breaugh and Starke (2000), the process of recruitment can be divided into five stages:

- Recruitment Objectives, in which topics such as applicant identity, diversity, and quality of applicants are considered;
- Strategy Development, in which the organization determines who, where, and when to recruit, as well as recruitment sources;
- Recruitment Activities, which entails the development of recruitment resources, recruiters, and the recruitment message;
- Intervention or Process, which involves creating a clear message for applicants, assessing applicant attention and comprehension of job and self-knowledge; and
- Compare outcomes and results of recruitment.

The five stages provide a systematic guide for recruitment strategies and practices. It is important to know how to reach individuals who may be qualified while investigating different recruitment sources and determining whether certain sources are linked to beneficial outcomes (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

In her study of admissions offices' recruitment strategies, Keller (2012) found that admissions offices used several strategies for recruiting new students, which included college planning conferences, high school visits, career fairs, campus visits, and email campaigns in addition to general phone and e-mail communication and follow-up. These offices have also recently incorporated social media into their recruiting practices, primarily through the use of Facebook and Twitter. Recruitment in any organization has a component of business and marketing (Keller 2012), where developers of successful strategic and marketing plans know their audience and how to reach out and connect with potential personnel (Anctil, 2008). The goals and initiatives should be clear, and values

should be communicated regularly (Keller, 2012). In sum, recruitment practices can be supported by articulating the critical need for the candidate's participation and maintaining a clear objective on the benefits to the organization. If the paradigm is to shift in the school counseling profession, and the recruitment of diverse school counselors becomes a priority, these recruitment strategies can serve as a great starting point.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 discussed the history of counseling and male's absence in the counseling profession. The history of the school counseling profession was also explored, and an examination of the shortage of Black males within the school counseling profession and their career choices was also explored. The recruitment of Black male teachers and general recruitment strategies also provided rich literature on recruitment considerations. The information in this literature review informs the current research in providing information maintaining the notion that Black males are underrepresented in our schools, especially the school counseling profession. The literature reviewed also explored diversity and the lack of diverse counselors, as well as strategies for recruitment. Chapter 3 will include the methodology of the qualitative research study, and information related to study design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. This research was centered on exploring Black male school counselors' personal/professional experiences in hopes of informing not only recruitment practices but also policy changes.

School counselors are called to be social justice advocates for all students, including students of color (ASCA, 2016). As the Black-White achievement gap remains pervasive within and among schools, social justice informed research and practice is necessary to advocate for effective prevention and intervention strategies for students of color. By engaging in social justice research and practices school counselors and scholars will be able to explore the systemic impact of racism, marginalization, and exclusion that often preclude Black males from in certain career fields. Furthermore, social justice research will assist counseling educators and counseling practitioners in their understanding of the socio-cultural structures that influence the career choices of Black males, ultimately offering answers to why there is a shortage of Black male school counselors.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the literature related to the Black males, school counseling profession, Black people in education, Critical Race Theory and Narrative Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Cladinin, 2013). Although the literature on Black males in school counseling is limited, existing literature was presented to investigate this topic. Furthermore, the literature on the recruitment of Black male teachers was examined as a possible avenue to exploring practical strategies in recruiting Black males into the school counseling profession.

The purpose of this research was to understand and tell the stories of Black male school counselors' personal and professional experiences and their ideas on recruitment. A total of 10 Black male school counselors were selected for this study through purposeful sampling using criterion-based logic. The participant group consisted of certified school counselors in the southeast region, who represented all levels of k-12 education. The researcher engaged the participants in individual semi-interviews, which were guided by interview protocols of questions.

The interviews were audio-recorded, and verbatim inductive transcriptions were done initially developed, followed by a deductive analysis, and finally member checked by the participants. The researcher then constructed thematic narratives from each transcription, and the narratives were also member checked. The data was analyzed through *Nvivo coding.* The themes extracted were further analyzed as a means of answering the primary research question of this study, which centered on Black male school counselor's experiences and their perspectives on recruitment.

Research Questions:

The research questions for this research was divided into a primary research question, and then a sub-question was explored to add to the recommendations and future research on this topic.

1. What are/were the personal/professional experiences of Black male school counselors?

a. How can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed? This section includes information regarding the research design, sample selection, data collection, analysis, trustworthiness, and potential limitations of the study.

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research method was the preferable design in structuring this research study because it explores why individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The participants were intentionally and purposively selected for this research study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007), because of the desire to extract detailed narratives and themes from participants who experience marginalization (Denzin & Lincon, 2011; McRoy, 1996). The qualitative method is best suited for studying human experience as it relates to phenomenon such as emotion, imagination, intuition, and other affective aspects of the human experience, albeit not providing a context for the sharing of accounts (Merriam, 2009). Early on qualitative research experienced a time of "crisis of representation" where the rise of feminism and other critical theories began to emerge (Hays & Singh, 2012). Qualitative researchers realized that they were not experts and that

objective reasoning was losing its place in research (Hays & Singh, 2012). Qualitative research encouraged a more holistic perspective to a problem and valued individual descriptions of a situation (Heath, 1997). The research is focused on meaning within context and involves narratives designed to elicit how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meanings they attribute to their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

A qualitative approach also employs an emic or inductive perspective, where themes emerge from the data based on the words and perceptions of the participants themselves (Denzin & Lincon, 2011; Prasad, 2012). In qualitative inquiry, research is often conducted in natural settings (i.e., schools, community centers) and information is gathered in great detail from participants (Hunt, 2010). The goal in qualitative research is not to generalize the results, but rather provide a wealth of data, with strong descriptions of an in-depth inquiry. Along with the focus on exploring meaning, the lack of research on Black male school counselors made this study well suited to qualitative methodology, which is often recommended when there is not a dearth of information and when a more in-depth inquiry is needed (Hunt, 2010). The study was based on the narratives of practicing Black male school counselors, which is a natural fit for a qualitative design. *Narrative Tradition* provides a critical investigation (Reissman, 2007) through the use of interviews, focusing on people's stories anchored in seeking understanding through stories and narratives about an individual or group (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). Therefore, narrative tradition was utilized as a method of inquiry, data gathering, and data analysis for the study.

Critical Race Theory

In researching the impact of Black males on Black students, Lynn (2002) asked a Black male teacher, "why he teaches in urban schools, a respondent softly uttered these words: "I teach 'cause I keep seein' me". This is an emotional and revealing statement made by a 35-year-old Black man who worked as a middle school teacher in South Central Los Angeles. Here, he expresses in a plain but powerful language his commitment to teaching Black children, particularly males, who live amidst difficult circumstances" (p. 119). As a Black male school counselor, it was important for me to utilize a conceptual framework that allowed for the stories of the participants to be centered at the front of the research, while critiquing th racialized system they are in (Yosso, 2005; Reissman, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1993), a body of legal and social justice studies (Arrendendo & Perez, 2013; Lynn, 2002) provided that platform. Using CRT, I was able to center the research to provide a counter story (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Harper, 2009) that was a genuine account of the participant.

Centered with CRT tenets are the permanence of race and racism, interest convergence, counter storytelling, Whiteness as property, and intersectionality (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Harris, 1993; Crenshaw, 2006). Furthermore, unpacking the narratives of Black male school counselors, and addressing the lack of diversity in school counseling is a commitment to social justice and multiculturalism (Ratts et al, 2016). Committed to amplifying the voices of people of color, CRT uses a form counter-narratives that can be a powerful means of enabling racialized groups to speak about racism and subjugation (Rollock & Gillborn).

Critical Race Theory provided the research a radical lens from which systemic racism, racial inequities, marginalization, and exclusive systems can be deconstructed, calling out power structures such as White supremacy that have reinforced and normalized power and privilege for its benefit (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011; Crenshaw, 2017). Participants in this study spoke poignantly about the impact systemic racism had on their personal and professional journey growing up and the effects they've witnessed on student of color. CRT tenets was utilized as a critical guide in this research (Delgado, 2009), will be discussed in the analysis section of this research

Narrative Tradition

The selection of this qualitative approach was beneficial because it facilitated the relay of ideas through narratives and human stories of my participants. While the concept of storytelling is not new, the development of narrative inquiry or narrative research in social science research is a relatively new paradigm (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Seated in the social constructivist approach to counseling, a researcher using narrative tradition sees life as a process of storytelling (White & Epston, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Although NT has a long history in the practice of counseling (Moen, 2006), Michael White and David Epston are the names commonly associated with NT, who was inspired by French philosopher Foucault (White, 2009). One of the central concepts of NT is stories or "re-storying" (Morgan, 2002), which is the opportunity for participants to develop a new narrative. This process is fundamental to this study of Black male school counselors; in hopes of extracting meaningful narratives that will explore the journey of Black male school counselors and begin a new narrative regarding

the recruitment and critical need for Black male school counselors. Moen (2002) described the narrative inquiry as a means of understanding a particular experience.

Before the "re-storying" occurs, narrative questioning is administered, which has the intent of uncovering meaning and generating experiences (Shapiro & Ross, 2002). Shapiro and Ross (2002) stated, "This type of questioning emphasizes participants making their interpretations of events and formulating their insights. The result is a process in which participant self-discovery and understanding are central, and the researcher's role is that of a facilitator and ally" (p. 97). Narratives provide a multifaceted account of stories that are sometimes unfinished and have the potential to catalyze change (Reissman, 2007).

Paramount in narrative approach to research is the applicability of an individual's historical data, or experiences being a driving force of change to a larger group, and larger system (Hays & Singh, 2012). The narratives from 10 Black male school counselors in this study can be that springboard from which school districts, counselor education programs, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), and state and local agencies, can develop recruitment efforts for more Black males in the profession.

Procedure

Participants

Participants in this study were selected through purposive sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research and is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 2009). With this non-random sampling technique (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), the criteria of the research was that the

participants in this study were Black male school counselors who have at least 2 years of school counseling experience. They have to be currently practicing as a school counselor in a public or private K-12 school in the Southeast region of the U.S. All the participants identified themselves to be middle-class or upper middle class. In regards to their education, 7of the participants held only a Master's degree in school counseling, 2 held a Master's degree and an Educational Specialist Degree, and 1 has a Master's degree, Specialist Degree, and a Doctoral Degree. All of the participants shared in their narrative growing up with some form of religious belief, but at this current moment, 8 of the participants identified as Christian, 1 identified as Muslim, and 1 stated he had no religious belief system. Ten participants were utilized in the research, which is a good sample size for narrative inquiry (Beitin, 2012). All the participants are also currently working in a K-12 public or private school setting, and hold an updated school counseling certification. Salient to CRT tenets, is the intersectionality of identities (Crenshaw, 2006), and the participants in this research were all Black, male, school counselors, which they all shared as their major identities, although some shared that part of their identity was fatherhood.

Participant Sampling

Since the pool of Black male school counselors is limited, the researcher utilized convenience sampling to solicit participants. Convenience sampling is a process that is utilized to include available people or volunteer, and can be easily recruited, and are willing participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). As part of convenience sampling, the participants were taken from certified Black male school counselors that work in the Southeast Region of the United States that were easily accessible to the researcher. To

increase transferability, the researcher gathered a sample that included participants of varying ages, school levels, and tenure, who work in different school settings (i.e. Title I and Non-title I) schools. The interviews took place in a private setting agreed upon by participants and the researcher. Each interview was held within a two- hour time slot, completed with a secure device and transcribed with fidelity.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Before participants were selected an email (Appendix A), was sent to all identified as potential candidates for the research. The participants then received an informed consent letter (Appendix B) before being recruited into the study; by potential participants receiving information about the study and possible implications of their participation, they were able to make an educated decision on whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. The consent letter included purpose and procedures, methods of research, benefits, and any risk factors implicated with being involved in the study. The consent letter also included a statement of withdrawal from the study without any obligations, and also their option to not answer any questions they do not want to answer during the study. Pseudonyms were used for all research participant names to protect their autonomy in research and confidentiality. Finally, the researcher's contact information was provided on the consent in case participants had any further questions about the research.

Confidentiality

Building a trustful relationship between the researcher and the participants is very critical to qualitative research (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014). The participants in this study were required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality

agreement stated that information gathered during this study will remain confidential in secure premises during the project. Only the researchers and the appropriate dissertation committee have access to the study data and information. There will not be any identifying names on the surveys or interview transcripts. Their names and any other identifying details will never be revealed in any publication of the results of this study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a research paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. It may also be published in book form. The knowledge obtained from this study will be of great value to the field of school counseling. Included in the confidentiality statement is information on the research team that is a part of the data analysis process.

Researcher as Instrument

In a qualitative research study, the human (researcher) assumes the role of the research instrument (Key, 1997). The human instrument must remove all assumptions, biases, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to detach from the research study and focus on data collection methods (Key, 1997). Narrative inquiry has a natural fit in this kind of qualitative research as it provides participants to be the experts of their experience, and the researcher is the instrument collaborating with the participant to extract the meaning of their experiences (Hays & Singh, 2012). In this study of Black males in the school counseling profession, the human instrument (researcher) utilized individual interviews to explore their core personal and professional experiences and thoughts on recruitment. The researcher utilized the research of the literature and theoretical framework (CRT) to guide the development of the interview protocol (Appendix C). The protocol included 10 questions that were divided into three sections,

personal early experiences, professional experiences and recruitment ideas. Interview protocols included

open-ended questions aimed at evoking honest dialogue about their journey, which led to more semi-structured questioning. The questions proved to be effective for delivering a rich narrative of each participant to examine the content, structure, and context of the narrative which helped to gain the meaning of a particular phenomenon in the research (White & Epston, 1990).

Researcher Positionality

The researcher is a Black male school counselor and has been a school counselor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The researcher has been a school counselor for seventeen years, in several states and diverse socio-economic communities. School counseling was not the first plan in the professional journey of the researcher. Upon graduating from undergraduate school, where he majored in history education with a plan to become a history teacher, he worked several years in an urban charter school for several years. During that time he witnessed students endure social and emotional distress that became a hindrance to their academic success, all of which were students of color. With a deep desire to address some of these social inequities, rather than focus on academic rigor, he was motivated by his mentor to pursue school counseling as a profession. The first application he submitted to a counseling education program he was denied entrance, but with persistence and mentoring, he reapplied and was accepted into a counseling education program. After the first denial of the program, there was a sense of failure and shame, which then turned into "imposter syndrome"; the feeling of not being good enough to enter the program. Thoughts that encountered his mind after that

first denial, were also feelings of the impact of a racialized system and how all the faculty interviewing him for the program was White men and women. There was no diversity in the faculty, how could these people see me as worthy of being a part of their selective group.

Like the participants, the researcher experienced the unique journey of working in a field that has an underrepresentation of Black males. Black men in education for many years have been viewed as disciplinarians, detention monitors, only there for Black boys, or just another quota for racial diversity to fill. Being one of the only males in a school, or sometimes the only Black male in a counseling office is a unique experience. Teachers and the administrators would often call upon the researcher to work with Black male students they were having challenges with. Although it was meaningful work and the impact on the students was immense, it became mentally draining being the intervention for all the Black boys. Another struggle as a Black male school counselor was the feeling of sometimes not being respected by other staff or even parents. The researcher recalls the experience of a White family refusal to meet with him because he was Black. The narratives of the participants are closely related to the researcher, and the shared experiences that create racialized experiences of both being the (re)searcher and (re)searched in both sites of inquiry (Dillard, 2018).

Even deeper in this dynamics is the researcher ties to the Mother Land. Born in Liberia, West Africa, and having visions of a White, clean America before arriving to this land called America; the researcher was faced with a racial and cultural shock when arriving in the U.S.. The vision that everyone in America was treated equitably, with respect and dignity quickly became a fleeting illusion when he landed in slums of 1985

Chicago, where Black people were living in "Another America", different from what he saw on T.V. He went through the school system feeling lost and often cast adrift by White teachers that cared less about what he was going through. His personal and professional journey, which is filled with pain, struggle, violence, was also filled with hope, faith, and determination. This paradigm juxtaposes the narratives of the men in this research, which challenges the researcher to be intentional about his own biases and feelings.

As a Black male school counselor, and the researcher, I exercised an open, unbiased mind in undertaking the research. Although the best attempt to remain unbiased in this research, there is always some bias in all research designs (Janesick, 2000). Creswell (2012) purports, "clarifying researcher bias at the onset of a study" (p. 251). It is important that in the clarification, the researcher should be prepared to articulate any pre-conceptions or existing prejudices and preferences that might have implications for the approach of the study. Merriam (2009) noted, "The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 15), and they have their human ability to immediately seek clarifications and engage in "member checking" (p. 15) to mitigate any inaccuracies in responses. Despite having the same professional, gender, and racial identities of the participants, the utilization of narrative inquiry will allow each participant's story to be a unique piece of the overarching goal of this research.

Data Collection

Data collection was a major part of the research process. This study utilized three types of data collection methods to aid in identifying themes that were extracted from their narratives (Reissman, 2007). The use of multiple data collection methods provides

triangulation of the data which increases the validity of the data analyzed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This also allowed the researcher to overcome any personal prejudices and significantly broadens the field of research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In this way, it is possible to avoid failure to meet the main research criteria like validity, reliability, and trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009). The collection of the data was administered through individual participant interviews, demographic questionnaire, and analytic memos. An audit trail was also utilized to secure a transparent description of the process of the research steps taken from the start of research to the development and reporting of findings (Merriam, 2009). These are records that are kept regarding what was done in the investigation.

Semi-Interview

The interview is an interpersonal meeting between the researcher and the participant where there are prepared open-ended questions that the participant will be asked (Johnson & Christensen). A standardized and open-ended interview is frequently utilized because of its structure and efficiency of the qualitative interviewing techniques and is useful for reducing bias (Sewell, 1999). Moreover, it is critical to remain impartial as the researcher during the interview process, as to not bias the responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and find meanings of central themes in the life of the participants (Kvale, 1996). An interview is particularly useful in going deeper in-depth exploration of a specific topic, and compiling the narrative of individuals (McNamara, 1999). Interviews also provide a space to build trust and a true partnership between the researcher and participant (Gall et al., 2007). In narrative inquiry,

the interview constructs a setting that encourages and stimulates an interviewee to tell a story (Clandinin, 2013; Reissman, 2007), hence becoming a storyteller, about some significant events in their life and social context (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). Bauer & Gaskell (2000) further stated, "Conceptually, the idea of narrative interviewing is motivated by a critique of the question-response schema of most interviews. In the question-response mode the interviewer is imposing structures in a threefold-sense: (a) by selecting the theme and the topics, (b) by ordering the questions and (c) by wording the questions in his or her language (p. 5). Furthermore, the questions need to be aimed at eliciting stories and the importance those stories hold for participants, as well as larger cultural meaning (Reissman, 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2013). A key element in this (NT) study inquiry is namely story-telling and listening to the narratives of Black male school counselors' experiences.

***Interviewing Process*.** The researcher conducted all the interviews to ensure that each participant in the research study experience the same general questions and topics (Patton, 2015). The semi-interview approach was very important in my selection for data collection because it allowed for me to build a relationship with the storytellers (Yoss, 2005). Establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of the interview was critical for the participants, as they will become more comfortable to share genuine stories about their experiences (Clandinin, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Since the participants in this study are Back men, it was very significant to me to use the semi-structured interview as a tool to deconstruct the power differential that often exists in researcher-participant relationships with individuals from marginalized groups (Seidman, 2012). The flexible approach and open-ended questions of the semi-structured process allowed for the

conversation to flow as the participants narratives took different turns in their journey (Coughlan, & Cronin, 2009; Clandinin, 2013), and it allowed for a "co-construction" of the narrative (White & Epston, 1990). Furthermore, to honor the storytelling and experiential knowledge that is central to CRT (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Decuir & Dixon, 2004), semi interview permits the participants to tell a counter-narrative (Yosso, 2009), which exposes deficit-informed research that silences the narratives and experiences of Black men (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Harper, 2009). In addition, Seidman (2012) asserts that both participants and interviewers enter the interview relationship with our personal experiences of social identities (i.e., race, gender, class, and ethnicity) and their intersectionality with issues of power, privilege, and oppression (Crenshaw, 2011; Crenshaw, 2006). The participants being Black males shared a collective struggle of racism, marginalization, fear, oppression, pain, and "racial battle fatigue" (Smith, 2007), which all intersects with their presented identities.

Participants engaged in a 60-90 minute interview with the researcher. Upon receiving all documents and consent to participate in the study, a mutual meeting time was decided to meet one-to-one, this allows the opportunity to interpret non-verbal cues and body language of the interviewee (Coughlan, & Cronin, 2009). The interview protocol (Appendix F) for this research was segmented into three categories (*Family and early years, professional journey, and Impact)*. The steps of the interview process are as follows.

In the first phase of the study, I conducted one interview with each participant. The interviews last approximately 60-90 minutes each and consisted of approximately 10-12 open-ended questions. The interview questions were developed using the literature

on critical race theory (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007, Crenshaw, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Harper, 2009; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013), and narrative theory (White & Epston, 1990; Reissman, 2007; Singh & Hays, 2012; Webster & Mertova, 2007; White & Dotson, 2010; Hall & Fields, 2015). Due to the paucity of literature on Black male school counselors, I researched literature that would provide the most depth and breadth in exploring the salience of the theoretical framework and tradition used to conceptualize and analyze the research, and further provide me with a research tradition that has been utilized when researching Black men and their experiences through structural racism and White supremacy (Bell, 1992); Fanon, 1952).

The questions provided the participants an opportunity to share rich data about their experiences (Seidman, 2013), which extracted salient narratives (Singh & Hays, 2012); I wanted the participants to tell be "their-story", not "his-story". Within their stories, the impact of racism, marginalization, oppression, and exclusion, as Black men (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, Ladson-Billings, 2011; Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013) resonated throughout the interviews. For example, one of the questions asked was *"tell me about your experiences as a Black male student while growing up"*? Interview questions like this was embedded within the various sections of the interview protocol to elicit the critical race critique (Crenshaw, 2011; Bell, 1992; Yosso, 2005) of their experiences.

I met with each participant at an agreed upon location that was suited for confidentiality and privacy (Seidman, 2013). In order to accommodate participants that were unable to meet in person due to location or personal reasons, I was able to conduct

their interview over the internet using the Zoom conference app. Creswell (2014) supports the use of internet interviewing in situations where a face-to-face interview is not possible. Both the face-to-face interviews and the virtual interviews were recorded on a digital recorder for accuracy and transcribed by the researcher (Creswell, 2014), As the research instrument in qualitative research a reflexive journal and contact summary sheets are important pieces to ensure trustworthiness of the data (Hays & Singh, 2012). I also completed a reflective journal sheet (Appendix G) immediately after completing each interview to note any discrepancies, salient thoughts, main themes, and general comments about the interviewee's responses in comparison with the responses of other participants.

Analytic Memo

Analytic memos is a reflective summary process that adds to the qualitative coding which tracks interpretations, thoughts, concepts, themes, and narratives (Chapman, Birks & Francis, 2008). Memoing as a research technique that is not restricted to the analytical phase of research. From the onset the study is conceptualized, and memos can help to clarify thinking on a research topic, provide a mechanism for the articulation of content, and subjective perspectives about the area of research (Chapman, Birks & Francis, 2008). In this study, the researcher documented analytic memos utilizing a MEMO (Mapping research activities; Extracting meaning from the data; maintaining momentum; opening communication process (Chapman et al, 2008). The MEMO process enabled the researcher to conceptualize (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007) the study's primary focus of Black male school counselors and their experiences, while

extracting ongoing meanings and narratives that came out during the research process (Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013; Harper, 2009).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was completed in two phases, which was in collaboration with a thematic narrative analysis of each participant, and *Nvivo coding* (Saldana, 2016). Qualitative data analysis is a thorough process of inspecting, organizing, and transferring data into a form of explanation that provides answers and meaning to a phenomenon being researched (Gibson & O'Conner, 2003). Therefore, the data analysis portion of this study was paramount because the analysis and coding process helped to reduce the data to narratives to categories, and themes (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1995). For this research, narrative theory analysis was utilized as it seeks to understand what the stories reveals about an individual in a culturally meaningful process (Hays & Singh, 2012). The interviews, demographic questionnaires, and reflective journals were used as data.

Following Creswell's (2014) guidelines, the researcher transcribed all of the audio recordings and a narrative was eventually developed for each participant. Following each transcription the participants received the transcription, to check for accuracy before coding (Creswell, 2014). First, the researcher and research team met to conduct initial inductive coding of transcripts to create space for participant's voice to be more clearly heard (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Bendassoli, 2013) to come up with initial codes, and made general notes about experiences of racism, family and early years, professional journey, and impact. Next, in commitment to the epistemology of CRT and its critique to structural racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, 2011; Solorzano &

Yosso, 2002) we engaged in deductive coding process. Deductive codes were developed by integrating the tenets of CRT (Bendassoli, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Bell, 1995) as a foundational framework. CRT tenets used for deductive coding included the following: (a) permanence of racism, (b) interest convergence, (c) counter narrative, (d) Whiteness as property, and (e) intersectionality. The initial codes were then organized and assigned to the different tenets of CRT. Based on the first round of deductive and inductive coding, the research team developed a codebook. The researcher then conducted another round of coding using the established codebook, to come up with the salient categories and meaning full themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codebook was used to code and analyzed the remainder data, and out of that process categories and themes emerged. Next, the researcher reviewed the themes and wrote anecdotal descriptions of the experiences of the storytellers and wrote thematic narratives of the recurring themes. These descriptions included the specific language of the men.

Polkinghorne's model of analysis. Polkinghorne's model of analysis was used to analyze the narratives of the participants as it creates a salience to address the larger phenomena of the topic (Polkinghorne, 1995). Polkinghorne's model of analysis also treats stories as data and uses thematic analysis to determine themes across stories, which is foundational (Polkinghorne, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis of the data allowed for the researcher to identify central themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hays & Singh, 2012) of the collective stories. Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).For this research study, the researcher identified commonalities that existed across data sources to identify shared experiences and examine relationships

within or among the narratives by categorizing codes across data sources to come up with patterns and themes (Polkinghorne, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006) using Nvivo (Saldana, 2016).

Member checking

Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher employed the strategy of member checking (participant feedback) to verify the preciseness of interpretations and descriptions of the transcription, coding, and themes (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2007; Hays & Singh, 2012). The participants received an electronic copy of their transcribed interview for review and were asked to provide feedback. After salient themes were identified and clearly defined, the researcher had a video meeting with the research team to agree on themes. Participants had the opportunity to review final themes and provide feedback on the themes. This was very important for the researcher due to the commitment of telling the stories of Black male school counselors.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are expressed in terms of trustworthiness using vernacular such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Merriam, 2009). The trustworthiness of a research study is paramount to acceptance into the academic world and to advance further research on the topic. The goal of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to verify and support that the findings are worth considering (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The current study utilized individual interviews and the transcription of those interviews, and analytic memos, which are all means of triangulating the data for stronger trustworthiness (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, peer debriefing was utilized to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Several peers within the school counseling field served as the research team for this study to discuss and critique any developing ideas or interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to offer advice and recommendations. This enables the researcher to make changes to the study by being aware of personal biases and ideas (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, member checking was utilized during, and at the end of the interview and data analyst process, so participants will have a chance to review the findings for accuracy (Merriam, 2009). Participants received an initial write up of their transcription to review and provide feedback. An audit trail was also used to enhance transparency and trustworthiness. An audit trail is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). An audit trail is a record kept regarding what was done in an investigation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). A timeline and a detailed account of each step taken in the research study were included.). Furthermore, Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2007) and narrative theory (Clandinin, 2013) aided in conceptualizing the research and analysis of this research.

Data Management

All participants received a confidentiality letter stating that their names and information collected during the study will be kept private. Participants used a pseudonym in the study and text was transcribed, cleaned, and the finalized content was stored in word processing file on a password-protected computer. The audio recordings were also done on a secure device and stored on a password protected device. The data memos were kept secured and all notebooks used to collect memos were placed in a locked file cabinet. At the start, and throughout the research, participants were reminded

that they can withdraw at any time, and upon the completion of the research study, participants will be informed of future research and asked permission for the safeguarding of all data to be used in future research.

Chapter Summary

To summarize, the focus of this research was a narrative study of Black males in the school counseling profession, exploring the experiences of practicing Black male school counselors, and recruitment strategies. In investigating the primary research questions, a qualitative approach was utilized, conceptualized by Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007) and narrative inquiry (White & Epston, 1990; White, 2009) was used to allow the participants to share their individual stories. The collection of the data and analysis was structured where a collection of all the individual data was collected through an interview. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) and coded to develop themes and meanings that were excavated from the narratives of the participants. The shortage of Black males in education is a global concern, but the shortage of Black males in the school counseling profession is even more unique. This research served as a springboard for future research, educational systems, and counselor education programs, to begin an active awareness of this topic, and how the shortage of Black males in the school counseling profession can be improved.

Chapter 4: Findings

"Out of the huts of history's shame I rise. Up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise. I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, Welling and swelling I bear in the tide, Still I Rise". ~ Maya Angelou

Introduction

Critical Race Theory was utilized in this article to focus on the pervasive racialized narratives of Black men (Bell, 1995; Lynn, 2002; Harper, 2009) who are professional school counselors, and to call for the elimination of systemic barriers that impede the progress of Black males from entering the school counseling profession (Warren, 2013; Pabon, 2014; Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013). In particular, this research draws on CRT as it explores how Black male (Harper, 2009; Lynn, 2002; Harrison, 2014) school counselors see themselves in light of their work. While using CRT as a methodology, this study engaged narrative theory (Webster & Mertova, 2007) to present the lived experiences of Black male school counselors in their own voices.

The purpose of this qualitative narrative research was to understand and tell the stories of ten Black male school counselor's experiences within a racialized system (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), specifically how the intersection of race, gender, and their professional identity clashed with each other in their journey (Crenshaw, 2011; Yosso, 2002). Furthermore, the research explored what they felt were steps to take to increase the representation of Black males (Washington, 2010; Jones & Jenkins, 2012) in the school counseling profession. This chapter presents the findings from interviews with ten Black male school counselors who are currently certified school counselors, and working in various schools across the southeast region of the United States. The resulting

narratives are the storyteller's personal stories of their journey through their respective voices.

The findings of the study centered on recurring themes related to the lived personal and professional experiences of participants as well as their perceptions of systemic structures (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) and how to increase recruitment efforts for more Black males in the school counseling profession. Findings emerged from the researcher and the research team analysis of the transcriptions using inductive and deductive *Nvivo Coding* (Saldan, 2016). The following research question and sub-question were the premise of the interview questions:

1. What are/were the personal/professional experiences of Black male school counselors?
    a. How can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed?

Discussion of Data

The data collection process used for this research was described in Chapter 3 as it relates to recruitment, selection and the recording of data. The participants were purposeful selected (Merriam, 2009), and they were emailed consent and confidential documentation that included the purpose of the research. Nine of the participants responded to the request to participate in a timely manner, the researcher had to find a tenth participant that took a few extra days to do. The recruitment process took about three weeks of preparing consent documents, completing and receiving IRB approval, sending follow-up emails and setting interview dates.

The individual interviews took place in an agreed upon location of all the participants. A protocol of interview questions was used to guide the respective interview sessions. Each participant received a transcript of their interview to check for accuracy (member checking), and all participants confirmed that the transcripts were accurate. The researcher then began the coding process with the assistance of a research team that included inductive and deductive analysis, and thematic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers then prepared a third-person narrative giving voice to each participant based on their respective personal/ professional journey, and their perspectives on recruiting more Black males in the school counseling profession. These narratives were then emailed to each participant to be further checked for accuracy and to ensure the narratives captured their voices.

Chapter Four is structured in two-parts to facilitate the presentation of the findings in relation and commitment to CRT and NT (Solorzano & Yosso; White, 2009). The first part essentially comprises the ten participant's narratives to share the authentic voices and background of the storytellers. In the second part, the researcher present the findings through the analysis of the ten interviews to highlight common emergent themes (Creswell, 2014). These analysis are presented using the thematic narrative approach. After each participant's narrative, reflection from the researcher is provided.

Part I: Findings Illustrated through Participant Narratives of Experience

Table I

Participants Level Status (Most Black male school counselors are found in HS)

Participants	Age	Grade Level	Experience	Education Status
Mr. Marc Andrews	40	Elementary	3	Masters Degree

Mr. Black	47	High School	23	Masters Degree
Mr. Nupe	32	Middle School	3	Masters Degree
Mr. Purple	53	High School	18	Masters Degree
Mr. Lamar	32	High School	6	Masters Degree Ed.S Degree
Mr. Anthony	53	High School	5	Masters Degree
Mr. Manny	35	High School	6	Masters Degree
Mr. Royal Blue	36	High School	9	Masters Degree
Mr. Green	31	Middle School	3	Masters Degree
Mr. Pro Counselor	42	High School	12	Masters Degree Ed.S Degree Doctoral Degree

Mr. Marc Andrews

Until you get into a position of power where you can change the rules, you really better follow them. Cause if you don't, you're going to end up somewhere in a position with someone who's going to discipline you out of hate for you, instead of love for you. (Mr. M. Andrews)

Marc is a 40 year old, full time certified school counselor at the elementary level, where he has practiced as a school counselor for 3 years at the time of the research. He is originally from Virginia, but grew up in North Dakota, New Jersey, Germany, and South Carolina, because his father was in the military. Marc's experiences in various parts of the world were very instrumental in his perspectives and worldviews. He recalls being called the "Cosby Kids" in Virginia because both his parents were working and they were considered middle class. Marc also remembers being asked "if he had a tail" because he

was Black, while living in Germany. “Living in Germany was where I really started to realize my identity as a Black kid, because you know they’ve never experienced Black people in those days, and all Black people have tails right”, he recalls.

Marc gives a lot of credit to his parents for the beliefs and values that have shaped him as a person; his tenacity and work ethics from his father, and his nurturing from his mother. “I feel like those together have kind of formulated who I am now and how it plays itself out in my role as a school counselor”. Marc knew the importance of work ethic when he was growing up. That work ethic is still with him today.

His professional journey began with pursuing an undergraduate degree in psychology, and after that his masters in community counseling. He worked in several community counseling agencies and even had experience working with the Division of Family and Children Services and Juvenile Justice Department, before he decided to pursue school counseling. Marc stated, “my whole journey of weaving in and out and learning all the different agencies and who does what, coming into contact with every type of child you can think of, as far as from every walk of life, has helped me be able to deal with any situation”.

Marc’s journey to becoming a school counselor has not been easy. He speaks about the system racial issues of the underrepresentation of Black males in the school counseling profession: “I feel that systemic racism, it, it plays an integral role because, or in terms of when you think about it through the lens of a young black boy, a young black girl, and you don't see the representation of yourself, people typically aspire to what they see. Black kids are not seeing themselves as professionals in the schools as much as White kids see White educators, and those that are allies to us that are of the dominant

culture, they have to speak up and it's until they speak up that we get heard because we keep saying the same thing over and over".

Marc speaks often about the challenges being the only Black male counselor at his school, and how he is often called to deal with the discipline of a male student, or deal with a male student in crisis. He states "it gets overwhelming, and I know that there are a few other men in the school, but being the only male counselor, they automatically come and get me to deal with the boys, we definitely need more males in our schools".

One way to recruiting more Black males into the school counseling profession is to "create incentive-based programs", Marc Stated. "I know you know this, there are a lot of male educators who wouldn't mind making that shift. But sometimes what happens is they start thinking about the schooling, and the cost to go back to school". "With financial support, more Black males might be willing to go into the school counseling profession".

Despite the challenges, and journey Marc has been through to end up in the school counseling profession, he feels his family and friends and other Black male school counselors, provide a lot of support for him, and he is able to reach out to them in times of need. The legacy that Marc would like to leave on the field of school counseling is, "my dream legacy that I would like leave behind just, I think my legacy would be more of a joint legacy as a black professional counselor that we leave behind the legacy of being some of the most profound instruments in schools".

Researcher Reflection. Marc was very enthusiastic about the interview, and he articulated with a sound sense of purpose and commitment to the work that he is doing as a school counselor. He struck me to be someone dedicated to succeeding, and giving all

his experiences to his current work. I saw before me a highly motivated individual with a love for the counseling profession, and a passion for working with students. That was evident in my experience with him walking in the hallways of his school. Within the five minutes we walked from the front of the school to the back, dozens of students will yell out for his name to just give him a high five. He shared with me that he has about sixty different hang shakes with different students. The impact he has on the lives of young people is priceless.

Mr. Black

She said, I think you need to be in education. Do you know that there's not a lot of black males in education? "She said, I think that you should really be concerned about making a difference in our community because you, you are someone that can do it. And this one lady, changed my life. (Mr. Black)

Mr. Black is a 47 year old Black male school counselor and works at the high school level in a school district located in the southeast region of the United States, and has been a counselor for 23 years. Mr. Black story begins in a rural town in Tennessee. He comes from a middle class household, with both his mother and father present and very active in his life. So the expectations were for him to go to college one day, but he was not sure he wanted to, because he states, "I was an okay student, in elementary, middle, and high school. When I say OK, I mean, a BC student, if I were to put the effort into education, I could have been an A student. So when it was time for me to graduate high school my father felt like since my grades were just OK I didn't appear to be college material. He felt like I just needed to go into the military".

The military was not attractive to Mr. Black, so while in high school he turned things around academically and became a stronger student. He recalls his mother being that voice on encouragement for him, “I don't care what they said at that school. I'm not worried about what your transcript looks like. You can write, you can still go to that school baby. You are not gonna stay at home and sit on the couch like those other kids”. So he forged through high school and enrolled in undergraduate school and majored in business. Mr. Black recalled, “As a Black man back then you were pushed to major in business, or computers. Computers was the big thing back then. I chose to major in business”. Mr. Black quickly realized that life was more than money. “I would hear all the time, as an African American male, you need to make money. Later I found out there was something more important than making money. And what that is, is making a difference. So making money is one thing, but making a difference gives your life”.

Hard work and education was very important to his family. Mr. Black grew up hearing, “education is the way out. Education creates opportunities. Especially when you're looking for African American males”. Mr. Black received a partial scholarship to attend college, and matriculated at a university in the inner city, very different from the rural town he grew up in. This was an eye opening experience for him, because this was the first experience he had with knowing his racial identity. “ I went from a rural time and going to school being one of maybe two Blacks in the school, to the inner city, where it was about 98% Black students”. Mr. Black felt a sense of value and worth on who he was because his identity was celebrated, and he saw professors and other professionals who were Black, not just the typical Black people he saw working in factories in his hometown.

After several years of majoring in business, he change to marketing, then later he changed to education. Mr. Black became an elementary school teacher for several years, then was encouraged to go into administration. At that point in his life, he had a passion for helping children, he felt working as an administrator will not meet that need. “Black men in education was always looked at as being the disciplinarian, and I didn’t want that, so someone mentioned school counseling. Mr. Black pursued a masters in school counseling and began working as a school counselor after several years. He felt that he can advocate for students more by working as a school counselor. Mr. Black recalled, “So from sixth through eighth grade, I really felt like I was an underperforming student as a black male. So when that, that trend, that mindset that mindset transcended into the ninth grade. No one at the school encouraged me to do better than I was doing, therefore if I had someone that looked like me, I think I possibly would have had a better opportunity to take my education more seriously and work to my potential. To see a path to success inspires me. Like somebody that did it, inspires me, to aspire to do what someone else has done and to try to take that to the next level inspires me”.

Mr. Black shared in his narrative that, “I think I tell my students all the time that the greatest thing you can have is an opportunity. And when you start talking about systemic racism what that really is, is it cuts away all the opportunities for, you know, especially African Americans in certain areas. Systemic racism was a topic that he felt really impacted the underrepresentation of Black males in the school counseling profession. Mr. Black poignantly captured systemic racism in education, “We're serving the students and in serving the students, you want to get the people that can, that can impact the students in unique ways. And that doesn't necessarily mean everybody on your

staff has the biggest degree or the doctorate degree or, or you know, or the master's degree. You might need to hire some teachers with the bachelor's degree that can teach art, they can speak to students in an art class and maybe a very gifted and talented art teacher, but just doesn't have the master's degree. But you hired the Caucasian teacher or the Asian teacher or someone else that has the masters in art. Who knows why this African American teacher didn't go to get her art degree because maybe they couldn't go back to school, and get their art degree, but they're a great art teacher. But you didn't hire them because they didn't have the master's degree, that systemic racism there".

His analysis of systemic racism in education was very powerful and it speaks to the motivation he has to continue to make radical changes in the school counseling profession. Mr. Talked about the school counseling field needing more conversations about the absence of Black males in the profession. He felt that Black males are not interested in going into the counseling profession because historically, "it's almost like, it's not even cool to go talk about feelings as an African American male to start talking about tapping into your emotions, because that's just not what we do". There was no examples of counseling or talking about emotions, "my dad didn't model that for me" he said. Mr. Black stated, "Catching students when they're in a before they've declared a major, exposing them to the opportunity of being a school counselor and what it means to be a school counselor, what's required to be a school counselor, and how, and what type of impact you can make in a local school".

Mr. Black years as a school counselor had been very rewarding, he recalls the countless lives he has touched and affected. "Every year one of the things that I've enjoyed most is at the end of the year seniors write a letter to people that have made a

difference within their four years of high school. And there are many students who come back and tell me how much of an impact I made on their life. That is very rewarding". The hopes Mr. Black has for the profession and the legacy he wants to leave is, "the greatest thing that I can do is make sure that African American males no, although I've done some great things in education, they can do much, much greater. You know, life is not all about money. It's about making a difference. And, and at the end of the whole counseling piece and when you feel like your work is done, the question will be, what difference did I make"?

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Black was very excited about the interview and felt like this was an opportunity to begin a much needed conversation. His journey is one of encouragement and motivation. He was not the best student in primary and secondary schools. In fact he felt like the mostly White educators did not believe in him or pushed him. They just kind of let him be mediocre. As he spoke on the systemic racism that has impacted the educational system he was very passionate and spoke to the realities that Black and Brown people experience when trying to navigate this racial system. His last words of making a difference in whatever you do, and not letting the chase of the purse influence what you want to do in this life resonates with me. I believe this is what continues to propel him forward to impact the lives of students through his career, as he saw potential in them, and the promise of the future of which he spoke of in the interview.

Mr. Nupe

And the difference is now I feel as if, especially working in middle school I feel like I wanted to work in middle school more or less because at that age I didn't have a counselor. So I wanted to be me, the counselor that I've never had. (Mr. Nupe)

Mr. Nupe is 32 years old, and has been a school counselor for 3 years at the middle school level. He grew up in the Bronx, New York, where he attended some private schools as well as public schools. He recalls growing up in a low income home where both parents were there until his father and mother separated when he was in high school. The separation of his parents had a difficult impact on him and he would act out in school. Mr. Nupe said, "I held on to some aggression, which probably could've been a little bit of what I was going through in school, and I held a little aggression cause I felt like he left us. For many years teachers viewed me as that angry Black kid". He went through school struggling to find his voice and place among other students, but as an only child being raised by a single working mother, he didn't have a lot of family structure. Mr. Nupe talked about his experiences in school as having to "speak up and defend myself and it would be viewed as me being very aggressive or even them saying I'm afraid to have him in my classroom".

Although his early years were difficult with the absence of a male role model and being raised by a single mother, he did graduate high school and matriculated to college in South Carolina, and his mother would always tell him, "have a plan, because, once you graduate, you are not coming back". He majored in criminal justice and began interning at a juvenile detention center while in college. His plan was to go into law or something in the criminal justice field. After graduating undergraduate he got his first job with the

juvenile correction center where he recalls working with a lot of young Black males. Mr. Nupe said, “So I worked with the youth behind the bars and I saw a lot of them. There was a few, very few that you know, felt like there was hope outside of that. But I also saw some of them that thought this is my life now. You know, I have a free meal, free housing. It doesn't get any better than that. And they started early becoming career criminals”. Working in the juvenile detention center was very challenging for him. To witness young Black males in the system and sometimes feeling hopeless with having to help them navigate the system as their probation officer. He was “emotionally tapped out”, as he stated in his own words of how the system made it difficult to advocate for the inmates.

Encouraged to affect change in another way and have a different opportunity to reach the youth, Mr. Nupe matriculated in a school counseling program as he was working in the juvenile detention center. He started his first school counseling job in South Carolina, and then eventually took a position in Georgia.

Mr. Nupe spoke about his experiences so far as a school counselor as being both challenging and rewarding. Some of the challenges he has experienced has been being the only male in his counseling department and working with all females. He said, “Sometimes they would want me to sit around at lunch and gossip about other staff, but that wasn't me”. He also talked about the challenges going to a new school district that was very different from what he knew, and he was “thrown into the fire, and had to survive, especially being the African American male now expect us to, just kind of man up and handle our business”.

The rewards that have been fulfilling are numerous. Mr. Nupe said, “Basically having that rapport with the kids. Not bragging...but two schools I've been at, kids say, I'm the favorite counselor. Not only just, you know, the African American students, but students from different cultures kind of understand my story and I’m able to understand them”. He values hearing and seeing the success stories of students and having the attention of misunderstood students that everybody else wants to throw away. He states, “Having them writing letters to me saying, you know, I really relate to you and if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have made it through this”.

Mr. Nupe spoke on the value Black male school counselors can bring to the profession. He said, “I want them to see how important it is to have us at their school and see the kind of bonds and relationships we've formed with our kids. We bring a unique cultural experience that speaks to the youth today”. When asked where to begin to increase the representation of more Black males in the profession, Mr. Nupe spoke about beginning with Black males who are teachers, and used the national program “Call me Mister” an example of how to recruit more Black males into school counseling. He also spoke about increasing the pay for educators, as an attractive way to have more Black males interested in the field.

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Nupe experiences and journey was a little different from most of the other participants. Most participants came from a middle class home, with both parents, but he was raised by a single mother in an urban setting, which really impacted his journey. Growing up he witnessed marginalization and in an urban setting and experiences educators that did not support him because of who he was. That has been the motivating factor that has led him to the school counseling profession, and he is

developing a deep desire to help students who are often forgotten and misunderstood. He brings a bright ray of hope to our students and his passion for the work is evident in his narrative.

Mr. Purple

Most of the black males that I encountered at that time in my life who were influential in my life, I encountered them in church. I did not encounter black male educators until I got to the collegiate level. My education opportunity fund counselor was a black male. That's the one that got me to say, college is an opportunity for you. (Mr. Purple)

Mr. Purple is a 53 year old Black male school counselor and is in his 18th year as a school counselor. He has worked in the elementary, middle school, and is now currently working as a high school counselor. Mr. Purple is originally from Guyana, South America. His parents were educators in Guyana in the 1970, and after the tragic death of his father, his mother wanted a better life for her family, so they travelled to the United States in 1979. When he came from Guyana, he experienced a culture shock like anyone migrating to another country might experience. He concluded the culture in America was extremely difficult because "I was just a very shy and bashful individual. As you can see the pigmentation of my skin being dark skin at that time, it wasn't popular in those days. I had this one teacher, I had this one teacher who took me under her wings and took a liking to me and definitely was able to get me through a process at that time that was extremely, extremely difficult".

One of the difficulty that Mr. Purple remembered was the challenge of getting any support from the school counselor at the time. He only met his counselor once while in high school, and "it was made clear to me that, that, that college was not an option for

me. And so I knew nothing about post-secondary, and I had no thoughts beyond high school". Fortunately, his mother worked for a woman at the time who son was a college counselor, who began talking to him about college and post-secondary options. Although his knowledge and experiences were limited in postsecondary options, his mother did value education and always encouraged him to pursue his dreams, and said to him that once he got into college that he was not going to return home. One thing he recalls learning from his experience is that "life happens to everyone. I have no respect for people's status or economic status or any of those things. And because life happens, we have to learn how to live life and not let life live us".

Mr. Purple eventually decided to go into the field of law, because it was thought of as being a more lucrative profession. He was accepted to Emory Law School, and completed three years of that program, and "after completing three years of law school, I came to the painful decision that this is not for me, I just didn't feel the passion", he recalled. He decided to change his course of action and went into ministerial studies at Mercer University. This proved to fit his personality and passions more, and he has been a minister to date. School counseling came to him in a very interesting way. Mr. Purple reflected, "My wife was just hired as a new school teacher for a charter school. As we were leaving one day, the principal of the school came charging out after us and just yelling and screaming for me. And she said have you ever thought about school counseling? And I said, I'm not a counselor. I'm a minister. I am not a counselor. She said, I've watched you come into this building the last two or so weeks and I see the ease in which people are drawn to you, the ease in which you talk to people, you have a way of putting people at ease". This unplanned interaction sparked his interest and desire for

the counseling profession, so he took the leap of faith and went back to school to obtain his degree in school counseling, and was hired as a school counselor in Atlantic City, NJ. The community in which he worked at the time was very low income, and stricken by deep poverty, and there were limited cultural representation of the staff.

Mr. Purple spoke about the impact of having more Black male representation in schools. He said, “When the community is more than 97% African-Americans, and school is 95% African American, it is critical to be able to have that interaction with a male that can help me to understand some of the male dynamics I was dealing with at that time, that didn't make sense to me, and, and mom couldn't help me understand it because at the end of the day, she's still a woman”. The more he noticed the impact of his presence in the school counseling profession, he became more vested in the mission of the profession for him, and sees this profession as his purpose in life.

Mr. Purple partly attributes the underrepresentation of Black males in the counseling profession to challenges of systemic racism. He suggested that “we have to start exposing our not just African American young people to so many different opportunities”. “African Americans don’t often have exposure to certain experiences, like counseling, in order for them to see themselves potentially becoming one”, he stated.

Some of the challenges he has faced as a school counselor has been breaking through the stereotypical macho masculinity of male students, and also the sometimes limits that are put on the counseling profession to be just a “job in my office”. Mr. Purple shared many experiences of working with students and attending their birthday parties, sporting events, family activities, and building an outside relationship with them. Despite these challenges, the rewards have been the impact of having students and their families

return and send letters of appreciation, and other pleasantries thanking him. He said, “Love and care transcends every culture. And so to be able to connect with students in a culture that speaks languages at home that I don't understand, or I may never be able to echo, but they still feel an impact, that's amazing”.

Mr. Purple responded to the call for recruiting more Black males in the school counseling profession by stating, “I think we have to start both on the local level and on the national level. We have to be intentional the same way that we are intentional about black male teachers in schools. And not just in, in the urban settings, right? Not just in the black communities that we have to be intentional to make this a national focus that black men bring a certain level of our expertise, so to speak to the profession and be able to create some avenues that we can start to nurture and move black males into this interest”.

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Purple provided a very interesting view of his experiences as an immigrant growing up in America, and navigating the system as a foreigner. He believes his identity as a school counselor and a minster is one in the same, because he is on a mission to impact the lives of students and their families, and he is quick to remind people that “I’m very intentional to remind folks, I'm not a school counselor. I'm a black male school counselor. That makes a difference. That makes a difference”.

Mr. Lamar

You know, if you're a school district, your population, your staff, your administrations should reflect your populations to a certain extent. You know, I wouldn't say it's one for one across the board, but to be able to have critical pieces and have a diversity of

thought and a diversity of ideas at each level will help those stakeholders have buy in into what we're doing.

(Mr. Lamar)

Lamar is a 32 year old Black male school counselor, who has been a counselor for 6 years at the high school level. Lamar was born and raised in the Atlanta area. He came from a middle class family where both his mother and father were present and very active in his life. His parents were very strict about education and also encouraged a level of pride for his Black heritage. "They taught me awareness as a black man in the world is something that my parents both wanted me to have a good sense of. They wanted me to have a good sense of my personal history, but then also the history of where I grew up". Growing up in the south it was important to know about the Civil Rights Movement and other critical parts of American history that impacted Black people.

He attended a Black private school during his primary years and transferred to a public school. The public school was a big change from private school because of the structure, and the focus on Black heritage was not focused on at the public school. During his k-12 experiences, Lamar was a gifted student and was very active in extracurricular activities, but recalls being always asked if he played basketball because he was a 6'6'' student, and Black. He also recalls a teacher in high school asking him if he completed a writing assignment and stated, "If you did do this, you will definitely go to college". Implying that he was not capable of doing such an assignment, but if he did he would have a college future. His parents were very upset and addressed the issue with the school. Lamar spoke about the implicit biases that he would often experience during his

school experiences as a “big Black man”. Lamar noted that society expected that he was either an athlete, or basically some kind of business man.

Upon graduating high school he enrolled in college and was on track to be an engineer. Not feeling a sense of purpose and fulfillment, he noted, “I was still in college when I switched my major. But I think it's unique because it did bring me back to kind of those core values that you were talking about earlier. And it brought me to a career that is more in touch with who I really am, who I really am as a person”. When he dropped engineering as a major he struggled to figure out what was a good fit for him, his family being from a line of educators encouraged him to go into education to become a teacher. One summer he worked as a camp counselor, and was also coaching basketball. While in this role, he enjoyed working with the kids and the pull to become an educator, “but once I realized I could start building relationships, I think that's what really turned it from just education to know why this something that I’m instantly passionate about is”? This is the point in his journey he decided that he wanted to work with students beyond the classroom, and school counseling was the right fit.

He enrolled in a school counseling program for his graduate degree and began the process to becoming a school counselor. Pursuing a school counseling degree was a social justice move for Lamar, as he noted, “So I think because there has been, you know, the voice has been so small for so long that we as black men, if we don't have that kind of a conversation, you know, we're always pushed towards, you know, money making careers because that's one of the things that was the deprived from us for a very long”. Lamar knew the historical impact of systemic racism and how it played into minoritized groups going into certain careers, and school counseling, was one of those systems that

did not seek to be inclusive. He articulated, “it just seems so elite. You think of psychology, I kind of equate it to different things that would be considered privileged activities. Memberships of, you know, white families or, you know, white people in general discuss, you know, I'm going to see my therapist or I'm going to go see my shrink, or a country club”. Lamar saw counseling as one of these privileged activities that did not address diversity and inclusion, to represent the students served.

As a school counselor, he spoke about the challenges of being the only male school counselor, especially Black male, “But now that there's only so much of you to give to everybody that's around you. I think that's one of the issues I ran into a lot in my previous school is that there was just so much that needed to be done in terms of conversations being had in terms of the advocacy that I found early on”. Being that advocate for Black boys, or even being called in to assist with discipline Black students was frustrating for him, so he “learned that I'm not doing them a service by being the advocate and the voice as opposed to educating them on how to advocate and then showing them how to use their voice because that now empowers them to do it regardless if I'm there or not”. Lamar was elaborating on teaching other counselors to be able to speak and advocate on behalf of students that they might usually just call him to handle. With the many challenges, Lamar has had great rewards in working as a school counselor. He has made a major impact on the lives of many students and their families. The connections he has made, and love and appreciation from students and faculty from schools he has worked is a testament to his impact in the profession. Lamar encouraged that the recruitment process for more Black males in the school counseling profession shout begin, “the most immediate starting point is graduate schools and, and you know,

post-secondary options to try and get the males who are already in the mental health profession to consider school counseling because of the impact they can have on young people".

***Researcher Reflection*.** Lamar is a young man that has a rich knowledge of his history as a Black man and how systemic racism has played a role in his life experiences. He was honest and very passionate about the work he is doing, and feels that the discussion of Black males in the school counseling profession has to increase. "I think if, if I could sum it up, I think its, its possibilities. Like I want to be able to, when I step away from it, the students that I've worked with, the families I've worked with, the faculty members that I've worked with, I want them to understand that it's possible to make an impact as a Black man".

Mr. Anthony

So the rewards, the biggest rewards are seeing the students matriculate and actually graduate and go onto something better. I tell you the feeling that I have when a crying mother comes up to me at graduation and said, we could not have done this without you. (Anthony)

Anthony is a 53 year old Black male school counselor who has been in the profession for 5 years. Both of his parents immigrated to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago. His mother came on a scholarship to NYU back in the mid-sixties. His father came a little bit after she did and he was born here in America. He has an older brother who migrated here with his mother and I have a sister who is his father's daughter from a first marriage. He was the first person in his family born in this country, and was born and raised in New York. He grew up in New York, and went through the school

system... He went to Catholic school in primary school, and then from middle school on, he went to the public school system in New York. He was very active in junior high, but especially in high school. He was a high school junior and senior class president for several years. He was a very active and motivated student, who subsequently went on to the University of Buffalo, upstate New York where he pursued a degree in management information systems. After graduating from the University of Buffalo, he migrated to Atlanta Georgia to work in IT.

Anthony noted, “I never really liked it. In fact, the reason I really went to college to be a Spanish major but not really having the type of guidance and assistance needed to make a decision. I just kind of listened to what people were saying, putting in my ear. Computers were big at the time, the next new thing. And so while I knew I didn't want to do computer programming, I figured I could do business management with a concentration in information systems and I can make money”. Computers were the wave of the future, that's where the money is. Anthony worked 25 years in IT, and when the opportunity presented itself, he retired from that industry and pursued school counseling. He went through the process of applying to a counselor education program and felt that if he didn’t have the money from his retirement, he wouldn’t have had the means and ability to go back to school and pursue a degree in school counseling.

Anthony came from a home where education was critical, and was a non-negotiable. Number two, respect for elders was very salient in his upbringing. Furthermore, being proud of culture and heritage was a message passed on by his family. He went to a school that was racially diverse in the sense of Black and White students, “like maybe 55% black, 45% white. I mean, it was really like almost down the middle. So

I grew up going to school with a lot of black people, with a lot of white people". While in school he never encountered a Black male teacher, counselor, or administrator, and Anthony felt that he was a very progressive and active student, also he did not really think about being treated differently because of his race. Although he never had the experience of having a Black male teacher or counselor, Anthony felt "I think we are absolutely critical to the livelihood and the support of our black male students today". He didn't really know the magnitude of the importance of Black male's impact on Black male students until "my very first year I really noticed how critical I was and quickly learned my impact I had when black males came to me and lean on me and I was their support and they will call me pops". Anthony also stated, "to be honest, I think schools that don't have at least one black male school counselor are doing kids a huge disservice because our black males need, black males and professional positions that they could look up to, and our black males needs people who are going to tell them that they are worth something, they can do what they want to do and to actually push them".

Antony felt that systemic racism played a part in the lack of Black male representation in the school counseling. He shared, "I think our black males who do go on to pursue higher education are not always looking to do it in a field of education as teachers or school counselors. Because I think the impact of systemic racism on black people makes us feel that the only way that we can progress or do anything is to, is the power of the purse and to have money so that our students are not looking to be educators".

As a school counselor, Anthony found a place where he can be an impact on the lives of young people. He noted that some of the challenges have been "navigating

through dealing with what I talked about before in terms of our, our teacher demographics or faculty demographics in comparison to student population; it often doesn't match. I don't feel like we necessarily have the right people teaching our students because I don't think they really understand our students". The rewards of working as a school counselor has been a great pleasure for Anthony as he talks about being the voice of encouragement for all students, and helping them realize their greatness. The legacy he wants to leave is, "I want people to say my life is different because of Mr. A. My life was positively affected because Mr. A was in my life; I just want to be known as that person who just loved them so much".

Researcher Reflection. Anthony's journey to the profession was different from other participants, as he came into the profession after retiring from another profession. He exhibited a high sense of purpose about himself and his aspirations as we conversed about his experiences. His cultural pride was evident, given his disclosures about his what he feels Black students need to be successful in school. Anthony's commitment to education and success was very evident that he has been a lifelong learner and now finds himself in a profession that has meaning and purpose. "There is just no greater joy than seeing them go onto the next stage of their lives. And knowing that you had something to do with it. And I just, I want to be remembered as that person who truly made a difference in the lives of my students".

Mr. Manny

Well, I think you have to start just how an administrator would try to recruit a black to becoming an administrator. You know, I see he is a good leader. I see he has classroom

management. I would start with the Black male teachers and see what qualities would make them a good school counselor. (Manny)

Manny is a 35-year-old school counselor for 5 years, and works at the high school level. Manny is originally from Georgia. He went to high school there, but before graduation, he was an Eagle Scout. That is something he is very proud of, and received it during his senior year. He keeps this honor with him all the time, and even has it on the wall in his office. He attended college as a baseball recruit, but later decided to give up baseball and focus on his academics.

Manny comes from a home with both of his parents actively involved in his life. Both of his parents were educators. Well growing up. His father taught horticulture and mother was a special education teacher, and still works as a teacher in the school system. Manny grew up in a middle class and was raised in what he calls "a nice neighborhood, nice predominantly black neighborhood where your neighbors really looked out for the kids in the community and, you know, it takes a community to raise them". This was very important for Manny to see growing up because he felt it impacted him to feel like he can accomplish anything because he saw professional Black people around him growing up. Growing up his family taught him the value of his Christin faith, and was also very intentional about education and exposing him and his siblings to different activities that would enrich them. ", I was able to go to summer camps on my own and stay a whole entire summer at a summer camp. We went to Florida every summer, joined the boy scouts, church, band, and participated in various sporting activities.

Along with all the various exposures, they also taught him the value of being resilient, not giving up, "fighting through and working your way out of something instead

of given up". This resilience he learned from his parents came to play when he graduated undergraduate and was trying to figure what he was going to do with his life. He graduated from GSU with a degree in criminal justice and a minor in psychology. His first goal was to work for the FBI, or the CIA. After several years of pursuing that dream he decided to begin working in odd jobs to make a living. After some time of doing that, he got a job working as a probation officer. Manny noted, "I was a probation officer for five years and probation was cool, you know, I enjoy helping the guys not come back on probation once they committed a crime and got processed through the courts. But I didn't enjoy seeing guys recommit and go to jail and stay in the prison population. So, you know, that's when I kind of was like, man, I need to try to do something about this or what can I do to help? So I just began researching and figuring I'll go back to school and become a school counselor and like work on the high school level to try to help these young men to, you know, not become a statistic in the criminal justice system".

Manny applied to graduate school and completed his program after two years, but one hurdle he had to cross was passing the state examination to become a certified school counselor. Manny recalled, "I had to take that test four times. And so I was on my second try, I was like, man, I'm giving up. I was frustrated. My mom, my wife, they were like, you'll get it, you'll get it. So I took it for a 3rd time and failed again and went to work at State Farm. After a year, my family encouraged me to try one more time. And so I, you know, I went to take the test for the fourth time and I finally passed it and it was kind of a sigh of relief, a big sigh of relief. I remember crying on the phone with my mom about that when I passed that".

Manny spoke about some of the challenges and the systemic racism that often impacts Black men representation in certain career fields. “I guess being taken seriously or, or your opinion and being taken seriously, you know you see the way certain administrators in the past may have looked at or thought of certain things you have said”. Also “them thinking you want to coach, thinking just because you black, you want to be a coach”. Manny also felt that one of the reasons we see the underrepresentation of Black men in the profession may also be because of some of the testing requirements that are mandatory to become a school counselor. “If we have to take all these test to go into education, I would rather put that energy and time into something that’s going to earn me more money”.

Although these can be challenges that are impacting Black males decisions to go into school counseling, the need is still there. According to Manny, “I would start with the Black male teachers. Teachers who are effective, Hey maybe the counselors need to approach those Black male teachers, and say, you know, you got all these good skills. The kids speak highly of you. I see you working at the school hard. You have a good relationship with students. Smiling with the kids, kids playful with you. You ever thought about, you know, being a counselor”. Manny also spoke about school counselors actively going to district job fairs and recruiting for school counselors as well. These were some ideas he felt to begin the process of recruiting more Black males into the profession.

Researcher Reflection. Manny is a relatively new school counselor who came from a long background of working in various fields before landing in school counseling, like most of the participants. His upbringing and family values helped shaped some of the attributes that has helped him in this journey (i.e. faith, relationships, resilience).

Manny's experience started out less than favorably as he pursued the counseling profession. It was not surprising to me when he said that he developed a passion for wanting to help kids that he was going to reach his goal of becoming a school counselor. His current role at the high school level has been a place where he feels he is needed. He is making an amazing impact in the lives of the students, as he also works as a football coach and has a unique impact with the young men on his football team. The feeling of belonging and fitting in was critical to his success, and it was interesting to hear him voice this concept himself.

Mr. Royal Blue

I always, you know, share with my students when they talk about their family issues or like having a step parent, you know, I'm able to relate to them because we didn't get along at all. So probably from age 10 to 17, she said two things a lot when she was upset with me or upset with my dad and then kind of transference onto me. You're trifling... And I remember looking in this old green dictionary, and the word that came up was unimportant. And then when she gets mad, you just like your monkey ass father. I heard that a whole lot. And of course the monkey's behind is nothing that's pretty and it affected me so much. (Mr. Blue)

Mr. Royal Blue is a 36 year old Black male school counselor who has worked in the profession for 9 years at the high school level. He was born and raised in New Jersey, and started out living in a separated home, so he lived with his mother for the first nine years of his life. He saw his dad some weekends during that time, but his parents were never together. Blue explained, "My father was married to my step mom, and cheated on her with my mother, that's how I was born, and my step mother carried that resentment of

me for many years". He had a lot of interaction with his grandmother growing up, before he eventually moved in with his dad, and his grandmother on his dad's side took care of him through his early schooling years. At the age of 9 his mother passed away from breast cancer, and he never knew how she died until he was 22 years old. He always just thought it was something else. After his mother passed away, he moved in with his father, and his father's wife, who became his stepmother. Living with his stepmother was "hell" in his words, and the verbal and physical abuse was often relentless. Mr. Royal Blue recalls, "In high school of course me and my step mom not getting along and there were those days I was like, I can't do this no more like, you know, and I've even shared with some of the students who, you know, have contemplated suicide. I had suicidal ideation. Because it was just so much that I was like, I can't deal with this, this whole house thing and step mom and saying all this stuff. And it seems like my dad was not even seeing it, which I talk about that in a moment. And I remember sitting there, I was like, yo, like it didn't even matter if I'm here anymore. Like, I'm just going to kill myself and be done with this".

During this difficult time of his life, he was fortunate to have some teachers in his life that really came to his aid and became a critical support system in his life. He recalls having a school counselor and several teachers that took interest in him and provided emotional, as well as financial support for him, especially when he was preparing to head to college. Blue also noted that, "if I had a Black male school counselor, I would've had someone that even understood me more as a Black male and probably would've done better in school".

Fortunately, he was accepted into college in the south, and was able to leave his home, and “start over without the negative abuse I had all those years”, he shared. “I got an acceptance letter from Morehouse, had no clue about anything about Morehouse HBCU... When I got that letter and I called my godmother, she was like, you know, everybody's jumping around like, I really don't know. She's like, that's where you're going. I was like, okay. I'm like, I'm getting out of New Jersey”. Mr. Blue's first year as a Biology major was a disaster. Being away from family and loved ones, and Biology was something his family pushed because they wanted him to be a doctor, but the course load proved to be very challenging for him. After his first semester he was on academic probation and was in jeopardy of being kicked out of school. “I had this whole thing, I put all this weight on my shoulders that I had to become this pediatrician because I told my whole family”. After several weeks of struggling and trying to figure things out, some of his friends started to suggest going into psychology. He ended up switching his major to psychology and it was the best move for him because he made connections with a few Black male professors in that department that would “they sat me down and was like, yo, if you don't slow down, if you don't change something, like you ain't gonna pass our class, you're not going to graduate. And like, and they were two black male, black male professors sat me down was like whatever you're doing right now, this ain't working”, he explained. He eventually graduated and due to his experiences working with young people at a local YMCA, he decided to pursue school counseling as a profession. He went through the school counseling program at neighboring college, and upon graduation began looking for a school counseling job.

Mr. Blue tried for several years to land a school counseling position and was not successful. After 4 years of searching for a school counseling position he finally was hired as a high school counselor. As a Black male school counselor he has seen the challenges, as well as rewards. Mr. Blue said, “So because you are a black male counselor and typically there's only one in each school if they even have one. And if there's a male issue, they'll come to you first, typically. I think maybe because we are males, even female students, especially if they don't have a father figure, would want to speak to us and develop a positive bond with us”. He also spoke poignantly about the impact of systemic racism; “Well, I believe it does in the sense tie in what society glorifies for African Americans, our field is not glorified. But sports is anything that kinda makes money, anything that seems beneficial to minorities, if they can capitalize on the talents that we have, then they're going to make it glorified. Systematically, Black male students are not seeing themselves in a school counseling role, therefore they cannot aspire to be what they don't see”.

The impact that Mr. Blue has had on the lives of young people has been immeasurable. “If you're able to impact just that one student, how it magnifies because maybe that one thing you said to that student, what they may do. The ripple effect. So you think about the opportunity that we have to impact the lives that can then go to the legacy, that legacy of being able to continue to impact lives positively for generations. Mr. Blue has been a school counselor for 9 years and has been an active leader in his school district as a school counselor. His hopes and dreams for the profession is to continue to increase the conversation of making the field more diverse, and “impact the lives of young people and their whole life changes”.

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Royal Blue experience was very unique compared to other participants. His parents were not together when he was growing up, he was raised by a collective village of people, and he experienced some abuse that has impacted him to date. He showed great passion for the school counseling profession as he spoke about this impact on students. He also has a desire to go into leadership roles and to continue to advance in the profession. Mr. Blue sees himself as a leader in his school, and school district, which is a position he values greatly. He spoke about leaving a legacy, "When you really talk about a legacy and you think about the impact of a legacy, how you think about our legacy on a family, and if that legacy is a strong one, a meaningful one, how many generations can they impact? So you think about, you know, we get the opportunity to have a black male counselor intern and get them to see how we do what we do and they start to emulate and then they put their own little flavor on it and then they can continue to do that".

Mr. Green

Overall, I think that just having value for what we do and understanding the importance, what we do and being able to explain why what we do is important in a way that they can, that black folks can digest and receive. There are a lot of people who are eliminated from that conversation about school counseling well before we talk about access. (Mr. Green)

Mr. Green is a 31 year old Black male school counselor who has been in the profession for 3 years at the middle school level. He was born in Huntsville, Alabama, and mother is from Mobile, Alabama, and his dad is from Nigeria. Mr. Green had a unique upbringing having family from two different worlds. He said, "My Nigerian side

was evident in my life, by spending a lot of weekends and some kind of Nigerian party or event, and in Alabama that was that good old southern living". He shared how the common experience in both cultures was community. "Community was super important, and education was a major value in his family". They were a low middle class family, who pride themselves on hard work, community, and speaking out. Although his father went to law school, he shared that his father later became a social worker, and his mother also worked as a social worker.

During his school years, Mr. Green discussed going through some difficult times because he was always in trouble in school. He stated, " the teacher was like, the teacher was talking about how I just, I guess wasn't doing what I needed to do in class and she recommended that that I be put on medicine that I might have, you know you know, I might need special education ". To the contrary, with some advocating from his parents, he ended up being tested for the gifted program and was placed into the gifted classes. Mr. Green discussed how he would often get his work done first and be bored, "that's when I'll get in trouble by talking or acting like a clown". He became a very active and involved student in high school, but he never really tried hard in school, things just came easy. During this time of his life, he became intentional about his identity and "my parents always instilled this, this identity pride in me. So like I knew who I was. I began to be more intentional about how I, how black I presented, I had to make sure my diction sounded a certain way. I try to make sure I spoke a certain way, try to make sure I dressed a certain way".

Like most of the Black males in this research, Mr. Green was encouraged by his family to become an engineer or a doctor, because it was the best way to get status, and

wealth. So after high school he matriculated into college and majored in chemistry and pre-pharmacy, and his parents expected that when he left for school, “you can't come back home once you leave”. Halfway through the program, he decided that “this doesn't connect with me. I'm not passionate about it. And I was spending so much time organizing student programs, volunteer all of that. I was like, that's where I'm more passionate about helping people”. Mr. Green shared that during this time, “Chemistry was cool and that's why like I finished it I guess, but halfway through I don't really want to do this. And like I had like a series, that's when I like, that's the hardest depression ever hit me in my life”. He struggled with a lot of identity issues and finding his place as an individual, and he wrestle with the whole Nigerina-Ameircan dynamics. He eventually matriculated to a school counseling program, to pursue a masters in school counseling after undergraduate.

Mr. Green spoke openly about systemic racism and the impact on the educational system. He explained, “We never, we never had, we've never talked about how, there was like slavery, then Jim Crow, then mass incarceration, then war on drugs. We never know how people are consistently put in situations where they're economically and socially vulnerable. Never talk about the stress and the trauma, we don't focus on mental health in the past. Really haven't focused on mental health at all. Whatever, you know, intergenerational trauma that's been passed down from generations “. He discussed how he is currently working in a school district where the students that are living in the most economically challenging communities are not receiving the resources they need to be successful. The funding for school improvement is going to other communities that are more financially wealthy. Mr. Green has become a major advocate in his school district

where he has spoken in front of the school board on behalf of students who are disenfranchised and marginalized.

Although he gets anxious and still suffers from inadequacies and questions if he is being effective with his work, “they kind of, a lot of them kind of see me as a, as a safe space. So it's like, I'm, I'm like the closest thing to...what you might see as a part of their group”. Mr. Green suggested starting with Black male teachers in the schools to begin the conversations about their interest in the school counseling profession. He also sees a need to expose the school counseling profession in a more attractive way to students as well, especially students of color. “When people see somebody that looks like them in space, they're like, okay, maybe I can, maybe I can exist in that space. I think creating opportunities for people to have that thought, like, Oh, maybe I can do that”. He further stated, “I think part of it is acknowledging systemic racism and us doing a better job for folks to feel welcome because why would I, why would I want to go back and work in school if I didn't even enjoy that experience”?

Mr. Green is an active member of local state and national school counseling organizations, and has been a very active participant in social justice and issues of equity. His dreams and hopes for the school counseling profession is to see more systemic changes, and see more equity among schools that are in areas that are disadvantaged. Mr. Green, believe students need to have the opportunity to see role models that look like them, “so they get to know what it takes and then strive to be just as successful”.

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Green's passion for equity and social justice advocacy was evident in his interview. He has found his place in the school counseling profession, and although it is not a perfect experience, and he struggles with his own inadequacies,

he is committed to systemic change. He brings a unique perspective to the profession with his cultural background and strong sense of community. He spoke often about community, and how that is very important to his value system and family traditions. Those attributes are seen in his current role as a school counselor. My overall perspective of Mr. Green is that he is a passionate advocate for students, and the field of school counseling needs more counselors like him that can relate to the students.

Mr. Pro Counselor

When we still see that there is a gap, what are we really doing to close the gap? We provide a lot of lip service, but there is no action behind it. And then do we really provide lip service? Because I feel like so many people have gotten jaded about the whole concept of like, Oh, it's like that topic again... Well the topic still happens because nothing has changed, and we won't grow as a profession unless we have some radical change. (Mr. Pro Counselor)

Mr. Pro Counselor is a 42 year old Black male school counselor who has been in the profession for 12 years at the high school level. He was born and raised in rural Mississippi, and grew up with his mother and stepfather who adopted him at the age of 7. He had one sibling, a younger brother, and a host of cousins growing up. Mr. Pro Counselor grew up in a low income household, and that they were "just making ends meet pretty much. I do recall that there were times, especially after the divorce where my mom had to use the services of, you know, food stamps. I do recall that there was a period of time where that was definitely necessary for my family".

Mr. Pro Counselor parents divorced when he was young due to the constant domestic violence that his stepfather rendered on his mother. He recalled, "there was a lot

of domestic abuse in the home, honestly, because, you know, just you know, all of that negativity was just not good for me personally. Honestly for me, I was just, I was always afraid, you know, personally, I was always afraid that something was going to just like make him just explode. Personally, I didn't know basically who was going to get it that night. I didn't know if it was going to be my brother and me or my mom, you know, so that, that was, that would definitely be some. So in protecting me and my brother, my momma often takes the rap for us. And so I definitely saw it to the point where there were a couple of times that, you know, I literally thought, you know, she was dead". This was a difficult time for him as he was, as he described, a "very emotional kid, and all the abuse I witnessed led me to obesity". Mr. Pro Counselor also struggled early on with his sexual identity and "there were times growing up I definitely felt like I was the, not necessarily black sheep, and I knew early on that I was different from the rest of the boys. I didn't necessarily know what it was. I didn't have the language for it, but I definitely knew I was not like the rest of the boys". He described the feelings he had about his sexual identity early on as that "Thing"; not knowing what that "Thing" was. Although, he struggled with know what that "thing" was, he noted that, "that thing that I didn't know who I was and still had no language for it, other individuals saw it in me, and began to call it out, and ridicule me with all kinds of names, especially in middle school, and I was calling it that thing, that thing specifically because my awareness of me being gay did not happen until around seventh or eighth grade". Mr. Pro Counselor immediately became an introvert and went in his shell in middle school, but in high school he found his place and was more accepted by his peers. He did not come out to his family about his sexual identity until he was in college, and at that time the only person he felt

comfortable telling was his mother, because of what he felt what had been embarrassing for his father and other family members to know. Despite coming out to his mother, he struggled with feelings of depression and social anxiety of his sexual identity that he sometimes still feels today.

Despite going through those difficult years of feeling like an outsider, witnessing domestic violence, being ridiculed, poverty, Mr. Pro Counselor always had a desire and dream to be an educator and to one day leave his small rural town. His family did not have conversations about education or professional aspirations much, “It just wasn't a discussion outside of K through 12. So the whole concept of college and furthering your education beyond high school was not a topic. And so knowing that I wanted that for my life, it really took me just working from ground zero to try to navigate my way”.

While in secondary and primary school he did not have any experiences with Black teachers, and he never had a Black school counselor. His interaction with counselors was very limited, and almost nonexistent, “my first view of a counselor was not a positive one”. He had a White male counselor who did not show any interest in the students of color and most of what he did was beneficial to the White students, “I did not have the knowledge, I did not have the language. So it took extra work on my part and a lot of that came by way of peers, us educating each other about what needs to happen because I wasn't the only first generation”. Despite those challenges of navigating the postsecondary landscape, he matriculated to college after high school beginning at a community college where he received his associate degree. After that he finished his bachelors in education in pursuit to fulfill his dream of becoming a school teacher. He began his teaching career at the middle school level and then eventually became a high

school teacher. Mr. Pro Counselor worked with students who experienced a lot of violence and abuse in their life, and as a result of this high demand of social emotional issues he was dealing with as a teacher, and his fondness of the human experience, when he took his Psychology course in undergraduate school, he decided to pursue the school counseling profession after several years of teaching. He noted, “The bug to be a counselor came from just understanding that our kids need more than just the education content information. They really, our kids need to be heard”.

Mr. Pro Counselor’s pursuit into the school counseling profession was for him a radical and social justice move because of the social discrepancies his students were experiencing, and he felt the need for more diversity in the education field was paramount. He poignantly articulated, “The narrative that has been painted is that you are of no value to me unless you are an athletic black male. You are of no value to me, unless you are, I have a level of entertainment value that you can bring to me. So because that narrative is out there, black males do not see their value inside of education”. In their school experience as children “we don't get enough black males receiving that validation inside of a classroom. They can go and dribble a ball. They can go out on a football field and use their physicality. And people say you are great. You are dynamic. You are worthy. Yes. You know, you are worth it. So when you find black males who are going into academia, you know, they're taking that route that comes from somewhere special”.

When asked what can be done to increase more Black males in the field of school counseling, Mr. Pro Counselor responded, “Call me Mister program, which they understood the necessity of getting more black male educators in the classroom as early as possible. This program is in several universities and actively goes out and recruit

Black males. We need something like this for school counselors". He also shared "and I think it's important to connect with teacher education programs and also those people who may go into sociology programs, those individuals that may go into psychology, you know, just connecting with them at the undergrad level, letting them know, hey, have you considered this as a potential occupation or profession? You know, and I think that that will help as well because it can't happen if they, if they're not aware of it". He was very adamant about even recruiting more Black males to work as elementary school counselors because "they wanted more black educators in the classrooms so that black males could see who they could become. So it was just like the experiences of most males in elementary school, they're dominated by nothing but estrogen".

The challenges of being a Black male school counselor are great and the journey to this point has been a rugged road. Despite this journey, Mr. Pro Counselor have witnessed the rewards of the work he is doing. "I had put limitations on myself and who I thought I could be. And so I dreamed a dream and God has given me beyond what I dreamed for myself and for my life. So I'm truly blessed to be here and to be able to serve those that are in need of the service that I bring". Reflecting on his legacy that he wants to leave in this profession he noted, "I'm just simply doing God work and that's helping people. So my legacy, whatever it may be, I'm just hoping that people said that he loved his work, and he did it with a full, open heart, you know, and he was genuine and he was real about helping people".

Researcher Reflection. Mr. Pro Counselor journey has been one of tribulations and triumph. Experiencing abuse at an early age, and also battling with his identity as a Black male growing up, and systemic poverty, are all narratives that could have written

him out of the race of life and success. Yet, he remained committed to his dreams, and he remains dedicated to his spiritual faith, because that's where his purpose and mission rest. He spoke about the critical need for students of color to have more representation of themselves in their educational experiences, and the impact it could have on their academic and social success. The feeling of belonging and advocacy was critical to his journey, and it was interesting to hear him voice this concept and how he thrive to transfer that idea in the students that he encounters every day.

Part II: Analysis of the Findings

Part I of Chapter 4 honored the essence of narrative inquiry research in that it presented the perspectives and journey of the ten participants around their lived personal and professional experiences. The following section below presents the themes that resulted from an analysis guided by CRT tenets (Bell, 1995, Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Crenshaw, 1989; Harris, 1993). Eight salient themes emerged from the analysis of the data, and they are illustrated in two categories, 1) structural racism (racial battle fatigue, token Black guy, code switching, and burden of my identities, and 2) counter-narrative (resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and community building) (see Figure 1)**.**

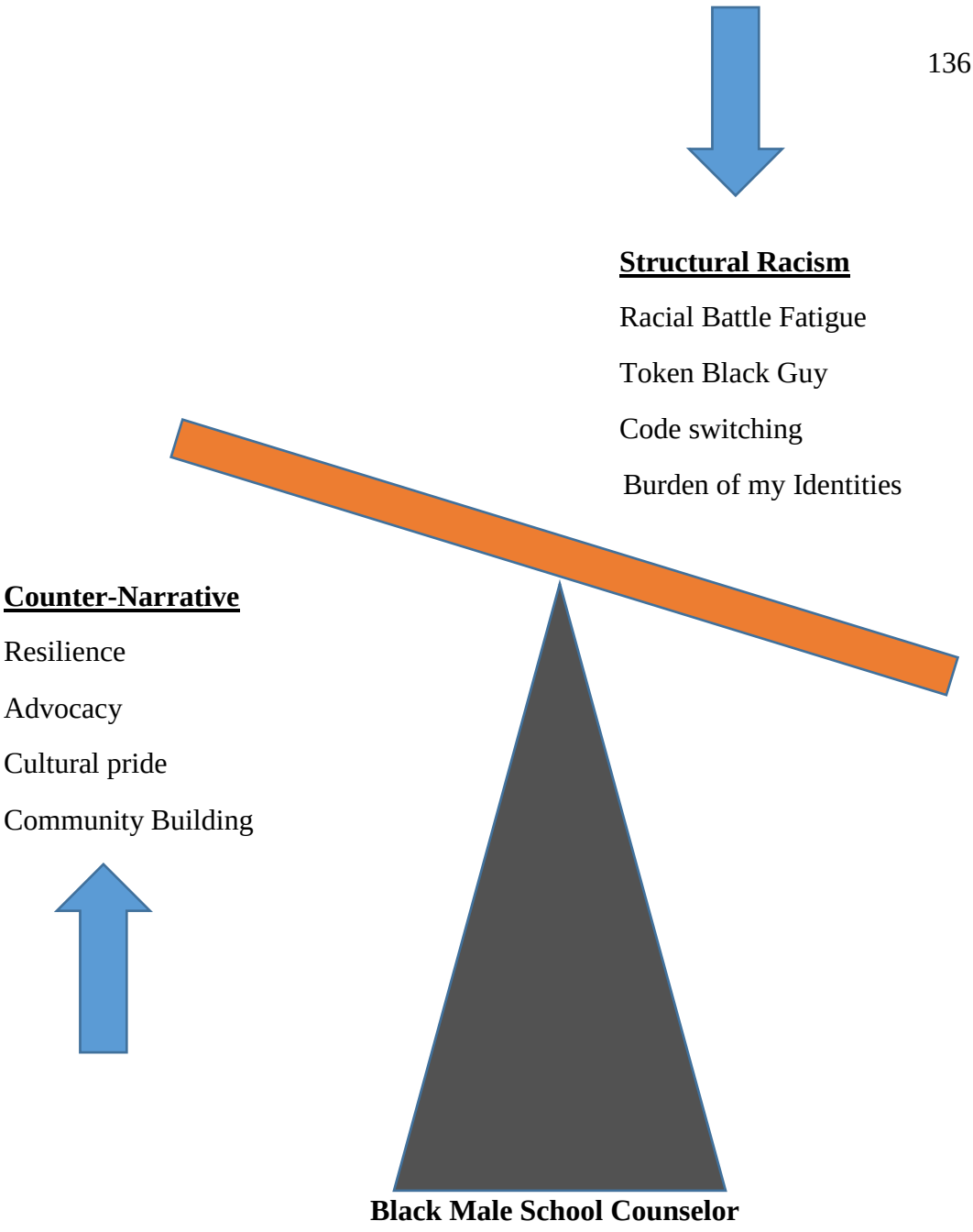

Figure 1. Structural racism impact on the experiences of Black male school counselors, and counter-narrative strategies for systemic change. Despite structural racism, Black male school counselors found effective strategies to navigate oppressive situations.

Structural Racism Findings

Feelings of "racial battle fatigue" .Smith (2007) describes "racial battle fatigue" as the physiological, psychological, and behavioral strain exacted on racially marginalized and oppressed groups and the amount of energy they expend coping with

and fighting against racism. The permanence of racism in the lives of Black men (Bell, 1995; Harper, 2009; Lynn, 2002) creates a level of stress and racial trauma (Harrell, 2000; DeGruy, 2005), that is often not experienced by other racial groups. It was overwhelmingly evident in the narratives of all the participants the topic of structural racism, and its impact on their journey as a Black male school counselors. Mr. Black, who grew up in rural low-socio economic town recalls being one of the only Black student all the way through high school and the treatment of exclusion he experienced:

They did not like overtly treat me racist, but I remember when I was in middle school I was not the best student, but I did decent, but they called my mom and told her that I was being active in class, so they wanted me to go to special education. So my mom did not accept that, so they eventually put me on the team of students that were the "low" kids. Not special ed, but we were in classes with students that were special ed. That's how they tracked you and you stayed there all the way through high school. And in high school, no one ever challenged me to take honor classes, or AP classes, or join the student council, or anything like that, but when it was time for sporting events or talent shows, they would always come and get me. I didn't feel like they expected more out of me. When I say they, I mean White teachers and staff.

This type of covert racism was evident in most of the early narratives of men. When asked about his early experiences as a Black male student. Mr. Green shared a similar story:

Man I stayed getting in trouble because I was bored, and they would not have nothing that would challenge me. So they wanted me to get tested, and I remember them telling my parents I had ADHD. Well my parents fought for me to be transferred to gifted

classes, and everything changed from there. Although, I was normally the only Black student in those classes, I didn't get into as much trouble.

The issue of structural racism was major theme throughout the collective narratives even as they navigated through adulthood. Mr. Lamar recalls:

As a 6'8" Black athlete in college, all they thought I was there for was to play basketball. My professor accused me of plagiarism and she did not feel like I was capable of doing the work. She gave me a failing grade on an assignment that I put all my energy into, so she would not give me an opportunity to prove my case, the fight went all the way to the office of the president of the university. I spent more time trying to prove my worth and work than even learning something.

The share experiences and fatigue of having to fight racism was throughout the stories of the participants. Mr. Green talks about "*the racism is insidious, and it is tiring",* while Mr. Marco shared, *"I'm so frustrated that they, meaning Whites, don't even see it happening, and if they never see and, and do something about it, we will always be in this situation*". Mr. Black shared, "*I see structural racism even in the hiring practices, when they don't even put an effort to hire more Black staff, and say there's none that qualifies, that's BS*". Mr. Anthony response about the impact he see racism effecting Black students at his school, and having to be that father figure for them:

Man, it is crazy how so many of the Black students feel like the White teachers don't understand them. So they would always come to see me to vent, and just have someone that is understanding to their experiences. So I had so many kids call me uncle, or dad. Although it was good to be there for them, it is tiring.

The mental, emotional, and sometimes physical fatigue of trying to battle through racism and oppression draining. What can be even more challenging are the Microaggressive insults which a diminish self-confidence, drain personal and family coping resources, suppress the body's immune system, and deflect important time and energy away from various forms of self-care (Smith, 2007). When asked about their professional journey and experiences, most of the men shared a glaring reality of having to be the "bread winner" or feeling the pressure of not wanting to let their family and community down. Mr. Royal Blue recounts, "*I felt like a failure when I didn't get into the college I hoped to get into, the church, my old teachers, family, were all depending on me the first to go to college and do something with my life. I fell through a deep depression and even contemplated suicide with everything else that was going on at home*". Mr. Emmanuel shared, "*I took the test to become a school counselor four times, and could not pass the test, and felt like a failure, it was frustrating*".

Mr. Lamar shared even as a school counselor student, he would experience the lack of racial consciousness from White students:

"*As the only Black male in the counselor education program, I noticed that every time the conversation of race came up, everyone would wait for me to lead that discussion. It got frustrating, but I still took advantage of it to let my voice be heard*".

The participants in the study shared their pain, frustration, embarrassment, anger, and sometimes fatigue, they feel only a daily basis as a Black man, and it is even increased when the intersectionality of their other identities are considered.

Token Black Guy. This theme was one of the major themes that emerged from the data analysis. Most of the participants shared stories of being that "token Black guy". With interest convergence being at the center of CRT (Bell, 1995), the men in this study experienced a level of frustration and fatigue being the only Black male in most of the educational settings (Washington, 2010). Tokenism can be traced to some of the early writings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he discussed the subject of tokenism, and how it constitutes a minimal acceptance of black people to the mainstream of U.S. society. This small acceptance to meet a diversity quota, often serves the overall best interest of the dominant culture (Bell, 1980). The participants in this study shared the stress of being the "token Black guy". When asked about the impact of being a Black male school counselor Mr. Marco responded:

"Man...It's a blessing and a curse. You know I think it is a blessing that I am a Black men and I am that role model for Black boys and can speak their language to connect with them, but as the only Black man in my building, everything that has to do with Black male students, I'm called. They call me to do all the dirty work it seems like. And even as a counselor I'm not a disciplinarian, but I'm seeing like that all the time. But when it's time to make more leadership and cognitive type of decisions, they don't value my opinion".

Most of the men felt the pressure and challenge of being in their schools or in a job because the company had to check off a diversity box. Mr. Anthony shared his experiences working in the corporate world before going into the school counseling profession:

"I worked in corporate, IT, for over 25 years, and it was a struggle at times. For a bulk of my career I was the only Black man, and would get assigned so much work, it was

burning me out. I brought a lot to the company, and I did a good job, but they worked me to death. Especially being the only Black man, I would have to train all the new Black hires, and everything that has to do with diversity or multicultural, they came to me. After, 25 years of that I had to leave, but I still see the same thing as a school counselor. Crazy."

Mr. Pro Counselor share his experience working in a high poverty, all Black school as a teacher before he became a school counselor:

It was an all-Black school, but a handful of Black teachers. I remember being at the interview, the administrators were like, we need you for our Black students…wow…I'm thinking like I am here for all students.

Mr. Black share his experience being one of the only Black students at his high school, and was never asked to participate in academic or enrichment type of clubs or activities, but anything that had to do with sports, or a talent show, he was asked to participate. There is a level of stress that comes with being the only Black guy. Participants stated hearing comments like this as a Black male educator, "*he's Black, he gets it*", "*you can help the Black students*", "*you are a credit to your culture*", "*how did you get hired* here". When asked about their counselor education training programs, Mr. Lamar share his experience of being the only Black male in his program, similar to the other men, but he recalls being told by a White female graduate student when they were both interviewing to begin the program, "*you know you are going to get in because you are Black*". That statement underscores the contradiction of being the only Black male in some of the institutions of the U.S. The contradiction of wanting to be one breaking barriers, but the

microaggression and other racialized statements and actions that comes with it. One participants describes it as, "*choosing the lesser of two evils*".

I have to Code Switch. Code-switching' was originally coined as a linguistic term for the ways in which bilingual people engage with language, and permeates between literal linguistic codes in environments where just one language is spoken and adapting to situations where a blending of languages is not unusual, such as 'Spanglish' (Akpan, 2019). In the case of Black people, "code switching" has become a survival mechanism to infiltrate into the dominant culture. W. E. B. DuBois actually alluded to this theory of duality among Black people in The Souls of Black Folk. He discussed the idea of the double consciousness of Black existence in a European society Code-switching is a more finite theory of DuBois' thoughts in that the focus is the ability for oppressed groups to effortlessly transform to the dominant language. Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), is a CRT tenet that assumes the notion that Whiteness is property (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Harris, 1993) and anyone that is not White, does not have the same rights and privileges, and their own cultural pride becomes questionable (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This tenet was articulated by the Black men in this research by their experiences of having to code switch, and the feeling they have of changing who they are to fit in. When asked about his experiences of being a Black male student growing up Mr. Lamar shared:

"*I had to constantly try to do what the White kids did, because all I saw was White experiences around me. So I got used to that, and when my parents moved me to an all-Black school, the Black students will call me oreo, Black on the outside, but White on the inside. So I had to learn how to talk so the Black kids would accept me*".

Code switching can also be evident in once personal appearance. Mr. Purple, who is a native of Guyana stated, "*I would get teased because of my dark complexion, so I felt being dark was bad. so I worked on changing my accent to sound more articulate, and if I sounded more articulate, then I'll seem smart, and once they see my intelligence, then maybe my color would not matter. That was my thought.*" Code switching even within culture was evident in the experiences of the participants. Mr. Green, a second generation Nigerian shared:

> "*I had to code switch all the time, because my mom was from rural Alabama, and my dad was from Nigeria, so I constantly had the influence of both cultures. So I had to battle with both side all the time, then you add the urban south ghetto in there, then trying to navigate this White world. Definitely stressful having to live in all those worlds*".

The challenge to live in a world where it's hard to celebrate once culture is immense. Whiteness as property regulates practices and policies that limits once ability to feel proud within their own skin and identity (Yosso, 2005; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). A majority of the participants shared some story about having to "code switch" (Harper, 2009) because they wanted to reach a certain level of achievement. This was significant in the data because it showed that participants were limited by *Whiteness as Property* (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) in attempts to self-actualize their lives and achieve their dreams.

Furthermore, the impact of Whiteness was also seen in the participant's experiences of entering the White dominated school counseling profession. The majority of the participants shared that they had financial, and social challenges entering the profession. Mr. Black shared, "*I was married, just had my first child, and there was no*

way I could not work, and most of the counselor education programs I was trying to get into, had classes in the morning, and you could not work fulltime". Another participants shared, "*financially, I could not afford going back to school, but I was lucky I had a retirement package from a previous career that helped me pay for school. If it wasn't for that, I would not have pursued going back to school for school counseling*". An overwhelming majority of the participants shared that they knew nothing about school counseling growing up, and it was not until college, that, as one participant stated, "*I just fell into the profession, no one was out there looking to talk to me about school counseling*".

***The Burden of my identities*.** In CRT, Crenshaw (1989) posits, individuals have individual identities that intersect in ways that impact how they are viewed, understood, and treated with in a society. She goes on to peak about the impact of those intersecting identities have on people of color, especially Black women (Crenshaw, 2006). For the purpose of this research, through the data collected on Black males school counselors, the participant were able to articulate their personal stories and experiences of their identities and how they intersected to cause of what this the title of this theme calls "the burden of my identities". The multiple identities that Black men have and its impact is worth noting, thus bringing forth awareness of the issue of racism and how to confront it (Crenshaw, 2011).

Although there the question about identifies was not a major question in the interview protocol, the multiple identities the participants have was illuminated through the research. In his narrative about his experiences, Mr. Purple shared, that he is a "*preacher, father, husband, Black men, Black male school counselor"*. These were the

identities that were important to him and "*in all of these identities or rolls, I live life in seasons, and in every season, there are opportunities to change, and grow, and learn*" he stated. Mr. Purple shared regarding his role as a Black male school counselor, "*we always have this pressure that there's somebody that's watching the work that we're doing that are waiting for those critical places where we slip up and that's when we highlight it*. The intersections of these different identities carries a lot of burden. Mr. Royal Blue shared:

> *The challenges of being a father and black male period of the weight that you have on your shoulders when you're trying to do the right thing and you got a family, but you're trying to do the right thing because you know how important it is to make sure these students get through school. And it's like you have the sacrifices your time and balance saving students, and my own family*.

Although Mr. Nupe does not have the identity of fatherhood, he did share the challenges of being a young Black male school counselor:

> *Okay, so the challenges is, especially if you work with mostly female staff, these women are in their forties, and then their fifties. So they, that their experiences are different than mine when I guess we would have our lunch times together. It started off cool. But I also do other things outside of this. I body build. So having a routine eating schedule became serious for me when I was in the competition. So it changed to where I couldn't have lunch with them because I might've eaten before lunch or got to eat a little bit after so I wouldn't sit around them and they took it as me not wanting to be part of the team and getting involved in the gossip and everything that they did*.

Mr. Green shared sometimes feelings of inadequacy with the burden of being a Black male school counselor:

I have to make other people feel comfortable. And I don't really get the opportunity to feel comfortable, as often around all White people. I'm trying to like protect myself and you know, be vulnerable at the same time, and that's harder to do. I have to protect my identities and it is hard to trust.

Mr. Pro counselor was the only participant who identify as gay:

I had not yet identified within myself that I was gay, but others had already identified for me. So, you know, others had identified what I had not yet known true for myself or that to be true for myself. So I definitely felt like an outsider. I didn't really feel connected to certain people and I didn't feel like they were safe people for me. So I stayed away from most, people, and I mean I stayed away from people because I didn't feel like they were safe for me. I always felt like an outsider, and so definitely as a counselor today, there are, you know, it leads to me being an advocate for children because I would like for them to have a better positive school experience than maybe what I had during that time period.

Counter-narrative Findings

Resilience. Although they came from different backgrounds and unique journeys, the similarities of their collective identities as Black male school counselors was illuminated as they shared experiences of growing up and having to "*work harder than all the other kids*" because they had the weight and burden of being Black and male. They all shared stories of experiencing some form of racism in their journey. These stories ranged from White students asking them if "*they had a tail because they were Black*" (Mr. Marc), being asked by teachers "*did you really do this assignment*" (Mr. Lamar), assuming they were incapable of doing it, and the test to become a school

counselor "*was culturally biased, and I had to take it four times*" (Mr. Manny). Navigating the stories of these Black men who are school counselors through the lens of CRT reinforces the need for racialized cultures to develop more opportunities for Black men to counter the dominant narratives (Prassad, 2005; Lynn, 2002; Harper, 2009) about them; which can often be inferior and damaging (Yosso, 2005). Effecting change was an emerging theme in the interviews. All of the men shared a story of resilience and triumph in an effort to change the narrative of racial domination and oppression that has plagued Black men from the inception of U.S. history.

An example of countering that dominant narrative is the experience of Mr. Pro Counselor, who grew up in a poverty, domestic violence home, and was also ostracized growing up because he was gay. Despite these social and emotional trauma caused by structural racism and marginalization (Yosso, 2005), he reached his dreams of becoming a school counselor, and holds a doctoral degree, an achievement that he never believed he could reach. Mr. Pro Counselor shared:

I grew up poor, I would say low poverty, and had to be on government assistance. My parents struggled to provide for us, but my mother still showed me love and attention. She struggled through years of domestic violence, at times I even thought my father was going to kill her one day, but when they divorced that was the best day of my life. So I grew up with a single mother, and later came out as gay. So you know being gay and Black in those days was hell. But I went through so much struggles, poverty, abuse, depression, inadequacy, and times when I felt I was not going to make it. But to achieve all I have, and to now hold a doctoral degree, I am so blessed. It is my purpose, and

mission to be doing what I'm doing now, to be able to share with other Black youth that they can also make it.

Mr. Royal Blue came from the inner city and he shared:

Man, I grew up with a single dad, my mom died when I was 8, and my dad remarried and my step mother abused be terribly, till times I wanted to commit suicide. We were poor, didn't have much, and thanks to the teachers in my school growing up, who thankfully were Black teachers and would be there for me at critical times of my life, like when my mother passed, and when I was going to college. I remember that when I was going to college they got me all the things I needed for my dorm room. What school does that? But it was the relationship and connection I had with them. I struggled through poverty, and when I made it to college I did not do well, almost got kicked out. Finally graduated and went into school counseling, and it took me years of working odd jobs after graduate school before I finally landed a counseling job. Through all that, I am grateful to be doing what I do. I think my experiences has helped me to connect with students who are going through abuse, loss, or any kind of pain.

In a different experience in his story of resilience to effect change, Mr. Green he shared:

What we've been through as Black men and racism is insidious. You know I went through many years of trying to figure things out, and was working several end jobs to survive. I went decided counseling, but with working several jobs and almost kicked out the program, I had to make the decision to quit some jobs so I can finish. I had to work to survive. But I made it through and now I seem the students I work with and they are being marginalized and not receiving the resources they need. I've spoke to the board of education on their behalf and will continue to fight for change in the system.

Mr. Nupe who was one of the youngest participants shared:

I can't say that it's been easy, but it's worthwhile. I worked with Black males in the juvenile system and saw how they were treated unfairly. I could not work in a system like that anymore. As a school counselor I see an opportunity to really change the lives of students, because I've seen the other side of things if they don't make changes in their lives.

When asked about the legacy he wanted to leave as a school counselor, Mr. Manny responded:

That I made a big impact on the social, emotional piece. And that the kids knew where they can come to, to get some good advice or just some, some relief. You know, you just, yeah, I think everybody wants to have a legacy where they work. And it's, and it's, I think it's easier to do it in the education field. Especially if it impacts kids in a positive way.

Similarly, when Mr. Anthony share his response to the question about his legacy and he responded:

I want people to say my life is different because of mr A. My life was positively affected because mr A was in my life, I just want to be known as that person who just loved them so much. U

But there is there's just no greater joy than seeing them go onto the next stage of their lives. And knowing that you had something to do with it. And I just, I want to be remembered as that person who truly made a difference in the lives of my students.

As one of the longest practicing counselor in the group, 23 years of practice, Mr. Black have seen a lot and have experiences a lot through the years. He talked about the legacy he wants to leave:

I'm 23 years in, but you know, yeah, yeah. I'm, I'm gonna keep working. I don't, I don't, I think I've just barely tapped, you know, what the impact that I can make and I'm still passionate about it and I still feel young. I just think encouraging our young men and encouraging them to get into fields where they can make a difference in our society. Specifically in counseling and an education is going to be a game changer for the future because we all know that education is, is, is the gateway to success. And I mean, I mean, you know, we, until you, when we know better, we can do better.

All of the participants had a sense of responsibility to the field to school counseling profession, and as Black males in education. Mr. Purple eloquently reflected:

I think a, again, I think there's a value that we bring to this profession and we have a responsibility to handle the mantel that we, that has not been passed to us. Cause first, a lot of us are almost first generation black male school counselor. But there is a mantel that has been created and a mantel that has been crafted that we now hold in our hands and we have to be careful how we handle it so that we can pass it to the next generation of black male school counselors intact and not tarnish.

Resiliency was critical to the living personal and professional experiences of the participants. Some shared some of the early struggles they went through being Black and a White world, and despite that, they are in a position to impact the lives of the next generation. It was amazing, and absolutely powerful to hear the passion these men had for the field, and the impact they have had, and continue to have on the school counseling profession.

Advocacy. Advocacy was another critical counter-narrative that the participants discussed poignantly, and felt that they had a purpose in the field of school counseling to

be advocates for all students, but especially students from groups that have been burdened by White supremacy, and institutional racism. Singh et al (2018) study reminded us in their social justice checklist that school counseling trainees may already have natural skills in self-advocacy based on their own life experiences. The life narratives of the 10 participants provided examples of those natural skills in self advocacy, as well as advocacy for their students. Each participants shared in their own words situations when they had to advocate form themselves growing up, and even reflected on experiences when someone entered their life and became an advocate for them. They learned advocacy from their own experiences as well as learning through someone advocating for them, and felt that it was their purpose to now pay it forward, which is often seen in the living experiences of marginalized groups (i.e. the obligation to pay it forward). One participant, Mr. Black shared,

I had to hustle for everything growing up, because I was taught that nobody was going to do it for you. I did not get the support from teachers and counselors in my high school, and they did not encourage me to go to college, so I took it upon myself to do my own research about college and scholarships, and was lucky get a partial football scholarship to go to college. Since that point, I felt like I had to always figure things out on my own, so now I work hard to support all my students who may feel like they have no one I their corner.

In addition Mr. Marc Anthony, who was the only participant who remember having a Black male school counselor in high school, and had a good experience with him, shared,

Yeah man, if it wasn't for Mr. G, I don't think I would've made it to college. All I thought I was going to do is play basketball in college, but when an injury changed my plans, he

was the only one at my school still pushing me to go to college, and doing something with my life. I remember he even reached out to a college and advocated with some of the admissions people he knew at the college t give me a chance. So I was accepted to a great college, initially on a provisional status, and worked my way to be a fulltime academic student, and the rest was history. You know, this is the kind of counselor I want to be for my student.

Cultural pride. Although the participants were not asked specifically about the cultural pride, 8 of the participants spoke about being proud of their culture, and how growing up it was a major value in their family to learn more about their ethnicity. Having pride in who they are was very important for survival in this White dominated world. Some spoke about having to code switch at times, and some reported the strain of going to school with all White students during k-12 and intentionally wanted to go to a HBCU (Historically Black College and University) to learn more about their culture and be around their people. Others reported that it was important from their childhood that they knew about their heritage, and remember their parents doing different things to instill that cultural pride in them. Three of the participants either were born in another country or their family immigrated and they were born in the U.S. Mr. Purple shared:

I was originally from Guyana, and my family came to the U.S. when I was young. It was difficult assimilating to this country, and as a kid I would do everything I could to try to act like an American and denounce my own cultural, because I was teased a lot for being dark, and a foreigner. But one teacher I had really helped me and gave me the confident to be proud of my skin color and proud of my heritage.

When they were asked about their cultural beliefs and values, Mr. Green shared,

It was crazy for me because my dad is from Nigeria, and my mom is from Mobile, Alabama, so I had to bounce between the two worlds, which was difficult at times, because they both were very proud people, despite not having much. Both traditions were really big on community, family, and education. These values are still in me today.

Mr. Anthony, who family was from Trinidad Tobago recalled,

Man I came from a very prod home. Being that we were from another country, my parents worked extremely hard when they came to the U.S. Within ten years of coming to the U.S. they bought their first home, and this was back in the 80s. So you know hard work, education, respect for the elders, were very important to us growing up. And I felt a sense of pride growing up knowing that my parents, although immigrants, manifested their own destiny in this country and that pride is still in me today.

Other participants, although not from another country, or had immediate family from other countries, they shared that same pride in their culture as Black men. Mr. Lamar stated, "*My parents had me reading and learning about Black history and history of the south from a young age, and that pride of who I am was very important*". Mr. Marc shared, "*although we are not sure where we are exactly from as Black people, my parents instilled that love for Africa and Black history in me. We even have done the genealogy program to try to trace where in Africa we are from*".

***Community Building*.** All of the participants responded to the question that asked for them to share what have been systems of support throughout their experience. Community building, or relationships was very evident in the narrative of the participants. All of the participants could share at least one person during their childhood that was part of their community of support growing up, and some even equate that

person's involvement in their life as being a critical turning point. Community in the Black culture is very important, and that community is something that becomes a motivation to continue moving through difficult times. The participants also spoke about the community of support that they currently have within their schools and districts they work. Singh et al (2010) social justice checklist also listed "building intentional relationships" as an important strategy for social justice change. The skill of building relationships or community building is something that has also been found as salient in the lives of people of color. One of the participants, Mr. Royal Blue shared,

My mother died when I was young, and I had a rough time with my step mother, but there were Black teachers at my school that step in for me during difficult times, and I remember getting ready to go to college, I did not have and money to get things for my room. There were some Black teachers, and clerks at my school, who were like mothers, bought me all the stuff I needed for my dorm room before I went to college. This was supper important to have people support me during this time.

Mr. Green recalls,

My collective community growing up was very important for me to have because it gave me a sense of security, love, and support. I could not do it by myself, and that same type of community I make sure and build now as a counselor. I have a great team at my school, and have built great relationships with other people at the school that really allows me to achieve my goals of advocating for my students.

Additionally, Mr. Purple stated,

As far as my support system, I have to say one big one is the relationships I've build with the community around my school. To do that I had to step outside of my office and be

visible as a counselor, and not just doing office work. I've been to birthday parties, church events, cultural events, you name it. But this helps with me building that community of support. And also building a good relationship with the people in my department and school was instrumental in having a support network.

Participants all felt that it was paramount to building a community of support around them as they do their work. That collaboration, and collective work, has been a pivotal asset as they navigate the system as Black men.

Researcher Reflection. The themes that emerged from the narratives of these men was not only compelling on the issue of systemic racism and its permanence, but it demonstrated the greatness and resilience they all have. From dealing with systemic issues like mental health, poverty, inadequate education, to personal feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, to entering a profession where they are not the norm, yet their perseverance and resilience has impacted the lives of so many student and families. The counter-narratives found in this study further argues that despite White supremacy and structural racism, there are great skills and experiential knowledge that Black male school counselors can offer the profession, as well as inform counselor education programs. To be Black, male, and a professional school counselor is an honor for these men, but it indeed bares a cross that is worth all the struggle and pain, as they all work feverishly in this oppressive system on behalf of liberating the next generation.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the major findings of the research study in a two-part structure. In commitment to narrative theory, I was determined to uphold it by honoring the voices of the participants through their stories in Part I. Part II of Chapter 4 represents

a more thematic presentation of the data analysis illuminating the emerging themes that supports the first research question, *what are/were the experiences of Black male school counselors*? The data that was collected and analyzed through an indicative and deductive analysis provided a total of 8 themes, that are separated into two categories, 1) structural racism themes, and 2) counter-narrative themes. The first theme under structural racism *feelings racial battle fatigue*, spoke to the stress, frustration, pain, anger the participants feel living in a racist system. The second theme, *token Black guy*, elaborated on the CRT theory of interest convergence. The participants spoke about feeling like they are only in certain jobs or opportunities to meet a diversity quota, and how being the only Black male school counselors has been very stressful because of the demand to work with all the Black male students. The third theme, *code switching*, relates to the CRT tenet of White as property. Some of the participants shared struggles of having to codeswitch growing up as well as in adulthood to fit into the dominant culture, and then back into their cultural norms. The fourth "burden of my identity" was a theme that spoke to the intersectionality of their identities and the pressures that came with the different identities they bare.

The counter-narrative themes provided an anti-deficit approach to this research that suggest that despite institutional racism, there are unique knowledge and skills oppressed groups can offer the school counseling profession, in this case, Black male school counselors. Resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and community building, were all salient assets that the participants shared as being pivotal in their personal and professional experiences, and is still a major part of the work they do today.

Chapter 5 will provide a more summarized version of the literature in the research, and how it has informed the salient findings. The findings will be reviewed, especially the counter-narratives (*resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and service*) that were salient in the narratives of the stories from the participants. Furthermore, the researcher found that the second research sub-question did not emerge in the data analysis, therefore the answers to this question, *how can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed*, will be explored in the recommendation section of chapter 5. Finally, implications, limitations, recommendations for future research, and will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear I rise into a daybreak that's wondrously clear, I rise! Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise ~ Maya Angelou

Introduction

The findings presented in this research provided salient narratives of the experiences of Black male school counselors. Governed by the tenets of critical race theory (Bell, 1995, Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989) and analyzed through a thematic narrative tradition (White, 2009; White & Epston, 1990; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Harrison, 2014), the study was designed to answer the following research question: What are/were the experiences of Black male school counselors? A second sub-question was also explored: how can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed? To answer these questions, a semi-structure interview protocol was administered with 10 certified Black male school counselors. In order to make meaning of the collected data, a thematic narrative approach was utilized to analyze the data. Guided by CRT tenets, an inductive and deductive coding process was used to condense the data down to categories, and finally into 8 salient themes that represented the voices of the participants. Four of the themes (*racial battle fatigue, token Black guy, code switching, and burden of my identities*) represented the impact of structural racism on the lives of the participants, and four themes represented a counter narrative (*resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, community building*). In this chapter, a discussion of the literature is reviewed from chapter 2 and how it has informed the findings of this research. Furthermore, implications for the counseling profession and future research about Black males in the school counseling profession will be shared. The chapter concludes with recommendations, limitations, and reflection from the researcher.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this critical qualitative narrative research was to explore and tell the stories of Black male school counselor's experiences and explore their thoughts on recruiting more Black males into the school counseling profession. My goal of exploring the personal and professional journeys of these men was to provide them the platform to tell their unique journey, and the impact they have made in the lives of students and the school counseling profession, hopefully sparking a larger conversation of the need to increase diversity in the school counseling profession. The research being centered in the CRT (critical race theory) (Crenshaw, 2011) provided a critical critique on the systemic racial structures that have impacted Black men entering various institutions in the U.S. (Crenshaw, 1989; Harper, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2011; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004), the focus of this research being the school counseling profession. The conceptualization of CRT allowed for the researcher to unearth the reinforcement of White supremacy and its impact on marginalized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Doing so brings awareness about the role of race in producing racial inequities (Hanks et al, 2018) for Black men who are not often considered in the educational field (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As a result, counselor educators, district administrators, and stakeholders will be aware of the rooted racism in social structures of the U.S., especially the educational settings (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and acknowledge the systemic complexities that further disadvantage people of color from pursuing certain careers and educational settings (Patton et al, 2007).

The literature revealed a long history of racism in the U.S. and the related stress and frustration that accompany it (DeGruy, 2005; Harrell, 2000). The literature also

revealed that there is an even greater need for more diversity in the staff and faculty in the school systems (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014; Dollarhide et al, 2018). More research highlighted the need to target racial, cultural, and socioeconomic factors students of color (Noguera, 2003; Ferguson, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2011). The school counseling profession is unique in that it trains practitioners about the social and emotional development of human beings, and how to work with students in a k-12 setting, and it emphasizes the value of counselor's culture, values and beliefs (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008). School counselors are change agents (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007) and the Black male narrative of navigating racial structures and White supremacy (DeGruy, 2005) has enabled Black males to offer a unique experience that can be liberating for students who feel marginalized in their educational experience (Griffin & Steen, 2011; Tate et al, 2013).

This work was crafted in the spirit of liberation and empowerment (Tate et al, 2013; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007).), so the lived experiences of Black male school counselors can be heard and inject change in systemic gaps within the educational system. (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Lynn, 2002). For these reasons, I utilized a critical race theoretical framework, and qualitative narrative inquiry approach to explore the following research questions, and emerged with subsequent findings.

Summary of Findings

Following is the main research question coupled with an overview of the respective answers and recurring themes:

1. What are/were the lived experiences of 10 Black male school counselors?

The findings were conceptualized and analyzed through the lens of critical race theory to provide a critique of racism, marginalization, class, gender, and a dominant narrative (Crenshaw, 2011; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) impacting Black males in the school counselors lived experiences. The most salient goal of the research was to learn about the experiences of Black male school counselors. Every participant had a unique experience that was rooted in an oppressive system (Crenshaw, 2017; Ladson-Billing, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), and the literature on CRT provided a framework for analyzing their narratives. The five CRT tenets used in this research are as follows: (a) the permanence of racism - both conscious and unconscious, is a permanent component of U.S. life (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), (b) interest convergence - the progress and systemic gains of Black people are only able to become reality, when it benefits the systemic gains of White people (Bell, 1995; Bell, 1980), (c) counter-storytelling- the method of telling a story challenges the dominant narrative that has been placed on people of color, with the awareness that racism is a critical part of the experiences and outcomes of Black men (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), (d) Whiteness as property - due to race and racism, Whiteness becomes the status quo, and Blackness become non-representative of the culture, and conformity becomes accepted, and cultural pride becomes problematic; (Harris, 1993), (e) intersectionality - intersectionality operates as both the observance and analysis of power imbalances, and the tool by which those power imbalances could create racial indifference and oppression, therefore must be disrupted (Crenshaw, 2011).

In addition, with the combination of narrative theory thematic analysis and CRT conceptual framework, the findings evoked the voices of ten Black male school

counselors, exploring their lived experiences personally and professionally. Consequently, through the analysis, the emanate themes that were deduced within the tenets of CRT were (a) feelings of racial battle fatigue, (b) token Black guy, (c) code switching, (d) and burden of my identities. Collectively, these themes spoke to racism as a cancer festering beneath the social surface of the U.S. landscape (Lynn, 2002). Not only has racism played and active hand in the construction of the social structure (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989) it also dictates how inherently racist laws, policies, and other discursive (Matsuda, 1987; Crenshaw, 2011; Lynn, 2002) formations are put into place and executed. Additionally, these themes reflected one of CRT critical tenets, intersectionality of their various identities of race, gender, class, sexual orientation (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefacic, 2007) that have collided throughout their lived experiences, which has been a burden for them.

Feelings of racial fatigue: CRT tenet permanence of racism

Within CRT, there is a "realist" mindset of the racial realities and permanence that are executed in the lives of people of color (Bell, 1995). Racial structures are present politically, socially, and economically (DeGruy, 2005; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005) and are the result of socio-political dilemmas Black people find themselves victims of (Newton, 2009). The literature found for this research was saturated with documentation on the issue of racism and its impact. For example, Dr. DeGruy (2005) work on post traumatic slave syndrome articulated the lingering psychological effects of slavery and other forms of oppression like Jim Crow laws (Alexander, 2012). To support this claim, the participants shared the stress and drain they feel navigating through a racist system every day. Some of those stressors occurred to them in the form of poverty, inferiority

complex, depression, abuse and neglect. Likewise, the literature found also examined the lack of diversity in the school counseling profession. The American Psychological Association (APA) reported that currently, only 1.5% of its members are African-American (Young, 2017). Furthermore, the need for multi-culturally competent counselors is increasing as the population of various ethnic minority groups grow (Ahmed, Wilson, Henrickson, & Jones, 2011).

The question is why is there still a major gap in the diversity within the profession, and such low numbers of Black males? The literature on Black males career experiences illustrated that, predominant jobs available to Black men from the Reconstruction Era through the Civil Rights Movement were factory and blue-collar jobs, although a small number of Black men held positions in academia and politics, or positions where they did not have to utilize manual labor (Taylor, 2000). Hence, participants in the research shared the frustration and fatigue of having to navigate through various end jobs before they had a chance to pursue the school counseling profession. Even after deciding to pursue the school counseling profession as a means of improving their financial and social status, they experienced financial stress, stress with in the profession, and racialized treatment. The feeling of racial battle fatigue felt by all of the men is congruent with the literature on the permanence of racism and its impact on their personal and professional experiences (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Token Black Guy: CRT Intersect Convergence

The literature did not explicitly explore the concept of tokenism, although it did highlight the CRT tenet of interest conversion (Bell, 1995), which is seen within the concept of tokenism through the findings. Some of the participants shared early

experiences of being a Black male student, and not being encouraged to excel in academic and enrichment activities at school, but were encouraged and promoted to be involved with athletics and talent shows. Delgado & Stefancic (2007) shared that the concept of interest convergence through racism can advance the interests of both White elites as well as working-class people (psychically, by giving them a reason to feel superior to Blacks), therefore large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it. Several participants shared that they feel like their presence in schools as Black male counselors has an alternative benefit to the schools and school districts they work for, because their presence adds diversity, which looks good for the schools, but it comes with a draining price of being the only Black men in the building.

With no literature on Black male's experiences as school counselors, the researcher explored literature on Black male teachers. Pabon (2012) argued, "that centered within the discourse of racialized and gendered dominant narratives about Black men, there is a national action relegating the installation of men of color in schools to become role models, surrogate fathers, or mentors" (p. 916). The Black male teachers in Pabon's study reported that even in the midst of being conceptualized as Black Supermen, they are under supported and being pushed out of the very schools that claim to need them so much, and also lack support from teacher education programs. Some of participants in this current study shared similar experiences of lack of support of cultural awareness while in their counselor education programs as they tried to navigate being the only Black male in their program. Others shared that being the only Black male in their school becomes lonely and sometimes feel isolated. Despite the imbalance (Crenshaw, 2011) of feeling needed, but only at once interest, there was an overwhelming level of

motivation in the narratives s of the participants to use their positions as school counselors to effect change.

Code Switching: **CRT Whiteness as property**

CRT articulates this tenet of Whiteness is property (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) being that there is privilege of being White, and anyone that is not White, does not have the same rights and privileges, and their own cultural pride becomes questionable (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Harris, 1993; Fanon, 1952). Although the literature reviewed for this study did not specifically examine the concept of code switching, White privilege was explored, which speaks to the tenet of White as property. In Diangelo (2018) work *White Fragility*, White fragility is not necessarily a weakness but when White people continue to protect their racial status and emotions, and maintain their racial status, they exercise their White privilege. White people receive by the virtue of being White and benefiting from the over 400 years of racial oppression and free labor of Black people of the world (Wise, 2008; Fanon, 2004). Whites have these advantages simply based on the color of their skin; doors that are open for them are not open to other people (Diangelo, 2018). What does this mean for a Black man in a White dominated world? Franz Fanon's (1952) work *Black Skin White Masks*, further articulated the psychic trauma that oppressed people face by the colonizers, when all they see around them that are the examples of success and goodness is White, and everything evil or bad is Black. Within this psychic trauma, Fanon (1952) argues that Black people become relegated and compel to wear a White skin, underneath their Black identities, hence we have code switching.

One of the participants shared an early experience when he was younger, and having to code switch. He attended and all White school growing up, but when his parent

moved to a more Black community in search to be more connected to his Black culture, the Black children would call him oreo. So he learned at an early age that when he was around his people he could be what he called, “ghetto, and act ghetto”, but around White people, he would be “proper”. This anecdote supports Fanon’s claim of the psychic trauma that happens due to the insidious oppression and colonization that occurs to people of color; demeaning their own culture, and elevating the dominant cultural narrative is more superior (Fanon, 2004).

Another participant who is a native Guyana, remembers, “I would get teased because of my dark complexion, so I felt being dark was bad”. All of the participants discussed being the only Black male in their counselor education training programs, with the majority of students being White women. Whiteness as property regulates practices and policies that limits student’s ability to feel proud within their own skin and identity (Yosso, 2005).

The burden of my identities: CRT Intersectionality

The literature reviewed for this study did not explore the many identities that Black men have, although it did excavate literature regarding Black men as teachers, Black men psychologist, Black male school counselors. The majority of this literature discussed the scarcity of Black men in these areas, but lacked literature on what has caused this disproportionality. Black males lag behind in major academic and school success categories (Noguera, 2005; Ferguson, 2003), and Black males are consistently falling behind the achievement gap (Ferguson, 2003). The researcher intentionally aimed to stay away from deficit research on Black male academic achievement and the achievement gap, because of its pervasive negative deficit narrative. Hence, the focus for

this section is on the literature of the CRT tenet intersectionality, as it sets the basis for the finding. Crenshaw (1989), credited for the CRT movement and coining the phrase intersectionality, provided this eloquent description of the term:

> This focus on the most privileged group members marginalizes those who are multiply-burdened and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination. I suggest further that this focus on otherwise-privileged group members creates a distorted analysis of racism and sexism because the operative conceptions of race and sex become grounded in experiences that actually represent only a subset of a much more complex phenomenon (p. 140)

That *multiplied-burdened*, was experienced in the lives of the participants as they struggled through society to be Black, male, father, husband, and professional. Participants shared poignant stories of feeling overwhelmed of managing all those identities because of the expectations put on them. One participant shared that as a Black male growing up, I was told I had to be the bread winner one day, so I had to do something with my life, and how he has always felt that pressure as a Black man. Another stated that as a Black father, trying to balance being a counselor, with family time is very demanding. Sometimes I have to bring work home and neglect my family. Another participant shared being a counselor education student, working a full time job, and as a husband and a father of two small kids at that time was taxing. Participants shared the intersections of those different identities they experienced and how it impacts them today, but the literature is often one dimensional, focusing on one aspect of their experiences. Although Crenshaw (1989) argues that a more complete theoretical and political agenda for the Black underclass must take into account the specific and

particular concerns of Black women, her ideas of intersectionality resonates with the narratives of Black men as well.

Counter-narrative findings

Despite the dominate narrative of structural racism (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado, & Stefancic, 2007) that were extracted from the stories of the participants, there was a counter-narrative (Yosso, 2005; Harper, 2009) of resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, community building, service that were salient in the voices of the participants. Solarzano and Yosso (2002) believed that counter-stories serves four functions, a) community building of those on the margins, b) challenge perceived wisdom about marginalized groups, c) open new opportunities and hopes, d) ones story combined with current realities can be catalyst for changing a racial system.

Although this research did not specifically explore literature on the resilience of Black men, resilience was especially evident in the stories of the participants. With the intent of debunking the pervasive deficit narrative of Black males in education, Harper (2009) counter-narrative study of Black male student's achievement at PWI found that the participant's engagement in student organizations, meaningful interactions with supportive same-race peers, and publicity of their educational achievements to White researchers who possess deficit views of Black men, was critical to their liberation from deficit research. This idea of counter narrative, or counter-story telling (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) was paramount to the overall stories of the participants. Participants shared multiple stories of their realities of racial oppression (Fanon, 2005), but still had the mental, physical, and spiritual perseverance to overcome those challenges. Countless stories of how they impacted the lives of their students were told. One participant shared

about a student who was a Black, male, and transgender, and was being ostracized by not only students, but staff, to the point of wanting to commit suicide. He elaborated on the relationship he build with this student, and was able to advocate for the students that went beyond expectation and according to the student, he "*saved his life*".

Another participant who is a high school counselor, shared experiencing a racial situation where a White family initially didn't want to meet with him because he was Black, but after meeting with and he helped them through a difficult family situation, they wrote a letter to the principal confessing their initial thoughts, and gracefully thinking the counselor for working with their family. Another participant shared that despite going through poverty, abuse, violence and hate because of his sexuality, he endured through those horrors to become the holder of a doctoral degree and is grateful to be working as a school counselor and impacting the lives of students for over thirteen years now. The participants in this study expressed an overwhelming desire to want to leave a legacy when they are done, and that legacy is that they were caring and compassionate, they connected with students, they were hard workers, change agents, dedicated, and determined to challenge the system. Harper (2009) study further denoted, our experiences are often presented as the same in the literature, as troubled, oppressed, and hopeless. In a grounded study about the "The work experiences of school counselors of Color", Dollarhide et al (2018) found that racial events was a commonplace for school counselors of Colors. The racial events were reported as negative as well as positive. Although negative racial events showed up as remaining silent, feeling defeated, and burnout, participants felt that they were their cultural identities was an addition to their students, and colleagues (Dollarhide et al, 2018).

The racial realities of the participants in this current study, combined with their counter stories, will hopefully provoke change in the school counseling profession when considering students of color and what they can offer to the profession. Despite the realities of structural racism, and its impact on the lived personal and professional experiences of the participants, most of the participants within the study shared stories of resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and service to their community, despite the structural racism they face. It was critical to highlight Black male school counselors in a more anti-deficit light in this research, yet still critiquing institutional racism as it relates to their experiences and journey to become a school counselor.

Resilience. The theme of resilience was very apparent in the narrative of the participants as they spoke about the challenges they faced ranging from poverty, abuse, segregation, inferiority complex, inadequate education, violence, and a racial fatigue, as they wrestle with trying to understand a system of White supremacy. Despite the fatigue of structural racism, and the burden of being Black, male, and a professional school counselor, they have all found unique ways to be resilient and transformative in their approach to the work they do as school counselor. The research on resilience is abundant and shed light on the interpersonal and cultural strengths that could be leveraged for marginalized groups to resist and disrupt the dominant narrative of their people (Yosso, 2005). In Yosso (2005) CRT shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color as spaces crippled by cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on the array of cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities socially marginalized groups often carry, that goes unrecognized.

This study suggests that school counseling programs intentionally provide opportunities for students to not only study resilience theoretically, but harness the resilience that is already within them, and bring that to the forefront of their counseling practice. The participants in this study shared many examples of using some of their struggles, and how they overcame and persevered, with their current students they work with. They utilized some of their cultural wealth of collective community to forge through challenges throughout their life. As school counselors, empowering students to find that resilience in them, is a powerful tool to have. In another study Spence, Wells, Graham, and George (2016) found that cultural resilience had an effect on stress levels, and cultural resilience compensated for the detrimental effect of racial discrimination on First Nation people. Instead of ignoring the cultural strength and spirit of resilience school counselors of color can add to counselor training programs, especially Black males, it is imperative that school counseling training incorporate and leverage resilience as an effective strategy when working with students.

Advocacy. Ratts and Hutchins (2009) advocacy competencies have been critical in elevating the call for social justice in counseling. Advocacy further encourages school counselors to address oppression in society, and the negative impact it has on human development (Singh et al, 2010). Social justice advocacy has taken a big leap into the literature in addressing environmental factors that serve as barriers to academic, career, and personal/social development of all students, especially students from marginalized groups (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Grimes, Haskins, & Paisley, 2018). In their study of rural school counselor social justice advocates, Grimes, et al (2018) found that participants valued exposing the socio-economic struggles of students in rural

communities, and collaborating with community organizations to advocate for their students. Likewise, Washington (2010) indicated in a study to examine school/community advocacy for Black male students, that collaboration with the community allows professional school counselors to courageously address student's needs.

In this study, participants reported similar desire to advocate for their students, and collaborate with the community to effectively support their students, especially students of Color. Furthermore, most of the participants viewed themselves as social justice advocates, and speaking out for students who are oppressed (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). The participants in this study felt like their experiences as a Black man, growing up in racialized society, provides them with a unique perspective to advocate for students of Color in the educational setting. Dollorhide et al (2018) argued that school counselors of Color and increased diversity in a school, adds to more positive racial events for students and staff alike, underscoring the need for more school counselors of Color in schools. Participants in this current study spoke poignantly about the impact they have made on their students, and their advocacy provides them with a sense of meaning and purpose.

***Cultural Pride*.** Cultural pride was not explored specially in the literature review of this study, although a historical examination of Black people in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and their experiences navigating structural racism (Crenshaw, 2011) was the focus of the literature review. Contrarily, what was discovered from the participants, was an overwhelming pride in their culture. This cultural pride has been a disruptive mechanism for the Whiteness (Harris, 1993) they have experienced throughout

their personal and professional journey. Some participants shared experiences of having to code switch or changing their accent to sound White when around White people, and switch back to a Black vernacular to fit in a certain space. Despite this internal struggle, they still spoke about the value of cultural pride their parents placed on them growing up. Appling (2015) study on African American doctoral student mother experiences found that personal pride was significant in their experiences as doctoral student mothers, and that pride increased feelings of self-worth, acceptance of self, and internalized success. All of the participants in this study shared a love for their culture, and how it has been a motivating factor as they navigated their journey. One participant spoke specifically of doing this work for his people, and challenges being an immigrant to America, but now being in a position to impact the lives of the youth is something that he is very proud of. Another participant spoke about having cultural representation of himself in his office and students that come into his office often asks him about his culture, and he uses it as an opportunity to teach students of other cultures, but also encourages them to learn more about their own culture.

The researcher in this study explored the literature on multicultural counseling competencies, which denotes that one of the critical areas of MCC is the counselor awareness of potential cultural differences with clients (Ratts, 2011). Several participants shared that they did not feel like their cultural identity was celebrated in their counselor training programs, or even encouraged as a tool that could be utilized when working with students. Henfield, Woo, and Washington (2013) purported in their findings of African American counselor educator students that they felt that faculty did not respect their differences, and they lacked understanding of their lived experiences. The study further

reported that it is the onus on counselor education programs to proactively create a space of equity and inclusion to further foster multiculturalism and social justice theories that are being taught (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013).

Community building. Although the literature reviewed did not explicitly explore community building, the concept of community and building significant relationships throughout the journey of the participants was salient in their narrative (Reissman, 2007). In a narrative study of successful African American college students, Harrison (2014) found that relationships were a key factor among all participants, and they discussed professional and familial relationships that they have built over the years that are significant to their development. The participants in this current study indicated that they grew up surrounded by a community of people that were supportive of their personal growth and development. Mr. Marc recalls having a strong family support that promoted education and a family unity that remained with him through adulthood. Several participants spoke about the importance of networking with various individuals that supported them pursuing the school counseling profession, and have been part of their community support to date.

Singh et al (2010) grounded study on social justice strategies that works in the real world found that building intentional relationships was critical to developing social justice and advocacy within the practice of the participants who were current school counselors. Teaching counselor education students how to build and use “community mapping” to mitigate burnout, isolation, and promote change (Singh et al, 2010) was salient in their study. Similarly, participants in this study discussed the value of being in a supportive school environment and counseling department. Some participants had

experiences with working in a school that they did not have a community of support around them, and they spoke about the challenges of isolation, and even burnout, resulting to them going to another school. The impact of community on the school counseling experience, from training to practice is vital, and has not be given appropriate attention as a tool of self-efficacy, survival, and system change (Singh et al, 2010).

Review of the Literature. The overall review of the literature in chapter 2 was centered in CRT and aimed to examine racial structures and institutional racism (Yosso, 2005) and the effects it has had on the life experiences of Black people, especially Black male school counselors was examined. The literature explicated the framework of Critical Race Theory; racism is endemic and permanent in U.S. society (Bell, 1995). As the literature denoted, the institution of slavery had a long and vicious tenure, that evolved to Jim Crow segregation, Colonialism, and the residue of oppression is still seen in the experiences of Black people (Alexander, 2012; DeGruy, 2005; Fanon, 1952). The literature also explored school counseling and some of the racialized structures of the profession, one being the lack of diversity (Spanierman & Smith, 2017). The literature, although limited on the experiences of Black male school counselors, provided a critical symptomatic look at the racial systems that has kept the lack of diversity in the profession (Henfied, Woo, & Washington, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; New, 2006). This has been the vortex in which the participants have traveled to get to this point of their lives. The fact that they persisted in this vortex of oppression, helped to shape their future in being change agents for the next generation. More than one participant said repeatedly that they remember hearing from their family growing up that, “failure was not an option”.

Implications

Implications for Counselor Education Programs

The findings of this study lend themselves to identifying strategies that could provide better awareness for racially/ethnically diverse school counselors and diverse others in schools (Dollarhide et al, 2018), and also provide counselor education programs with a greater understanding of their lived educational experiences. While race is a social construct, this does not mean that it hasn't have real, and tangible effects on people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Systemic racism has been the culprit for the racial divide in the educational system and also plays a significant impact on how institutions of higher education serve students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Hilliman, 2001). Counselor education programs are serving students from various cultural backgrounds, but lacks deep understanding of the social-cultural experiences their students are going through (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013). The question this research aims to pose to counselor education programs is despite a wealth of research on multiculturalism and advocacy (Ratts & Huthchins, 2018), why is there no intentionality to recruit more ethnic diversity within the school counseling profession? School counselors of Color could be strong advocates for racially/ethnically diverse students, colleagues, and families within their schools, fulfilling the ASCA National Model's Advocacy and Social Justice theme (ASCA, 2012). Part of fulfilling this call from ASCA, counselor education programs must critique its current practices, and confront White supremacy that has kept Black and Brown folks out of the profession.

In this current research of Black male school counselors, overwhelming number of participants shared that school counseling was not a career of choice that was talked

about, or even experienced growing up. The message of being the bread winner and pursuing a career that will provide higher financial wealth was expected by their families, but there was the societal racism that remains a major barrier for financial and social growth for Black people (Feagin & McKinney, 2003). Hence, most of the participants in this study were in previous careers, prior to being able financially be able to matriculate to a counselor education program. Furthermore, some of the participants had to still work full time or part-time while in their school counseling program, therefore, they could not attend some institutions due to their class structure of having classes during the morning hours. This becomes a basic issue of exclusion and elitism, while eliminating potential counselors that could bring the profession greater diversity.

Furthermore, the concept of counseling is perceived to be a White Eurocentric concept and the literature on counseling has excluded the Black concept of counseling and healing (Bandjes et al, 2017). A historical study conducted by Nwoye (2010) revealed that throughout the past half-century, the formal study of psychology in African universities has been colonized by mainstream Western psychology, and fails to acknowledge corrective counter discourse aimed at interrogating the highly partial, and self-serving negative images of Africa found scattered in Western scholarship. I addition, African concept of counseling emphasized the importance of cultural traditions that support the healing relationship. A study conducted by Bandjes et al (2017) traditional African healers said they felt confident in their ability to help suicidal individuals and that they did not believe that this was a problem which could be remedied solely by Western medicine. They further reported how they helped patients overcome suicidal crisis through the use of rituals and practices which seek to prompt thinking, restore a sense of

wholeness, reconnect the person to their family, and reestablish social ties ((Bandjes et al, 2017; Nwoye , 2010). Although the participants in this current study are not natural born Africans, they shared some of those values of family connection, and wholeness that is a valuable asset in their practice as school counselors.

Lastly, the findings provided a critical discourse of what the participants have experienced through a structural racist system, explaining their battle fatigue, feeling of tokenism, code switching, and the burden of their identities. Despite these challenges, they offer resiliency, advocacy, cultural pride, and community building that are salient assets to the work they do, and can also be informative strategies to counselor education programs for recruiting and supporting students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, it was evident in their narrative that resilience, advocacy, cultural pride, and community were direct assets they currently carry in their tool bag of counseling strategies to support all students, especially students of color.

Implication for recruitment

The aim of this study is to also raise the question, how can the profession be more intentional with recruiting Black males into the profession, and even recruiting other groups that are absent from the profession. Demographic information provided by ACA suggested that there are a limited number of counselors from diverse backgrounds within their membership, consisting of only 1.1% Native Americans, 1.5% Asian Americans, and 3.4% Latinos, and 5.9% African Americans (ACA, 2005). This data is even more evident when considering the low number of Black males that are represented in the profession. The participants all shared their stories of being the only Black male in their schools, and the challenges that it presents.

The data collected from the participants overwhelmingly illustrated that recruitment strategies for Black males be more intentional. A majority of the men questioned if counselor education programs are even interested in recruiting more Black males into the profession, because there is no intentionality of that. Despite that, their "resiliency to effect change", and the impact that these men have had on the profession and on the lives of their students and families was paramount in their narratives. One participant shared, "Black students felt like I was a father figure for them, and they had someone that they can talk to". Another stated, "when a family comes to me at graduation in tears, thanking me for being there for them, is the legacy I want to leave". The impact of these men on the profession needs to be documented, with the potential that counselor education programs would begin developing intentional programs to recruit more Black men (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013; Irvine, 2002). Hence, recruitment, training and practices, have to be based on a focus in social justice and equity (Ratts, 2009). The participants offered suggestions for counselor training programs:

- Offer scholarship programs for Black males, as well as other diverse groups that are not represented in the school counseling profession.
- Host open house events for undergraduate male students of color.
- Consider alternate options for counselor education programs (e.g. online, evening) to allow access for some men who may not be able to commit to leaving their jobs and going into a fulltime program.
- More research and scholarly work on school counselors of Color.

Once counselor education programs have Black males in their programs, there has to be an intentionality in the support that they receive. The intersections of being Black

and male causes an overwhelming level of imposter syndrome, and self-doubt. Within counselor education programs, there should be mentors that are honest and are able to help navigate the racial systems and microaggression that Black male students often find themselves in. As a school counselor, the researcher recalls the feeling of loneliness and not having someone that could really understand his plight during his counseling training program. A majority of the men in this research were able to share the same sentiment.

Implications for Future Research

Given the findings of this research, I suggest several initiatives to enhance the visibility and recruitment of Black males in the school counseling profession and potential future research. The findings of this research provided deep insight into the experiences of ten Black male school counselors, as well as will suggest areas for potential future research. Some of these suggestions are, (a) a mixed-method research could be conducted with the students of the participants of this study, to determine their impact from the perspectives of the students they work with. Survey, individual interviews and focus a group could be a means of data collection for this research, (b) Participatory Action Research (PAR) could also be conducted. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a qualitative research methodology option that requires further understanding and consideration. PAR is considered democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing qualitative inquiry to invoke social change. The findings in the current research on Black male school counselor experiences produced critical dialogue on systemic racism, which would be an appropriate fit for PAR research. This research format may include surveys, as well as direct observations, (c) Qualitative narrative study on other school counselors from other groups that are not highly represented in the

profession. For example, (Latinx school counselors, Asian school counselors, Indigenous counselors, LGBTQ, etc).

Finally, future research could include survey research based on these qualitative findings that could include larger sample sizes and more generalizable results. School counselors, adolescents, and counselor educators could be surveyed regarding their perspectives on the need for more diversity in school counseling, specifically Black male school counselors. Combined results from additional qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies could inform and influence both practice and preparation regarding diversity in the school counseling profession. Currently, there are no research on the experiences of Black male school counselors, and the current study provided an exploratory look into the lived personal and professional experiences of Black male school counselors, and the aforementioned research ideas will be an additive to the research scholarship of this group.

Implications for Advocacy

It is paramount that I follow-up with dissemination plans to share the findings and recommendations of this research with the counselor education programs, local, state, and national school counseling associations. However, what is equally important is this study's potential impact on social change. The findings are liberating in terms of highlighting Black males in a most positive light, and also extracting the power in their voices and the impact they are making. The findings also attribute positive intrinsic motivation, ability to form solid relationships, love and regard for family, and a yearning to be successful Black men.

Furthermore, the fact that this research is the first of its kind in exploring the experiences of Black male school counselors, this is the beginning of disrupting systemic racism and offering more laboratory research on behalf of minoritized groups. Future research should explore the experiences of Black school counselors which will be a valuable addition to the literature on Black male experiences in the educational system overall. The more inclusive the research landscape, the more changes that can be made to address systems of inequity and oppression. The research created the opportunity for Black male school counselors to share their stories about their own lived experiences, this no doubt strengthened their very resolve and confidence to continue to develop in the profession and make a difference. For their engagement in this research was, in essence, an exercise in reflection about themselves, where they had to think critically about themselves as men and their journey in getting where they are today.

Finally, It is anticipated that the findings and subsequent recommendations that have emerged from this research will have important implications for long-term, sustainable social change in terms of the recruitment of Black males into school counseling profession and propelling them toward a profession where they can make an impact on social change by sharing who they are as individuals, and critically being advocates for students who are being educationally oppressed (Freire, 1996). Many of the participants asked if there could be a follow-up focus group, and also they were all interested in continuing the conversation and sharing the experiences of Black male school counselors at local, state, and national conferences. The reach and impact on this work are endless, and it is at the incubation period, but with more intentionality, and collective work, change is inevitable.

Recommendation

The recommendation of this research was developed from the second research question, as it was important to the researcher to explore this critical question of improving the representation of Black men in the profession, as well as the overall diversity in the field.

Research question 2 - How can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed? Data from the narratives of the interviews suggested that:

•Coordinate a focus group with the Black male school counselors and engage them in a collective conversation regarding the original research questions. It also allows the men the opportunity to share authentically their experiences as a group.

•Develop a social media campaign of Black male school counselors and the work they are doing in schools (Facebook, Instagram, Website, Podcast, etc). Social media is a powerful platform that would aid in changing the paradigm and shining a light on the great work Black males are doing in the school counseling profession, with hope to encourage more Black men to pursue the profession.

•Develop a Black male school counselor program that would begin recruiting Black males into the school counseling profession, by visiting colleges and universities to recruit, and also provide practicing Black male school counselors mentor support, and a space to share and support each other in their experiences. This initiative is currently in development and collaboration with another program called "Brothers Making Moves".

•Begin presenting the current research to local, state, and national school counseling, and education conferences. I intend to present this research to conferences in the format of a

panel discussion with Black male school counselors who will share their lived experiences, and their ideas on recruitment efforts.

The recommendations delineated above are pragmatic and reasonable. They can be easily implemented with the commitment and collaborative efforts of colleges, universities, and other stakeholders. Along with these initiatives, I also recommend that future research be considered to further continue the significance of this current study.

Limitations

Although this critical narrative research was suited to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of Black male school counselors related to their underrepresentation in the school counseling profession, there were some inherent limitations. The limitations did not negatively impact the research, as the researcher hopes that this study will ignite an awareness in the school counseling profession, but the limitations must be addressed and discussed to fully disclose all steps in the study. After careful analysis of the data and presentation of the findings, it was evident further research on the topic is required to grasp a complete understanding of the experiences of Black male school counselors and address the question of how recruitment efforts can be increased; and further interrogating the training practices of counselor education programs. While the findings of the research provided insight and information regarding the Black male school counselor's experiences, there is still an abundance of data to be uncovered.

The first limitation was that the researcher failed to collect sexual orientation data of the participant. Other demographic data was collected like, age, education, years as a school counselor, faith, but their sexual orientation was not collected, although one participants did share that he is a gay man and shared his experiences of being gay as a

child, and how he navigated the intersection of being gay, and Black male. For future research, sexual orientation will be a good data to collect, which will provide another identity and intersection that Black males experience, which adds to their overall narrative, of being a Black male in the U.S.

Second, the most apparent limitation is that the findings of the research will not be generalizable to other populations. The findings, however, can be transferable to other settings, and future research. The small sample size with this type of in-depth inquiry is also a limitation and provides little opportunity for a diversified sample. Due to using purposeful sampling, the participants were selected that met the criteria of the research. Other races and genders were not included in the research; therefore, the findings do not relate to a diverse demographic of school counselors.

Third, the research only included one type of interview process, which was a semi-structured interview of each participant. A focus group was not administered, which would have provided more data on the individual and collective narrative of the men. While the semi-structured narrative interviews provided the participants with the opportunity to share their lived experiences through their own words, utilizing different forms of data collection could provide further insight into the topic. Despite these limitations, the careful attention to narrative tradition and qualitative inquiry leads to the potential for it to expand on the dearth of knowledge in this area, as well as potentially provide the groundwork for future research inquiries.

Finally, the research was conducted with participants in the southeast region of the United States. Although cultural similarities may be evident with Black male school

counselors in other parts of the United States, their journey in becoming a school counselor may have some unique variations.

Chapter Summary

Critical race theory provided a critical lens for this research, and a deep commitment to critiquing racial structures, and its impact on people of color. The experiences of the storytellers in this research illuminated the fact that racism and an oppressive system impacts the lives and outcomes of Black men in the U.S. The literature examined for this research thoroughly highlighted the historical impact of racism in the U.S., and also explored a critical race perspective of the school counseling profession. The research was evident that there is a paucity of diversity in the school counseling profession, Black male school counselors being a critical gap. The impact of racial oppression and systemic marginalization in the educational field (Solorzano & Yosso, 2000), was indisputable throughout the research. The narratives of these ten Black men further demonstrated the impact structure racism have had on their personal and professional journey.

This research gave voice to ten Black male school counselors, who shared their journey growing up and how they ended up in the school counseling profession. The stories they shared are rich evidence that indeed Black males have ambition and are willing to make an impact in society. I do hope this study will have added in some small way to the breadth and scope of the experiences of Black males in the school counseling profession, and further open discussions of the overall diversity of the profession.

Reflection

As a Black male school counselor for seventeen years, I've witnessed a lot of changes within the school counseling profession. There have been changes that ranged from shift to more social-emotional work, and less career guidance. There have also been changes in the number of student ratio per counselor. We have also seen changes in the recognition of the school counseling profession being celebrated at the local, state, and national levels. Even the White House has found it necessary to recognize and celebrate the work that we do as school counselors. I have even seen a greater presence of school counseling advocacy at the political level, and I have been a part of some of those advocacy work for school counseling in the state for which I reside. With all these changes and advocacy work that has transpired in the school counseling profession, it remains very exclusive and lacks the diversity that represents the makeup of the students and families we serve. This research was very important to me because there has to be an intentional paradigm shift in the advocacy practices of the profession, where the issue of having a diverse representation in the profession be a priority.

The research focus on Black male school counselors is just the beginning of where this research can go. Other groups are not highly represented in the school counseling profession, and their narratives would be critical to the greater issue of diversity in counseling. It was very important to me that the stories of the men emerged as they had voiced them to me. I could not help, however, feeling a deep sense of pride and admiration for every single one of the ten storytellers I interviewed. It was so heartening to witness in their body language, intonations, passion and words how highly motivated they were about the profession and the students they work with. With full

regard for the backgrounds and experiences of these men, I aim to have their voices be the navigator for this research, and desire for them to speak critically and poignantly about what they have been through systematically. They were all very gracious in sharing their joys and pains as they navigated through racial challenges they faced growing up, and also their professional journey. With deep admiration for the journey they shared, and the social advocacy they bring to the work they do every day, my respect and love for Black males have grown exponentially. As one of the participants stated, "They need us, we bring a deeper sense of self, and pride our students can see, and believe in themselves". While we must never become complacent in advocating against those inequitable conditions that continue to persist, we must also continue to highlight our Black males in the educational and counseling arenas, and help to change the perceptions of Black males in society, so they can scream to the hills with a valiant cry, “And Still We Rise”.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Email

My name is Bobby Gueh and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling and Human Services at the University of Georgia. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation under the direction of Dr. Deryl F. Bailey, and I invite you to consider participating in this study. The title of my study is, **"OPPRESSED NO MORE: A CRITICAL NARRATIVE OF THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE SCHOOL COUNSELORS".** This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Georgia (Submission ID: PROJECT00001586).

The purpose of this study is to examine the personal and professional experiences of Black male school counselors in the school counseling profession. You are being invited to participate in the study as a certified Black male school counselor of a school in the Southeast region of the United States. Participants need to have been a certified school counselor in their current state for which they work, and have to be currently practicing as a school counselor in a public or private school setting. If you meet these criteria, please consider participation in a one 45-60minute face-to-face interview, or through the online video conferencing platform Zoom, as well as a second shorter follow-up interview after themes and interpretations are complete. You will have an opportunity to read the transcription of your interview prior to my engaging in data analysis. Interviews will be held at a mutually agreed upon time and place. Each participant will receive a $15.00 Starbucks gift card for their time and participation in the study.

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. While the results may be published, your identity and the identity of your school will not be shared. Also, no specific school or student data will be collected. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this research. You can contact me at bmmmovement@gmail.com or feel free to contact me at 678-296-4724. Visit https://research.uga.edu/hrpp/research-participants for information the University of Georgia provides to help inform your decision.

If you would like to participate, please send an email or contact me by phone, as soon as possible. Please include your contact phone number and the best times to reach you. I will call to further discuss the discuss the details of the study.

Sincerely,

Bobby B. Gueh

Bobby B. Gueh
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
678-296-4724

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

OPPRESSED NO MORE: A CRITICAL NARRATIVE OF THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Dear Participant,

My name is Bobby Gueh and I am a student in the Counseling and Human Development Services Department at the University of Georgia under the supervision of Dr. Deryl F. Bailey. I am inviting you to take part in my dissertation research study entitled, "An narrative inquiry of the experiences of Black male school counselors; recruitment, training, and retention considerations."

I am doing a narrative research study on Black male school counselors regarding their decision to pursue school counseling, their experiences working as a school counselor, and recommendations for recruitment, training, and retention. I am conducting this research due to the limited amount of Black males in the school counseling profession, in hopes of increasing their representation in the field. The research question that will guide this study is, "What are the experiences of Black male school counselors in the school counseling profession?"

You have been selected as a potential participant because you are currently a practicing Black male school counselor and you practice in the Southeast region of the United States. Moreover, your narrative of your experiences going into the counseling field, will provide this research rich data that can be utilized for further research.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews as well as review the transcript of your interview. The first session will be approximately 45-60 minutes and the second follow up interview will be approximately 30 minutes. Each session will be conducted either face-to-face, or the use of Zoom, a video conferencing platform, and scheduled at a time convenient for you. After your interview has been transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcript through email and will have the opportunity to ensure I correctly captured your responses and make any corrections you deem necessary. A second follow-up interview, approximately 30 minutes, will be conducted where you may provide feedback on the findings of the study. Each session will be recorded using an audio recording device. A $15.00 Starbucks gift card will be sent to each participant at the conclusion of the study. Your name, school name, email address, and school phone number will be kept by me should it be needed for accounting purposes. If needed, the information will be provided to the Business Manager in the Department of Counseling and Human Developmental Services at the University of Georgia.

This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort will be taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Participation in this research study is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to discontinue participation will not impact the receipt of the gift card at the conclusion of the study.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Some questions may make you uncomfortable. You can skip these questions if you do not wish to answer them.

As a result of this study, school administrators, school counseling leaders, state and national counseling organizations, counseling scholars and researchers, will see the need to increase the diversity in the counseling profession, specifically increasing the presence of Black males in the profession. Moreover, the impact Black male counselors have on Black boys, and all students will be salient.

Research records will be labeled with your selected pseudonym that are linked to you by a separate list that includes your name. This list will be destroyed once we have finished collecting information from all participants. The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used. As a participant you will select a pseudonym that will be used in any publication or presentation. The name of your school will be changed by the researcher only the level will be accurate (e.g., elementary, middle, high, etc.).

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at 678-296-4724 or send an e-mail to bmmmovement@gmail.com. Dr. Bailey can be reached at dfbailey@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the IRB at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Bobby B Gueh

Bobby B. Gueh
Doctoral Candidate
University of Georgia
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
678-296-4724

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONAIRE

Pseudonym: _____

Age: _____

School Level/Grade Level you work with:_____

School Counseling Year Experience: _____

Marital Status: _____

Religious/ Spiritual Orientation: _____

Education: _____

SES: _____

Contact Information:

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Please provide any additional information that you would like us to know:
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Hello my name is Bobby Gueh, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. The purpose of this study is to examine the personal and professional experiences of Black male school counselors in the school counseling profession

With your permission, I will interview you today about your experiences as a Black male in the school counseling profession. During the interview, I will ask you questions related to your experiences as school counselor with hope to extract your narrative as a Black male in the field.

The information we discuss will be confidential and your identity will not be revealed in any documentation associated with this study. Indirect identifiers, such as the pseudonym you selected, will be used. A fictional school name will be selected by the researcher, but the level associated will be accurate.

I expect this interview to last no longer than one hour. I will audio record or video record the interview as well as take reflective notes during our conversation. I will transcribe this interview verbatim and will send you a copy of the transcribed interview to ensure the transcription reflects your recollection of the interview and your intended meaning.

You may end the interview at any point and you may decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. If you are unsure of a question, let me know and I

will clarify the question. Do you have any questions for me before we begin the interview?

Demographic Information

1. At what level are you a school counselor?
2. In what state/ school district are you located?
3. For how long have you been a school counselor?
4. Do you work in a public or private school?
5. What institution did you receive your school counseling degree?
6. Are you a member of any counseling professional organizations?
7. Are you the only male currently in your counseling department?
8. Are you the only Black male school counselor in your school district?

Semi-Structured Interview

Research Questions:

1. What are the experiences of Black male school counselors, and their decisions to pursue the school counseling profession?
2. How can the recruitment efforts of Black males into the school counseling profession be developed?

Interview Questions	**Rationale (NT)**	**Critical Race Theory**	
	Family and Early Years		
1. Please tell me about your background/identities. a. Where are you from? b. Family socio-cultural dynamics growing up. c. Identities- personal and professional d. Values / beliefs	• Biographical narrative. • Re-memering conversation • Identity formation and consciousness development.	• The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination (socio-economic status). • Intersectionality	
2. Talk about your upbringing and family	• Narrative story telling	• CRT analyzes the	

traditions/messages that informed your career decisions?	• Linking story-lines	role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups	
3. What was your experience like going through school as a Black male student?	• Re-membering • Narrative story telling	• CRT can be used to uncover the ingrained societal disparities that support a system of privilege and oppression.	
4. Have you ever had a Black male as school counselor and what was that experience like? If not, what do you think could be the impact could've been if you had a Black male school counselor while you were in school?	• Narrative story telling • Linking story-lines • Identity formation and consciousness development.	• The challenge to dominant ideology • Acritical race theory challenges the traditional claims that educational institutions make toward objectivity, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity.	
5. What impact do you feel systemic racism, and marginalization, have on the underrepresentation of Black males in the educational field, specifically the counseling profession?	• Externalizing the narrative • Problems can be constructed in social cultural context.	•CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups.	
	Professional Journey		
6. Tell me about your professional journey, and decision to go into the school counseling profession.	• Narrative story telling • Linking story-lines • Sequence of events	• The centrality of experiential knowledge. • Critical race theory recognizes that	

a. Specifically college, and graduate levels. b. Speak on your experiences in the counselor education program you attended. c. Tell me about your experiences currently working as a Black male school counselors, challenges/rewards.		the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial disparities.	
7. How will having more Black male school counselors be instrumental in improving the academic and social experiences of Black male students?	• Re-authoring • Re-storying	• exposing deficit-informed research that silences and distorts voices of people of color	
	Impact		
8. In your opinion what strategies and techniques can be used to recruit more Black males into school counseling? • Recruitment • Training • Retention	• Re-authoring • Re-storying •	• Counter narrative • Counter-story telling	
9. What has been a source of strength and support for you working in a profession where you are not the norm?	• Meaning making • consciousness development	• Critical race theory recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial disparities.	
10. What hopes or dreams do you hold for your work in relation to people knowing that you are a critical part of the profession?	• Meaning making • consciousness development	• CRT provides a voice to the people who have been systematically oppressed	

		(DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).	
11. Any questions or comments I did not ask or bring up, that you wish to discuss now?			

Thank you again for your participation in this study. I want to remind you that you may withdraw from participation at any time as previously discussed. If you have any questions about the study or feel like you need assistance after your participation in this interview, please do not hesitation to contact me or my committee chair, Dr. Deryl F. Bailey. I can be reached at bmmmovement@gmail.com and Dr. Bailey at dfbailey@uga.edu. I will send you a copy of the transcribed interview through email and will ask that you verify I have transcribed it as you remember the conversation. Once I have completed the data analysis and interpretation of the data, I will contact you to schedule a follow up interview. The follow up interview will allow you an opportunity to offer feedback and provide any additional relevant information. Again, thank you for your time and have a great rest of your day.

APPENDIX E

AUDIT TRAIL

Date of Action Taken	Action Taken
December 5th, 2019	Dissertation proposal submitted
December 12th, 2019	Dissertation prospectus defense
December 14th, 2019	IRB Documents submitted
January 6, 2020	IRB Approved
January 6, 2020	Recruitment email/ Informed Consent sent out
January 10th, 2020	Interview Story Teller # 1 -
January 11th, 2020	Transcribed Interview #1
January 12th, 2020	Interview Story Teller #2 -
January 14, 2020	Transcribed Interview #2
January 17th, 2020	Interview Story Teller # 3
January 18th	Transcribed Interview # 3
January 19th 2020	Interviewed Story teller # 4
January 21 2020	Transcribed Interview # 4
January 20 2020	Interview ST # 5
January 20 2020	Interview ST # 6
January 22 2020	Transcribed ST # 5/6
January 23rd, 2020	Interviewed ST # 7
January 24th , 2020	Transcribed ST # 7
January 25th, 2020	Interview ST # 8
January 25th, 2020	Interview ST # 9
January 26th, 2020	Transcribed ST # 8/9
January 31st , 2020	Interview ST # 10
January 31st, 2020	Transcribed ST # 10
February 1	Email transcriptions to participants (Coding)
February 8th	Meet with Research Team (coding)
February 11th	2nd Meeting with Research Team (coding)
February 14th	Begin writing 3rd person bio-narrative of each story teller
March 2nd , 2020	Full 1st draft of dissertation submitted to committee
March 9th , 2020	Feedback received from committee
March 20, 2020	Revisions submitted to committee
March 30th, 2020	Final Deadline for UGA formatting
April 8th, 2020 12:00 PM	Dissertation Defense

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Interviewer: Bobby B. Gueh Interviewee Pseudonym:

Today's Date: _____

1. Summary of interview.

2. What were the main issues or themes that stuck out for you in this contact?

3. What discrepancies, if any, did you note in the interviewee's responses?

4. Anything else that stuck out as salient, interesting, or important in this contact?

5. General comments about how this interviewee's responses compared with other interviewees: