P-12 Black Male Principals: Our Journey Toward Comprehensive Mattering

A dissertation presented to

the Graduate Faculty of

the University of Southern Indiana

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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June 2024

P-12 Black Male Principals: Our Journey Toward Comprehensive Mattering

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June 10, 2024

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Educational Leadership degree.

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Abstract

The voices of Black male principals in American P-12 settings have been silenced due to deficit framing that has informed hiring and retention practices, promotion, job roles, and job-related stress unique to Black male principals. I explore these challenges Black male principals face in P-12 settings using Carey's (2019) conceptual framework of mattering for Black boys and young men in P-12 settings. The purpose of this collective case study was to center the voices of three P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals respond to marginal (a minimal recognition of Black boys that implies their insignificance) and partial mattering (selectively valuing certain talents and attributes Black boys embody). Further, this qualitative research study informed a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter (fully conceiving the mattering of Black boys) based on the voices of these participants.

Two key findings on how P-12 Black male principals responded to marginal and partial mattering were represented by the three performance types of (a) "The Director", (b) "The Strategic Statesman", and (c) "The Purposeful Passivist". Within each performance role, two themes emerged: (a) Stress responses (e.g., confusion, apathy) at district levels in response to racism and (b) Leadership dispositions (e.g., being solutions based, confident demeanor) used as coping strategies in response to oppression and racism. Three key findings emerged relative to how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that would account for their comprehensive mattering. Those were: (a)

Instructional leadership (b) Deep demonstration of care for students and (c) A rejection of standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning.

Acknowledgments

I have to first thank my amazing wife, Dr. Joy Howard. You are an amazing woman, mother, and scholar. Your support, mentorship, and love are the reasons I made it across the finish line.

To my three sons, Jonas, Micah, and Kyeson. I finished this dissertation to show you the importance of never giving up on your dreams. My hope and prayer are that each one of you will find your purpose and have the courage to see that purpose come to pass in your lives. You are amazing young men, and I am honored to be a witness to your lives.

To my committee, Dr. Colson, Dr. Wilkins, and Dr. Blue. I am so thankful for all the support, feedback, and encouragement you provided me throughout this process. Thank you for believing in me!

To my mother, Bettie Wilkins and brothers Clifton and Randy Howard. Your support and love kept me encouraged throughout this process. I hope I made the three DEGREZ proud!

I want to thank all my friends and family members who encouraged me to finish this journey. I want to especially thank my best friend Matthew Hatcher, who constantly affirmed my intelligence and ability throughout this process.

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to Deacon Otis Hodge, my grandfather. He taught me about comprehensive mattering at an early age. He was a man of integrity and showed care and kindness to everyone he encountered. I finished because of you!

Ephesians 3:20-21- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Growing up, one of my all-time favorite movies was *Lean on Me*, a true story about Joe Clark, a famous Black male turnaround principal in Paterson, NJ. In this movie, Joe Clark, played by Morgan Freeman, goes into a predominately Black, drug-infested, high poverty, and low achieving high school, charged with the task of cleaning it up and turning it around academically. In one memorable scene in the movie, Mr. Clark expels over 100 students in front of the entire student body for violating several school rules. In his effort to turn around Eastside High, Mr. Clark is a tough disciplinarian who uses a combination of tough love, aggression, mentorship and high expectations to connect with the students, staff, and community members. At the end of the movie, Mr. Clark is hailed as a father figure hero for turning around the school culture and improving academic achievement through staff intimidation and aggression.

As a young boy watching this movie, I could picture myself going into tough schools, with a charismatic personality and passion for change, believing one day I could be an agent of change. Unfortunately, the Hollywood ending to Joe Clark's story points to a larger and more damaging reality for US public schools and the Black male administrators who serve in them. Eastside High and the story of Joe Clark exemplify the anti-black policies and structures that plague today's US public schools (Dumas, 2016). Anti-black policies in US public schools are manifested through its culture of discipline and punishment, hyper-surveillance of Black bodies, and viewing Black

students as inherently criminal (Wun, 2016; Yancy 2017). My intentional focus on

Black male principals in P-12 settings closely aligns with Howard's (2014) paradigm

shift of "moving away from viewing Black males as uneducable and academically

inferior, to one where they are seen as individuals who possess unlimited potential and

promise that can be recognized when they are situated in a caring and supportive

learning environment" (pg. 29).

Background, Context and Theoretical Framework

Black male administrators being viewed in a fixed role as disciplinarian, role

model and father figure for Black students, while admirable, have caused Black

administrators to be viewed less as instructional leaders, content experts, and community

builders (Brown, 2012). Too often, Black male principals find themselves leading high-

poverty schools that are underfunded and under-resourced (Alston & Bass, 2018). As a

result of leading schools that are high-poverty and high-need, Black principals are more

likely to be viewed as "ineffective" when it comes to creating school conditions that

increase and emphasize student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

As the "browning" of the United States of the collective student body continues at

a rapid rate, it will be imperative for Black male principals to challenge the status quo as

it relates to curriculum, discipline practices, and culture building (Dantley & Rogers,

2005). Black male principals have the intellectual capacity and professional authority to

challenge anti-black and racist systems embedded in P-12 settings, but are often met with

hostility and risk of job loss if their authentic voices and beliefs are shared. An example

of this phenomenon is the story of James Whitfield's journey as the first Black male

principal of Colleyville Heritage High School in Colleyville, Texas. After the death of George Floyd, Dr. Whitfield used his authentic voice to pen a letter to the school's majority White community expressing his feelings that systematic racism was still alive and well. Some members of the local school board believed his letter supported the use of Critical Race Theory in schools and put him on administrative leave, eventually firing him with a paid severance package (Reed, 2022). Dr. Whitfield's story highlights the complexities that exist when Black male principals attempt to use their authentic voices within a P-12 system that does not value their voice and unique experiences. For districts to recruit and retain Black male principals, it is critical that school environments and districts establish systems that ensure Black male principals are valued and their voices are being heard.

Based on Carey's (2019) mattering research between 2013-15 with high school boys and young men of color, I argue that Black male principals, at best, only marginally and partially matter in P-12 settings. Mattering is a social-psychological concept that encompasses how individuals tend to understand themselves through evaluations of self as significant to others (Marshall, 2001). Carey (2019) conceptualizes three types of mattering that describe how Black boys and young men are viewed and treated in social professional domains, P-12 settings, and post-secondary educational institutions. The first, marginal mattering of Black boys and young men is a type of minimal, baseline recognition that implies their insignificance. Marginal mattering is rooted in the cultural norms and structures that view Black boys and young men as inferior, unacceptable, and to be feared. The assumed relationship with Black boys and young men and criminality is

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one of the most revealing social structures that point to the marginal mattering of Black boys (Carey, 2020). Due to the hyper-criminalization of Black boys and young men by social and cultural mechanisms, the everyday behaviors of Black boys and young men are considered threatening and delinquent (Rios, 2011). In sum, Black boys in P-12 settings are facing experiences that characterize them as inferior and intolerable.

The second, partial mattering is when society selectively values certain talents and attributes of Black boys and young men in ways that leave racist systems unchallenged. Through partial mattering, only some of the skills and abilities Black boys and young men possess (e.g., often artistic, heroic, or athletic in nature) are cultivated and exalted by social and school actors (Carey, 2019). Partial mattering extends beyond marginality and compels images of Black boys and young men as super-humans and messianic figures, tokens and those whose attributes, and not whose selves, are adored within athletics, entertainment, or within social and school outreach realms (Carey, 2019). In other words, Black boys and young men partially matter when they are celebrated for what they can do instead of who they are.

Lastly, Carey (2019) conceptualizes the comprehensive mattering of Black boys and young men as conceiving the fullness of mattering, being seen as fully human and valued for their mere existence. Comprehensive mattering will emerge from reimagined social structures that encourage liberating instead of confining structures (Carey, 2019). Carey (2019) theorizes that comprehensive mattering will be achieved when Black boys and young men are given the space to try out things (e.g., activities, ideas, and performed identities) with artistic and athletic endeavors viewed, appropriately, as merely

mechanisms for creating fuller versions of their developing selves. Simply put, Black

boys and young men will comprehensively matter when they count not because of what

they are said to be able to do or not do, but simply because they exist (Carey, 2019).

Similarly, I purport that Black male principals experience marginal and partial

mattering in schools. Black male principals navigating racist P-12 settings in which they

are relegated to disciplinary and non-academic roles and being appointed to alternative or

"ghetto" schools, even when their training or desire is not aligned with that background

or setting are examples of how marginal and partial mattering exist for Black male

principals. Utilizing this conceptual framework of this research study, I will connect the

troubling experience of Black male principals in P-12 settings with research literature

from the field of education and Black male leadership. Additionally, this research project

will center the voices of Black male principals to reimagine P-12 settings that account for

their comprehensive mattering.

Statement of the Problem

The voices of Black male principals in American P-12 settings have been

silenced by systematic racism. Systematic racism has been manifested through a deficit

framing that has informed hiring and retention practices (Bailes & Guthery, 2020),

promotion (Berry & Reardon, 2022), job roles (Brown, 2012), and job-related stress

(Alexander al et., 2018; Brown, 2012; DuBois, 1903) unique to Black male principals.

Just like Howard (2014) who argues for Black boys to be seen as fully human in P-12

settings, I argue for the voices of Black male administrators to be heard and valued so P-

12 educational spaces can be reimagined into spaces that fully recognize the humanity of the Black administrator and the Black male students they serve.

Purpose of the Study

Black male voices need to be heard and are often neglected in research literature about the roles that power, race, and racism play in their educational journeys (Howard, 2014). Due to deficit framing as a result of systematic racism in P-12 settings, Black male principals are underrepresented in district policy and leadership posts in P-12 settings (Akua & Fenwick, 2013). Additionally, Black male principals are undervalued, seen predominately as disciplinarians and often placed in high poverty and under resourced P-12 settings (Brown, 2012; Alton & Bass, 2018). Black principals find themselves working in P-12 environments that do not have systems in place to capitalize on their intellectual, cultural, and curriculum knowledge they bring to educational settings. I explore the challenges and opportunities Black male principals have in P-12 settings using the three types of mattering Carey (2019) conceptualizes for Black boys and young men in P-12 settings. Marginal mattering is the minimal recognition signaled by individuals and institutions that implies Black boys and young men are insignificant. Partial mattering is the significance Black boys and young men infer about themselves based on how others selectively value certain talents and attributes they exemplify in ways that keep racist systems intact (Carey, 2019). Lastly, comprehensive mattering is conceiving the fullness of Black boys and young men. It places an emphasis on Black males being taken seriously and feeling valuable and significant to peers and educators (Carey, 2019). In sum, this research study seeks to capitalize on the cultural, intellectual,

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and curriculum knowledge of Black male principals to redesign P-12 spaces that fully value their voices and expertise.

Research Questions

1. How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with marginal mattering in the P-12 setting?

2. How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with partial mattering in the P-12 setting?

3. How do Black male principals reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance

The purpose of this collective case study is to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals respond to marginal and partial mattering in P-12 settings. Further, this study will inform a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter based on the voices of these participants. The state of South Carolina is significant in this study because it has a long legacy of racial oppression within its educational system. I grew up and received the majority of my formal education in South Carolina public schools. While I received an adequate education in South Carolina, I was also informally taught the limitations that existed in the educational system due to my race. A vivid memory from my childhood was when my fifth-grade teacher told me I was denied being named "Fifth Grade Boy of the Year" due to the color of my skin. Another significant highlight of my childhood was being an extra in the movie *Separate but Equal*

that highlighted the Briggs vs. Board of Education case located in Summerton, SC that laid the groundwork for the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education case that ended segregation in the United States. Even as a child, I understood the history of racial segregation and inequality that embodied South Carolina's public schools and wanted to help transform the system.

The journey of ensuring Black male principals comprehensively matter in P-12 systems through being seen, heard, and valued is a project that aims to help future and current Black male principals with strategies to help them advocate for themselves in school systems which may not see their full value. Additionally, results from this research will inform school districts in South Carolina and nationwide on how to create optimal working environments that account for the comprehensive mattering of Black male principals.

Definition of Terms

1. Mattering- A social-psychological concept that encompasses how individuals tend to understand themselves through evaluations of self as significant to others (Marshall, 2001).

2. Comprehensive Mattering- Conceiving the fullness of Black boys and young men. Comprehensive mattering places an emphasis on Black males being taken seriously and feeling valuable and significant to peers and educators (Carey, 2019).

3. Partial Mattering- Significance Black boys and young men infer about themselves based on how others selectively value certain talents and attributes they exemplify in ways that keep racist systems intact (Carey, 2019).

5. Marginal Mattering- The minimal recognition signaled by individuals and institutions that implies Black boys and young men are insignificant (Carey, 2019).

6. Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF)- RBF is an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that considers the increased levels of psychosocial stressors and subsequent psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses of fighting racial microaggressions in mundane extreme environmental stress (Smith et al., 2012)

7. Microaggression- A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

Summary

This collective case study aims to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals professionally respond to marginal and partial mattering experiences in P-12 settings. Further, this study will inform a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter based on the voices of these participants. In chapter two, research literature will be highlighted that demonstrates the marginal and partial mattering of Black boys, young men, and principals. Additionally, the futuristic nature of

comprehensive mattering and ways schools and institutions can promote the actualization

of comprehensive mattering within Black boys and young men will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter is organized into four sections that provide an overview of Carey's conceptual framework of mattering for Black boys and young men. Drawing from Carey's framework, chapter two aligns the theory to mattering of Black boys and young men with that of Black male administrators working in P-12 settings. The first section provides a brief overview of Carey's (2019) conceptual framework of mattering. The second section provides an overview of marginal mattering, a minimal recognition of Black boys that implies their insignificance. A parallel is drawn to similar experiences and perceptions expressed by Black male administrators in research literature. Additionally, the second section offers a historical backdrop of the ways in which systems and structures that inform schooling in the U.S. have contributed to the marginal mattering of Black male administrators. The third section offers an overview of partial mattering, selectively valuing certain talents and attributes Black boys embody. In this section, various archetypes of Black male administrators who have been celebrated by school systems are highlighted. The fourth and concluding section examines comprehensive mattering, fully conceiving the mattering of Black boys. Carey's conceptual framework describes what comprehensive mattering could look like for Black boys and young men in social professional domains, P-12 settings, and postsecondary educational institutions. In each section, research literature from the field of education and Black male leadership is connected to align and explain the ways in which Carey's

mattering framework is essential to the work of reclaiming the knowledge and expertise of Black male administrators.

Theoretical Framework

Mattering is a social-psychological concept that encompasses how individuals tend to understand themselves through evaluations of self as significant to others (Marshall, 2001). Based on his research with high school boys and young men of color in an urban context, Roderick Carey theorized the mattering of Black boys and young men through the lens of the Black Lives Matter Movement and amidst an uptick in neoliberal reforms that position Black children and families as problems in need of fixing (Carey, 2019). Carey (2019) described mattering of Black boys and young men as their (a) value and significance; (b) indicated by the regard with which they are held; (c) how they are treated; (d) the relational interest taken in them by individuals in society and (e) the messages they receive in schools. Through multiple conceptualizations of mattering that analyze how Black boys and young men matter in broad social professional domains, P-12 settings, and postsecondary educational institutions, Carey articulated that marginal mattering is the minimal recognition that implies their insignificance; and partial mattering is the selective mattering of certain talents and attributes they embody. These two forms of mattering dominate the social and school lives of Black boys and young men. To counteract the negative impact of Black boy partial and marginal mattering, Carey theorized comprehensive mattering of Black boys and young men, which is the conceiving of the fullness of mattering of Black boys and young men. Comprehensive

mattering places an emphasis on Black males being taken seriously and feeling valuable and significant to peers and educators (Carey, 2019).

Review of the Research Literature

Marginal Mattering

Carey (2019) defined marginal mattering of Black boys and young men as "the type of baseline, minimal recognition that implies their insignificance, as signaled by individuals (e.g., peers, educators, the general public) and institutions (e.g., schools) around them" p. 376. Given social commitments to anti-Blackness, examples of marginal mattering facing Black boys and young men include assumed criminality as experienced by displacement into criminal justice systems, negative social imagery, and disproportionate suspensions and expulsions within P-12 settings (Carey, 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2009, Black males are undereducated, over-incarcerated, have chronically high unemployment, and ultimately have lower life expectations than any of the other large racial ethnic groups in the United States (Howard, 2014). Howard (2014) describes the current state of Black males in society as "disturbing, alarming, and almost mind numbing" (pg. 10). Due to society's negative perception of Black boys and young men, the struggle continues for them to find purpose and belonging in P-12 settings and larger society.

P-12 Settings. Marginal mattering of Black boys and young men is clearly seen in P-12 settings through local, state, and national achievement and discipline data. For Black students, disparities in frequency and severity of school discipline, academic achievement, rate of neighborhood school closures, fundraising capacities of Parent

Teacher Associations, and lack of access to art, music, and unstructured playtime point to antiblackness policies in education (Dumas, 2016). Pruitt (2019) asserted, "In America today, 54% of African-Americans graduate from high school, compared to more than 75% for their Caucasian and Asian counterparts. African-American male students were nearly 2.5 times more likely to be suspended in 2000 than their peers. African-American males' twelfth-grade reading scores are currently lower than any other racial or ethnic group. According to the congressional Black caucus foundation, Black males ages 18 and older make up 5.5% of college students, and of those who do make it to college, only one out of every six of them receive a college degree" (p. 1). Marginal mattering for Black boys in K-12 settings can be clearly seen in the 2020-21 data from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. Key data points from the 2020-21 OCR report include:

- Both White and Black boys were overrepresented in P-12 school discipline outcomes, but Black boys were nearly two times more likely than White boys to receive an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion.

- Black boys accounted for 9% of preschool enrollment, but represented 23% of preschool children who received one or more out-of-school suspensions and 20% of preschool children who were expelled.

- Black boys accounted for 8% of total P-12 student enrollment, but 18% of students who received corporal punishment.

Marginal mattering of Black boys and young men is pervasive in all areas of education, hindering their ability to fully matter in society and P-12 settings.

The marginal mattering of Black boys and young men show up in classroom spaces on a daily basis. Student-teacher interactions within the classroom can produce both social and academic disparities between Black students and their peers (Kenyatta, 2012). Ferguson (2000) noted in his research that teachers often misinterpreted actions by Black boys which led to them being disciplined at higher rates and more harshly than their white peers. Current research on student-teacher interaction among African American students suggests that teachers fail to provide African American students with the same positive reinforcement and feedback on mistakes as they do their white counterparts (Ferguson, 2003; Pollard, 1993). Kunjufu (1995) asserted that Black boys begin to take a substantial academic and behavioral decline in about the 4th grade, as teachers tend to stop nurturing and paying attention to them. These harmful student-teacher interactions lead to negative experiences for Black boys, especially in the areas of school discipline and academics, which reinforces the preeminence of marginal mattering in P-12 spaces for Black boys and young men. It is clear we have a Black boy problem.

Marginal Mattering of Black Male Principals. The Black male principal is a symbol of Black advancement within our education system. In Anderson's (2016) book, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, she explained the trigger for white rage is black advancement. Anderson further explained that white America has used an array of policy assaults and legal contortions to dismantle the rights and successes that Black people have achieved. In other words, Anderson (2016) suggests that white rage is rooted in anti-blackness. Anti-blackness, a legacy of chattel slavery in the U.S., is the socially constructed rendering of Black bodies as disposable, inhuman,

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and inherently problematic (Coles & Warren, 2020). The U.S. education system has reinforced anti-blackness through its culture of discipline and punishment, hyper-surveillance of Black bodies, and viewing Black students as inherently criminal (Wun, 2016; Yancy, 2017). Dumas (2016) argued that the mere presence of Black people in white school spaces is seen as a threat. Kohli (2018) further explained that anti-blackness is not only an act of violence against Black students, but Black teachers and administrators are victims of this violence as well. Similar to the ways that Dumas and Nelson (2016) argued that Black boyhood is socially unimagined and unimaginable (as creative, imaginative, playful, innocent), I consider in this study the ways that anti-blackness affected Black male school leaders whose instructional leadership was unimaginable.

The personal stories of Black principals exemplify the marginal mattering they experience within the principalship. Milligan and Howley (2015) conducted a qualitative study of principals in segregated, white-staffed urban elementary schools. Of the ten principals in the study, three of the five Black principals interviewed, one male and two females, were considered emotive principals. These emotive principals would often become emotional when they began discussing the racist behaviors of teachers, expressing frustration and anger at the mistreatment of students in their schools. Each one of these emotive principals experienced racist acts as students and principals in their P-12 settings. They all tied in their racialized experiences to the broader understanding of race and racism in America and having to live in two worlds, one White, one Black.

In the book, *Fighting the Good Fight: Narratives of the African American Principalship*, the personal stories of over 18 Black male principals were published that highlighted the many challenges Black male principals face as they lead P-12 schools (Carrier & Griffen, 2021). The personal experiences of the Black male principals who shared their stories reinforced the societal injustices such as media assassination, racial profiling, pay inequality, and stereotyping that Black males face on a daily basis (Alston & Bass, 2018). In Crawford's (2021) edited chapter, he proclaimed, "Every African American school leader I have known, from superintendents to assistant principals, has spent their entire career trying to prove their competence and worthiness for the leadership position" (p. 105). Crawford (2021) further added, "it is my opinion that African American principals are expected to coddle white subordinates and succumb to the fragility of white superiors over the needs of their students" (p. 105). The personal narratives of Black male principals serve as vital pieces of evidence that marginal mattering exists and continues to thrive in P-12 educational spaces.

Post-Brown Consequences on Black Principals. During the pre-Brown era, Black principals led the closed system of segregated schooling for Black students in the South and represented the Black community as an authority on educational, social, and economic matters (Tillman, 2004). Described as leaders of the Black struggle, Black principals set the mission and vision for school staff, developed and implemented relevant curriculum, and transmitted goals and ideals of the school to a philanthropic White power structure (Rodgers 1967; Tillman 2004). After the Brown vs. Board of Education decision that outlawed segregation in schools, Black principals who once led

predominantly Black schools began losing their jobs to white administrators (Alston, 2005; Brown, 2005; Ogletree, 2004). For example, in one southern state between the years of 1963-1970, the numbers of Black principals decreased by 73%, from 620 to 170 (Patterson, 2001). In a southeastern state between the years of 1963-1973, the number of Black principals dropped 99%, going from 209 to 3 (Patterson, 2001). By the late 1970's, white resistance to Brown throughout the South had decimated the ranks of Black teachers and administrators, leaving at least 100,000 Black teachers and principals without jobs (Fenwick, 2022). Black men were hit particularly hard as they comprised most of the Black principalships that were eliminated (Fenwick, 2022). The widespread displacement of Black educators ensured the White power structure would be maintained in schools with control over instructional delivery, curriculum development, school culture, and educational policy and practice (Fenwick 2022). From an economic perspective, desegregation left southern Black educators nearly $1 billion poorer (Fenwick, 2022).

Data from the National Principal and Teacher Survey of 2017-18 reinforces the fact that Black teachers and principals have not rebounded from the elimination of jobs caused by White Southern resistance to Brown. According to the data, 63 years after the Brown decision:

- Black principals make up only 11% of the nation's 93,200 principals.
- Black teachers make up only 7% of the nation's 3.2 million teachers.
- Fewer than 3% of the nation's 13,800 school districts are led by Black superintendents.

The continued absence of Black principals in P-12 settings create white spaces rooted in anti-blackness that enable marginal mattering to exist in our current educational spaces (Dumas, 2016; Fenwick 2022).

      Black Males and Their Responses to Microaggressions and Racism. People of Color have been experienced racism and are treated as outsiders in historically white institutions (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Black males in particular face Black misandric microaggressions that are characterized by a pathological aversion toward Black males. Examples of misandric microaggressions include hyper-surveillance and anti-Black male stereotyping (Smith 2010; Smith et al. 2007). Smith (2004, 2008a, 2008b) conceptualizes a theoretical concept called racial battle fatigue (RBF) to describe how Black males respond and handle racist experiences and Black misandric microaggressions. Smith and co-authors (2011) further explained:

      RBF is an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that considers the increased levels of psychosocial stressors and subsequent psychological (e.g., frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, hopelessness), physiological (e.g., headache, backache, "butterflies," teeth grinding, high blood pressure, insomnia), and behavioral responses (e.g., stereotype threat, John Henryism, social withdrawal, self-doubt, and a dramatic change in diet) of fighting racial microaggressions in mundane extreme environmental stress. Black men are routinely confronted with forms of Black misandric discrimination for which many have only limited space, time, energy, or counterstrategies to cope and resist. (p. 68).

Decades of research have concluded that racism is experienced as a stressor which can have a negative influence on the physical, mental, and emotional health of People of Color (Smith et al., 2012). In conclusion, Black males experience various types of stressors as a result of working in racist environments that devalue their contributions and expertise.

Partial Mattering

Carey (2019) defined partial mattering "as the significance Black boys and young men can infer about themselves based on how others (e.g., educators and the general public) selectively value certain talents and attributes they embody in ways that leave racist systems unchallenged" (p. 378). Black boys and young men find themselves on one hand being loathed, while on the other hand being selectively loved, applauded, and emulated for certain talents (Davis, 2003; Carey, 2019). Ladson-Billings (2011) offered a description of how Black males are both loved and loathed in our society. She asserted:

> We see Black males as "problems" that our society must find ways to eradicate. We regularly determine them to be the root cause of most problems in school and society. We seem to hate their dress, their language, and their affect. We hate that they challenge authority and command so much social power. While the society apparently loves them in narrow niches and specific slots-music, basketball, football, track-we seem less comfortable with them than in places like the National Honor Society, the debate team, or the computer club." (p. 9).

Carey (2015) further explained that Black boys and men live at the end of a spectrum in the U.S. On one end, they are considered harmful, threatening, and deviant, notions

embedded in their marginal mattering. At the other end, they are celebrated for being politicians, civic leaders, or entertainers. While seemingly positive, these roles reflect ways that Black boys and men can matter, but only partially. Partial mattering is exemplified through the stereotypical endeavors society expects from Black boys as athletes, sensationalized heroes, and entertainers. While in these roles, Black boys and young men matter Carey (2019) believes, "not because they are well or whole but, instead, because of what they do well, such as serving as community saviors or as popular entertainers or athletes" (p. 379).

Partial mattering is most clearly seen in P-12 settings through the relationship schools have with Black boys and their participation in athletics. In a qualitative study of 6 Black male students who were recruited to play basketball in a predominately white Catholic high school, Davis et al. (2022) examined their experiences and interactions within their school environment. Initially, the Black male athletes saw their attendance at the Catholic high school as an escape from their neighborhood public school, but later realized that their attendance did not equate to being fully included into the school's culture. All participants experienced forms of anti-blackness via cultural and structural assaults that made their attendance at the school very challenging (Davis et al., 2022). This research study demonstrates how Black boys and young men partially mattered in P-12 settings when they are celebrated for what they do and not for who they are.

Black Male Teachers and Administrators as Role Models and Disciplinarians. The partial mattering and its impact on Black administrators are directly linked to the experiences of Black male teachers, as teachers serve as the main

recruitment pool for the principalship in K-12 settings. Using research from 1930-1990 and Ian Hacking's notion of humankind, Brown (2012) concluded that Black males have been generalized as culturally deviant, absent fathers who were incapable of training Black boys on how to make it. Beginning in the early 1990's, Brown (2012) highlighted how researchers, foundations, and politicians began to view emerging middle class Black males as the potential remedy for the social conditions of Black youth. Due to this shift in discourse, the author concluded that the Black male teacher developed into a pedagogical archetype, one who is seen in the fixed role in the schools as a role model, disciplinarian, and father figure for Black male students (Brown, 2012). While the aforementioned roles appear positive, they fail to recognize Black male educators as instructional leaders, content experts, and community builders.

In Brown's (2012) qualitative study of ten Black male teachers who taught in an urban 6th-9th midwestern school, each teacher interviewed shared the belief that they were expected to be the heavy and physically intimidating toward Black male students to keep them 'in line.' Brockenbrough's (2015) qualitative study with eleven Black male teachers teaching in an east coast urban district revealed 5 of the 11 men experienced a notable source of stress, anxiety, or frustration in their professional experiences when expected to demonstrate the patriarchal authoritarianism expected of Black male teachers. When Black teachers are put into this one-dimensional role of disciplinarian, the voices that were designed to heal become the voices that inflict violence and suffering (Brown, 2012).

The fixed role of father figure, role model, and disciplinarian continues as Black

male teachers become principals in K-12 educational settings. Specifically, the role of

Black male principals as disciplinarian causes tension between themselves and Black

students. Alexander, et al (2018) highlighted the complex relationship Black district and

school leaders have with the School to Prison Pipeline (STPP). The authors defined the

STPP as the "process of tracking traditionally racialized and minoritized student

populations (e.g., Black, Latino, and students with disabilities) out of educational

institutions, directly and/or indirectly, into the juvenile justice system and subsequently

into the adult criminal justice system" (p. 32). Based on government school discipline

statistics highlighted in the article, Black students are adversely affected by the STPP.

Black school leaders find themselves in situations with Black students that either support

or disrupt the STPP. The authors used Du Bois' notion of double consciousness as a

conceptual framework to explore the challenges that Black district and school leaders

face when dealing with disciplinary issues of Black students. Du Bois (1903) explained

double consciousness as the struggle of Black Americans to reconcile their identities as

an American and a Negro in a society in which they experience racial oppression because

of their Blackness. Through the lens of double consciousness, Black district and school

leaders grapple with their identities as agents of the system and agents for racially

oppressed students. The authors contend that race conscious Black school leaders "never

aspire to or attempt to fully reconcile their identities as Black individuals and as

administrators who contribute to Black students' entrance and further integration into the

STPP" (p. 37). While Black district and school leaders hold power, they are still

restricted by the nature of their positions and the school systems, thus advancing the negative effects of the STPP.

Promotion and Hiring Practices. Partial mattering of Black administrators can also be seen in hiring practices within K-12 settings. In a Texas study of 4,689 assistant principals from 2001 to 2017, researchers Bailes and Guthery (2020) found that race and gender are associated with the probability of promotion to school leadership. Bailes and Guthery (2020) tracked four cohorts of 1,100 assistant principals starting in 2001 to 2004. Each cohort was tracked until 2017. They found that Black assistant principals are least likely to be promoted and wait longer for promotion when compared to White assistant principals. In other words, compared with White assistant principals, who held similar education and experience, Black assistant principals were 18% less likely to be promoted across all time periods during the study's sixteen-year period. The systematic non-promotion of Black principal candidates has negative consequences for both Black students and Black teachers (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). Black principals experience partial mattering in school districts like the ones in Texas because they have skill sets districts perceive are adequate for the assistant principalship, but are often denied or have longer wait times for promotion to principalship due to the color of their skin.

Black principals not only have to deal with delays in their hiring process, they also need to have more experience and educational attainment than their White counterparts before getting an entry-level principalship (Berry & Reardon, 2022). Data from the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey discovered that Black principals have the prerequisite skills and abilities for the principalship, yet their preparation path may be

subject to containment (Berry & Reardon, 2022). In other words, even when Black principal candidates have more advanced academic credentials and greater administrative experiences than their White counterparts, the hiring practices and policies within their districts create limitations and barriers that hinder their path to the principalship.

Comprehensive Mattering

Comprehensive mattering of Black boys, which is the conceiving of the fullness of mattering of Black boys and young men, is rooted in positive relationships between Black males and their schools (Carey 2019). Comprehensive mattering in educational contexts places an emphasis on Black males being taken seriously and feeling valuable and significant to peers and educators. When Black boys and young men matter comprehensively, they are seen as fully human, whose value will reside in their mere existence and their humanistic flourishing within that existence (Carey, 2020). Drawing from Dumas and Nelson's (2016) research on Black boyhood, Carey (2019) argued comprehensive mattering begins when others view them as essential and significant while seeking to draw out the Black boy from the stereotypes of the socially imagined Black boy. For instance, one study of Black middle school male students who participated in a weekly mentoring group that focused on Afro-centric teachings of Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Uhuru (freedom and social justice), and Maat (truth) scored higher on standardized tests than their non-mentored peers (Boyd et al., 2009). In another study of high achieving Black boys, the research revealed mattering was connected to adults and peers taking their opinions seriously and educators providing support instead of controlling (Tucker, Dixon, & Griddine, 2010). In Howard's (2014)

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study of Black high school boys, resilience, high expectations others had for them, and upward mobility potential were the top factors that contributed to their academic success in school.

Carey (2020) challenged those in educational settings to (re)center school structures and curriculum around Black boy celebration, happiness, and joy. Carey (2020) further outlined ways educators can help Black boys infer their comprehensive mattering. Comprehensive mattering demands teachers to incorporate texts that challenge the stereotypes of Black boys promulgated through the media (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Educators should shun stereotypes and (re)imagine the possible types of positive teacher and student relationships that would transform students' learning experiences (Nelson, 2016). To help support Black boys in inferring their comprehensive mattering, teachers must incorporate critical literacy and artistic explorations in efforts to assist marginalized youth in cultivating resistance tactics (Johnson, 2015b).

Comprehensive Mattering of Black Administrators. Black male principals exemplified community building and caring for the Black community during segregation. Black principals served as a resource for the Black community beyond education and were the first agents to challenge inequality in local settings (Walker, 2000). Not only were Black principals instructional leaders, they were responsible for motivating parents to provide resources for the school, were active in local churches, and even served as financial advisors to community members (Walker, 2000). While Black principals experienced a form of comprehensive mattering within the Black community during segregation, White society continued with racist practices before and after Brown as

White superintendents and school boards acted with impunity as they disobeyed the Brown decision by opposing the integration of Black students and school personnel (Fenwick, 2022). While Black male principals enjoyed a form of comprehensive mattering during segregation within the Black community, the hope of Black males comprehensively mattering in larger society and integrated P-12 settings remain a hope unseen.

  Black Principals as Instructional Leaders. Research suggests that Black principals have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Black students (Lomotey, 1993). Lomotey (1993) identified two role identities that Black principals demonstrate when it relates to curriculum, instruction, and teaching of Black students. The "bureaucrat/administrator" role is defined by Black principals facilitating the socialization process of schooling. Essentially, Black principals who operate in this role help students move through the educational hierarchy of schooling. Characteristics of Black principals who operate in the "bureaucrat/administrator" role include goal development, energy harnessing, communication facilitation, curriculum planning, and teacher supervision (Lomotey, 1993). The Black principals who operate in the "ethno-humanist" role go beyond academics and believe African American students should learn about their culture. These principals identify with African American students on a cultural level and encourage students to view the world through an Afrocentric perspective. Characteristics of "ethno-humanist" leaders include commitment to the education of all students, confidence in their abilities, and compassion and understanding for students and their communities (Lomotey, 1993).

Lomotey's (1993) identity roles of "bureaucrat/administrator" and "ethno-humanist" are directly associated with the success of African American students. In a broader view of instructional leadership that encompasses all students, aspects of Sergiovanni's (1998) pedagogical leadership shares some alignment with Lomotey's role identities of Black male principals. Pedagogical leadership focuses on investing in resources that positively impact students and teachers on a personal and professional level. Pedagogical leadership style is defined by school leaders as developing the academic, social, intellectual, and professional capital within their schools (Sergiovanni, 1998). Sergiovanni outlines two ways of thinking within the pedagogical leadership model that describe how school leaders interact with students, staff, and community members. Social contracts is a way of thinking that centers transactional relationships among stakeholders in schools that promote compliance, organization, and the procedural side of schooling. In contrast, for school leaders who utilize social covenants, relationships among stakeholders are reciprocal in nature that prioritize collaboration and shared decision-making. Principals who operate in a social covenant way of thinking, go beyond the operational side of schooling and emphasize building community through the virtues of mutual respect, morality, and cooperation (Sergiovanni, 1998).

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy. Relatedly, to reimagine Black male school leaders as having the capacity to be instructional leaders, we must turn to what we know will work. I draw from culturally sustaining pedagogy which is connected to the ways that I think about comprehensive mattering. Culturally sustaining pedagogy builds on decades of asset-based pedagogical research. The goal of culturally sustaining pedagogy

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is to affirm and respect students' cultural knowledge and ways of being as a means of promoting equality across racial and ethnic communities often marginalized withing school settings (Paris & Alim, 2013). While the present study is not specifically focused on culturally sustaining pedagogy, there is an identified need for teachers and school leaders who understand how to reach and teach racially marginalized students.

Black Male Principals as Caring Leaders. Nodding (1984) described caring as an ethical approach focused on responsiveness, receptivity, and relatedness. Black male principals have a high degree of care for the stakeholders in their schools (Bass, 2020). In a qualitative study of ten Black male principals, Bass (2020) examined how the ethic of care is operationalized in schools led by Black male principals. Creating a caring environment is critical in school leadership as evidenced by its inclusion in the Professional Standards for Educators. Seven emergent themes developed from Bass's research on Black male caring. Those themes were Black male caregivers (a) view themselves as father figures; (b) they strongly identify and connect with a sense of spirituality; (c) they care, but feel they must mask their caring; (d) they derive a sense of pride from their caring; (e) they sometimes practice "rough love" as care; (f) they believe that action must follow caring; and (g) their present success fueled desire to demonstrate care. Findings in the study were used to create the Black Masculine Caring Framework (BMC). Ultimately, the BMC Framework seeks to debunk the negative stereotypes of Black men as violent and aggressive, and instead, offer a narrative that Black male principals care at a deep level for all students who are under their supervision (Bass, 2020).

Summary

The aim of this collective case study is to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals respond professionally to marginal and partial mattering experiences in P-12 settings. Further, this study will inform a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter based on the voices of these participants. Comprehensive mattering places an emphasis on Black males being taken seriously and feeling valuable and significant to peers and educators (Carey, 2019). By centering the voices of Black male administrators, drawing from the work of Carey (2019), this research project seeks to validate the need for Black male comprehensive mattering (holistic value as a human being) in P-12 settings. The design of this study, selecting only Black male principals and focusing on questions that emphasize their significance within the profession, is an intentional move toward taking a futuristic approach about what school environments could be reimagined when Black male principals comprehensively matter.

<p style="text-align:center">CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY</p>

Purpose of the Proposed Study

The purpose of this collective case study was to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals respond to marginal and partial mattering in P-12 settings. Further, this study will inform a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter based on the voices of these participants.

Research Questions

1. How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with marginal mattering in the P-12 setting?

2. How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with partial mattering in the P-12 setting?

3. How do Black male principals reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering?

Methodology and Research Design

The voices of Black male administrators are being silenced in American P-12 educational settings due to the impact of systematic racism. Howard (2014) asserted that the firsthand and detailed accounts from African American males are absent from much of the research associated with Black males as it relates to power, race, and racism in their educational experiences. In other words, it is important we hear from Black males themselves.

The methodology was a collective case study with three Black male administrators from the same Southern state, South Carolina. Yin (1994) defines a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). In a collective case study, the researcher selects a problem to investigate and selects several cases to explore the issue (Bhattacharya, 2017). Enhanced understanding of the phenomenon may occur as a result of using the collective case study methodology (Ellinger et al., 2005). The collective case study design will allow me to compare and contrast the real-life experiences of Black male administrators working in South Carolina schools.

Target Population

The target population for this study was Black male principals who self-identify as (a) Black and male, (b) living in South Carolina, (c) working in either public or private school, and (d) previously or currently serving as a school-level leader. There was a total of three participants in this study.

Sampling Method

Participants were derived from a purposeful sample of this long-time professional cohort of principals. In other words, this group of principals have been in regular contact over a course of a decade. Criterion sampling was employed for the selection of participants, which is needed in qualitative research to ensure that meaningful data is collected that address the research questions and align with the research purpose (Creswell, 2009). These participants were selected because they are leaders in the field of

education and have demonstrated effective leadership within their respective school buildings. Each participant shares common experiences of leading majority-white staff in majority-white school districts. Drawing from Laura's (2016) work with intimate inquiry, I center the core values of love (acting on behalf of participants), values care (knowing research participants in all of their particularity), and solidarity (working with participants in research endeavor) in this research project. This love-based approach to research offers the opportunity as the researcher to do research not on my participants, but with my participants (hooks, 2000). Additionally, these long-time professional and personal relationships that have been developed through this cohort led to more authentic and truthful responses during the data collection process. Below is a table that describes participants more in detail. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Name	Age	Current Role	Total Yrs. in Education	Education Level
Chuck	36-49	Principal	23	EdD
Nazir	36-49	Principal	23	EdD
Ryan	36-49	Principal	24	Master's degree

Sampling Size

There was a total of three Black male principals who participated in this study.

Setting

The setting of this research project was done virtually through Zoom. Participants conducted Zoom interviews with the researcher in their homes or school offices.

Recruitment

During my years in South Carolina, I met other soon-to-be Black male administrators and began a professional informal cohort and support group of other Black male principals that has lasted for over fifteen years. The researcher called each member of the professional informal cohort and used a verbal consent script to determine if cohort members wanted to participate in the study. For each cohort member that agreed to participate, the researcher emailed each participant the informed consent letter and instructed them to sign it before the first interview.

Data Collection

To better understand the vision that Black male principals have for their own future in the profession, this collective case study is designed using in-depth interviews and a culminating focus group with all participants. During in-depth interviews, goal was to explore in-depth the participants' experiences with Carey's (2019) marginal, partial, and comprehensive mattering. Each participant participated in two virtual individual interviews and one focus group using semi-structured open-ended questions within the Zoom software. These questions were formulated based on Carey's (2019) concept of Black boy and young men mattering and the research literature that demonstrates some of

the challenges faced by Black male principals. Semi-structured open-ended questions

align with the collective case study design because they allow the interviewer to guide the

conversation while allowing the interviewer to gain perspective on how the participant

understands his experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). Understanding the unique experiences

of each participant is critical within the collective case study methodology because it

allows the researcher to compare and contrast participants' experiences.

Prior to conducting first round interviews, an informed consent and demographic

questionnaire was obtained from each participant. The first round of individual interviews

focused on questions that allowed participants to explore ways they could redesign K-12

settings to ensure their comprehensive mattering (holistic value as a human being)

(Carey, 2019). The second round of individual interviews allowed participants to share

experiences during their principalships in which they experienced marginal mattering

(excluded from the center of value and decision-making) and partial mattering

(selectively valuing certain talents and attributes Black boys embody) (Carey, 2019).

Analytic memos were written in Dedoose and were used to reflect on the process of

coding choices and emergent themes in the data (Saldana, 2009). Individual first and

second round interviews were scheduled from an hour and a half to two hours with each

participant. Interviews were recorded using Zoom software and the researcher transcribed

each interview. In order to ensure confidentiality during the virtual interviews, the

researcher asked participants to select a private location where they could talk freely

without distractions or fear of others hearing their responses. Additionally, the researcher

asked each participant for permission to record the virtual interview. All recorded

interviews were kept in a file on a pass protected laptop to maintain the confidentiality of all participants.

After individual first and second round interviews were complete, a focus group with all participants was held via Zoom. Notes from first and second round individual interviews were utilized to develop focus group questions. The purpose of the focus group was to gain diverse perspectives from participants and analyze themes derived from round one and two interviews. The focus group provided participants opportunities for additional probing and follow-up questions (Bhattacharya, 2017). Additionally, the focus group allowed an opportunity for participants to be member checked. Member checking occurred when the researcher discussed quotes and stories shared in individual interviews and participants confirmed the validity of those stories. The focus group was recorded using the Zoom software and fully transcribed by the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

Stage One Analysis

Stage one analysis took place during and after the completion of all individual participant interviews. During stage one analysis, inductive analysis was utilized when coding data from first and second round individual interviews. Inductive analysis was best used when coding participant responses because the researcher listened to what participants had to say rather than attempting to force-fit the data into preexisting conceptual frameworks (Miles et al., 2020). Additionally, inductive analysis was the best fit for this research project because there was no preestablished testable hypothesis about the data (Bhattacharya, 2017).The first round of individual interviews focused on questions that allowed participants to explore ways they could redesign P-12 settings to

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ensure their comprehensive mattering. The second round of individual interviews dealt with how participants responded to partial and marginal mattering in P-12 settings.

Once each participant interview was complete, analytic memos were documented in Dedoose, a data management software, to document thinking and ask questions about participant responses and the interview process as a whole (Miles et al., 2020). Nvivo coding was utilized as the first cycle coding method. Once all interviews had been transcribed, data was chunked from participant interviews into manageable units of analysis by pulling out phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that stand out during analysis (Miles et al., 2020); Bhattacharya, 2017). Pattern coding was utilized for second cycle coding method. After the first cycle coding, the researcher then grouped codes into a smaller number of themes, categories, or concepts (Miles et al., 2020). For collective case studies, pattern coding lays the groundwork for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes and directional processes (Miles et al., 2020).

Stage Two Analysis

Once themes from stage one pattern coding were established, themes were identified that cut across cases. Benefits of cross-case analysis enhances the transferability to other contexts and deepens understanding and explanation (Miles et al., 2020). Next, a focus group with all the participants was conducted to collectively analyze the cross-case themes that surfaced during participant interviews. During the focus group, participants had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and provide additional insight based on the cross-case analysis matrix. The focus group also allowed an opportunity for participants to be member checked. The focus group was recorded using the Zoom software and fully transcribed. Nvivo and pattern coding were utilized to interpret data

from the focus group to determine if any new themes emerged from participant responses. All transcript data, Nvivo coding, pattern coding, and analytic memos from participant interviews were managed and organized in Dedoose.

Validity and Reliability

In this study, credibility was sought by using member checking. Member checking is a method in which the participants review the interpretations, findings, and conclusions to ensure reliability (Bass, 2020). Participants were able to read a draft transcription of their own interviews and the focus group interview and revise, correct, or clarify any remarks. Draft transcripts were emailed to participants' preferred email and shared with them in a Google share folder that only they could access. Given the personal relationships this researcher have with the participants and personal experience as a Black male principal, member checking reduced the potential bias that could occur from my assumptions about their experiences or language used in their responses. In addition to member checking, this researcher will keep analytic memos in Dedoose to document thinking and ask questions about participant responses and the interview process as a whole, providing continuous reflective and reflexive commentary, to help ensure dependability.

Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations employed in this research project include obtaining signed consent forms from all participants and using pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identifying information such as where participants live and work. Additionally, the laptop used to store research data was

password protected. The researcher plans to keep research data for up to five years on a password protected laptop.

Researcher's Position Statement

I am a Black male principal with over thirteen years of experience as a building principal in elementary schools across four states. I began my teaching and administrative career in the state of South Carolina. In my years of being a principal, I have faced many challenges such as dealing with overt and covert racial acts, microaggressions, and school placements based on my race. An example of when I believed my race played a factor in job placement was during a time when my family and I transitioned to the Pacific Northwest. I applied for the principal's job at the affluent, mostly White school in the district where we lived. My previous principalship was at an affluent, suburban school in the South and I had experience with this population. After the interview process, I was placed at the lowest performing school in the district with an extremely high Spanish speaking population. After learning more about the district, I learned there has never been a Black principal at the school I initially applied for, and it was an unwritten rule that only White principals were hired at this particular school. Some of these challenges have led me to question, "Do I still have a role in our current educational system?" Over the span of my administrative career, I have shared my personal experiences and challenges of being a Black male principal with the participants in this study. While research exists that speak to the many challenges Black male principals face in education, my goal with this study is to empower current and future Black principals with the platform to reimagine educational spaces that account for their fullness of interests, talents, and worth

(Carey, 2019). It is my hope that this research project will inspire hope for the next generation of Black male principals to become fully, authentically themselves in the role of principal.

In one of my undergraduate English courses, I remember reading a short story in which the black male character felt he had to whistle opera while walking the streets of New York City so he could simply fit in and not seem aggressive to the outside world. In Steele's (2010) book, *Whistling Vivaldi*, he tells the story of Brent, a Black male college student, who noticed that white couples would cross the street to avoid him. Out of nervousness, he began to whistle Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" as he walked down the street to reduce the negative stereotype of Black men being aggressive. The feeling of having to compromise one's true self in order to just survive and walk down the street describes how I've felt in my journey in the principalship. Du Bois (1903) would describe that feeling of compromise as double consciousness. Black people in America live two lives; one as an American, and one as a Black person in America. The Black person in America is in a constant tension of having to live and work in a society that was built on the enslavement and mistreatment of Black people (Du Bois,1903). It is from this place of double consciousness and having the personal struggle to find the balance of living within that duality that I position myself in this research and as a community leader.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to provide a description of the methodology and research design behind my inquiry of Black male principals and their experiences with partial, marginal, and comprehensive mattering in P-12 settings. Next, I discussed how

data in this project will be collected and analyzed. Furthermore, I described steps of how I would address ethical concerns in this study. Ultimately, this study is designed to deepen the understanding of how Black male principals respond to marginal and partial mattering in P-12 settings. Further, this study was designed to inform how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 educational spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering.

CHAPTER 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

In this study I asked the following research questions: (1) How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with marginal mattering in P-12 settings? (2) How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with partial mattering? (3) How do Black male principals reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering? To explore these questions, I asked interview and focus group questions (see Appendix B) about Black male principals' identities, actions, feelings, experiences, and analysis as they relates to participants' roles in P-12 settings. These interview questions provided insight into what I frame in this study as partial mattering, marginal mattering and comprehensive mattering (Carey, 2019). Marginal mattering is defined as the minimal recognition signaled by individuals and institutions that implies Black boys and young men are insignificant (Carey, 2019). In his work, that meant that Black boys were suspended from schools at disproportionate rates or tracked out of gifted coursework, for example. Relatedly, Carey (2019) describes partial mattering as the significance Black boys and young men infer about themselves based on how others selectively value certain talents and attributes they exemplify in ways that keep racist systems intact. This is exemplified when Black males are celebrated as star athletes or exceptional students, while simultaneously being subjected to microaggressions and hostile P-12 school environments. Lastly, Carey (2019) describes comprehensive mattering of Black boys and young men as conceiving the fullness of mattering, being valued and seen as fully

human. I apply the concepts of partial, marginal, and comprehensive mattering in the present study of Black male principals.

I have organized this chapter into four distinct sections. Section one provides a detailed profile of each participant. Section two reflects the themes that arose from participants' responses to marginal and partial experiences in P-12 settings. Section three describes the performance roles that were derived from stage two analysis of data on marginal and partial mattering. Lastly, section four reflects themes that arose from participant responses on how they would reimagine spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering.

Participant Profiles

Nazir

Nazir has been in administration for 16 years. Before going into administration, Nazir was an elementary school teacher. Nazir was raised by his mother and two brothers. Nazir described his biggest fear as disappointing his mother because he saw how much she struggled to raise him and his brothers as a single mom. He describes himself as a hands-on father and loyal son. Nazir enjoys motivating others and prides himself on being an upbeat and positive person. He likes to make sure everyone around him is having a good time.

He has experience leading schools with both majority white and racially diverse staff. Professionally, Nazir has aspirations to be at the district level. Nazir describes himself as scholarly who loves to read and learn new things. Nazir is big on respect and models those respectful expectations for his own children and staff.

Chuck

Chuck has been in administration for over 20 years. Before administration, Chuck was a middle school teacher. Chuck describes himself as a loving father who believes in providing guidance and leadership to his children. He described himself as a loving and compassionate son and loyal friend.

Chuck has led schools with majority white staff as well as schools with racially diverse staff. He describes himself as a diplomatic leader who values the opinions of others. Chuck is a big advocate of shared leadership, as he actively looks for opportunities to put his staff in leadership positions. Professionally, Chuck desires to work at the district level within the instructional realm. Chuck mentioned that he would even consider being a superintendent.

Ryan

Ryan has been a building principal for over 12 years. Before becoming an administrator, Ryan taught in various grade levels ranging from 3rd-6th grades. Ryan describes himself as a convicted person with a strong belief and faith. His desire is to be a father and husband who can connect to his family on a vulnerable level. Ryan mentioned that leadership can be lonely, so he looks at his friends as accountability partners who can build him up.

When Ryan started his principalship, his staff was majority white. Now that he's been at his school for over a decade, he has been able to recruit more staff of color in efforts to increase racial diversity within his school building. Ryan emphasizes collaboration and shared decision-making as important aspects of this leadership

approach. Ryan desires to build teacher leaders and wants his staff to see him as a
thinking partner.

Marginal and Partial Mattering

The findings in this section describe how participants responded with stress responses
when confronted with marginal and partial mattering in P-12 settings. The focus of this
line of inquiry is to better understand the ways in which Black male principals experience
their identity and role options similarly or differently to this framework. Further, this
study contributes to concepts that could be expanded beyond the context of the
principalship.

Marginal Mattering and Stress Responses

Across the participants in this study, marginal mattering was communicated
through district-level messages of distrust and demonstrations of disrespect. For example,
this was illustrated in Nazir's story about a circumstance when he effectively organized
interventions to decrease disciplinary disparity, but his efforts were met with an
accusation that he falsified data. When asked about this situation, he described feeling
insignificant and not valued. Nazir described a situation with his superintendent during
the first year of his principalship. The school had a history of high monthly discipline
rates and with the help of his counselor and assistant principal, Nazir put in intentional
behavioral interventions that resulted in a significant decrease in monthly disciplinary
rates over a year period. Behavioral interventions included a before school basketball
program that helped with school attendance violations. Nazir and his team also
established a school-wide PBIS program that promoted positive school-wide

interventions. At the end of the year, the superintendent requested to have a meeting with Nazir. Instead of being celebrated for decreasing discipline rates, his superintendent questioned his professionalism and integrity by asking if he was skewing his school's discipline data. Nazir explained:

> Everybody started to notice that the discipline rates at my school were going down. From roughly 15 to 20 suspensions to 1/2 each month and then at the end of the year compiled the district list and sent the report to all the principals, letting them know who had the most disciplinary issues and who had the least disciplinary issues. So, I put a few things in place and people started to notice discipline at my school was going down so much so that I ended up having to meet with the superintendent. I met with the superintendent and the assistant superintendent, and they asked me if I was skewing the discipline data. I said "Well could you please be more specific in regards to your definition of the phrase skewing the data?" They thought that I was not reporting or accurately recording disciplinary issues. Because again, the school had a history of having a high rate of disciplinary issues and my response was, "Well, teachers can't teach in mass chaos. Teachers can't teach. Students can't learn if there is just perpetual chaos throughout the building."

Nazir experienced feelings of confusion and frustration due to the fact that his integrity was called into question when he was modeling best practices that were proven to be effective.

Another participant, Ryan, experienced disrespect at the district level where he was commonly overlooked despite his positive professional contributions. Ryan explained,

I have the highest growing growth measures in the district at elementary schools in our district. For the last three years, sure, we still have some proficient numbers. My structures, I'm the only one who is fully staffed for the upcoming school year. The reason I'm fully staffed is because I had low turnover. The reason I have low turnover is because I have a strong culture with high morale. That being said, you would think that is touted right. You think you would hear about that. You think that you would hear that a Title I school is performing at the same level as a high achievement school, outperforming in the growth measure, but nobody knows that.

Ryan responded to this constant lack of affirmation by the district office by saying, "I think for the average Black person who looked like us, that would be defeating. It will be disheartening. But for me, I use it as fuel because I understand the construct."

Participants felt marginalized at the district level as a result of their voices being ignored and devalued. Ryan shared a story of how he felt silenced and dismissed at district meetings. He shared,

I'll give you examples, sitting at district meetings, sitting in on grade level meetings as teachers on the activity teams, etc. Whenever we're talking about things that are instructional in nature, my input is not considered. It's kind of like glossed over and it's validated with a passive response and then the meeting goes

on. So what that does to me internally and has become a part of who I am, is an unknown or recognized apathy. I'm not apathetic, but I understand that the system doesn't see me, so I am reluctant to contribute to academic type conversations or discussions. I just sit passively, and I think a lot of my colleagues who look like me would say the same thing.

Ryan's stress response to being silenced and dismissed was apathy. He further explained his feelings of apathy by saying, "We just sit and accept what occurs or what happens because our voices are not factored into the discussion. Nor do I think our data matters when it comes to celebrations."

Chuck shared an experience in which his voice was dismissed by a district director. Due to confidentiality procedures in Chuck's district, school staff were not allowed to use the name of a student with disabilities within an email to schedule a meeting. Instead, the district required that staff use a student's Powerschool (a commonly used student data management system) number to schedule a meeting. This was causing an issue in the district because some staff members could not access Powerschool which caused confusion on knowing who the meeting was about. Chuck attempted to share his school's solution to the problem of scheduling IEP meetings using a child's Powerschool number instead of their real name. When I asked him how he responded when his solution was dismissed, Chuck said,

So, then I retreated. I was quiet and I didn't say anything else because I have a system for my school. I was attempting to help resolve a problem that really

wasn't my problem. Like, my teachers have a way around it and I have a small

student body, so it's not as a big of a deal for me.

Instead of further engagement with the district administrator, Chuck decided to retreat

and withdraw from the situation. As Chuck noted in his story, he already had a system for

his school and was simply trying to share his school's solution and expertise about the

situation.

Partial Mattering and Stress Responses

Partial mattering (being celebrated for certain attributes, yet being affected by

racism) was evident in the ways participants described professional promotions that were

unavailable to them at the district level. In an interview with Chuck, he shared a story

about how the district assigned him to the dynamic task of converting an alternative

school into the district's new virtual school in only a few weeks during the pandemic.

While they celebrated his leadership and organizational skills, he was not valued enough

to be hired in district roles that required the same skills he utilized to make the transition

from the smallest school to the largest school during the pandemic. Chuck explained,

When the pandemic happened in about two weeks, I went from having a school of

60 to a school of 2,800 with limited resources and not really a direct vision

because I mean with the pandemic, everybody was trying to just operate on what

they thought was the best thing. But nobody knew exactly what was there, so I

had enough experience to undergo something that had never been done before and

become the smallest school to the largest school in a matter of weeks. But I didn't

have enough experience for the three positions that I applied for within the same

district after I've been given that experience. Like I didn't have enough experience to go into the personnel department, but I had enough experience to hire 120 teachers virtually, in a matter of two weeks, right? Or I didn't have enough experience to be a director of student services, but I have enough experience to orchestrate events with families that were you know, just disgruntled about learning. Kids weren't doing well. Like I had enough experience for all the toughest stuff that nobody else could do, but I didn't have enough experience for the things that I chose to do.

In the focus group, Chuck summed up his experience with being overlooked by his current district for positions by saying, "It's amazing how I could be unqualified for jobs that I want to apply for within our district, but was qualified without hesitation to do the job that no one else had ever done before." Essentially, Chuck experienced shock as he described how he was overlooked for district positions he feels qualified to perform. Chuck further explained how shocking these rejections are when he specifically told district leaders during the interview process for his current role that he had previous district leadership experience and had district-level aspirations. As he reflected on the experience, Chuck asserted, "So they will hire a Black person who is a yes man, but if you are a strong, independent thinker, or if there's a perception that you might not go along with status quo. . .that's where the hindrance comes in."

Nazir described a situation in which he felt he only partially mattered after being passed over for a district office position. Due to his exceptional writing and organizational skills, Nazir explained how the person who got the job over him wanted

him to perform some additional tasks that would have benefitted the person who was selected for the job for which he had applied. Nazir further explained that he experienced partially mattering in this situation because he felt the district's decision to pass him over was a direct result of not being valued as a Black male. At the same time, he was celebrated for his writing and organizational ability. He explained his outrage,

> I interviewed for a job last year at the district level. The individual that got the job said, "You know what? You ever thought about working at the district level?" I said, "I absolutely did. I interviewed for the job that you currently hold." Brief moment of silence. [She replied] "I might have a few tasks that I would like for you to perform. "I said, 'Well, I mean, if I'm going to perform tasks that you want me to perform, I should just be working in your position."

Nazir's direct response comes from his frustration and righteous indignation from knowing he has the skills and expertise to excel at the district level but is consistently denied the opportunity.

Participants experienced partial mattering when they were perceived by district office personnel to be capable of fixed roles, specifically behavior managers or logistics managers. In Ryan's teaching and administrative career, he had been celebrated for his perceived ability to connect and manage the behavior of boys, especially the behavior of Black boys. Ryan saw this perceived strength as a way for the P-12 systems to keep him pigeon-holed as a manager of behavior and logistics rather than recognized as his desired role as an instructional leader in the district. Ryan elaborated,

Well, even as an administrator, you've heard me say quite a few times that we manage behavior. So more importantly, when I taught school, I was an elementary teacher, and unfortunately, I was at an elementary school where there's not a lot of African American men. So in turn, every single year when schedules are made for students, I had an increased number of African American men or boys, and I don't think it was done for aptitude. I think it was to control behavior because many and most times those Black and brown boys who look like me had an increased level of perceived behavior, and I think they were placed in my class to control the behavior, not to ensure they were learning. So once again, I don't think I was sought after for aptitude. I was a logistics manager, right? I can go back into my early years as a teacher. I want to say about year seven or eight, I taught a single gender 3rd grade class. It was comprised for much of your research here, where it was about Black boys having a Black male teacher. Does it impact their growth? It didn't; I would say out of 180 days I might have gotten to the instruction 50 days because the behavior was atrocious. So once again, even though the theory was out there, I was managing behaviors. Why was I selected? Because I was a Black male. So once again, I wasn't sought after for aptitude or moving metrics or when it comes to increasing reading levels, comprehension, math levels. It was more about managing behavior and that class did have a high number of students who were identified as special needs in the area of behavior. So, when you factor all those type of experiences in, I think it

only substantiates that from my experience, more of my mattering was around

logistics and or behavior, not instruction or being an instructional leader.

Ryan's experience highlighted the dangers of Black male teachers and principals being

limited to managing behaviors within school systems. Based on Ryan's example, students

in his single gender classroom missed out on 130 days of quality instruction because the

school's focus was more about managing behavior instead of doing what was best for

them instructionally. Ryan further asserted, "Once again, we're seen as logistics,

managing behavior, transactional and as a result of that, many times when we're talking

about anything dealing with curriculum, aptitude, moving metrics, that's not entangled in

behavior….we're very much not considered."

Ryan discussed further how his district perpetuates his fixed role as behavior

manage when he described what his district decides to celebrate about his school. He

explained,

> We were moving metrics all over the place. As for my culture, I have the lowest
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> teacher turnover rate in the district of all schools. I'm fully staffed for next year. I
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> have the highest morale scores of any school. As for my academics, we've tripled
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> our Gifted and Talented numbers, and we have less Tier 2 numbers. Our Special
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> Ed numbers are reduced to the point where they move programs from our school
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> because we didn't have a subgroup and our behavior is unheard of. We just don't
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> have any. But there's never any accolades for it. However, if I have a student who
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> is now in middle school and they're performing, you know, as far as track,
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> football, and basketball, those things are celebrated.

Ryan described the feeling of being "baffled" by the fact that he and other Black administrators in his district are limited to behavior and logistics roles within the principalship. He further explained,

> I don't think we are perceived as instructional leaders. We're logistics managers. We're put into places to put things in line, but when it comes to creation developing, we're not sought after…we can go to a leadership meeting and the people with the least qualifications, the least diverse experiences have the most to say, and they get the most implementation, and it just baffles me.

Chuck described how his district reinforced his fixed role as a behavior manager, "I'm celebrated as the principal of the alternative school when I'm working with what is the perception of the worst? Your drug dealers, your chronically truant students, like I'm celebrated with them because there are no issues coming from my school." Chuck further explained that when he has attempted to share data on lowering the suspension rate and academic achievements from his alternative school with the school board, those attempts were met with the response, "That's not quite the kind of celebration that we want to go to the board." When I asked Chuck how he responded when the district disregards those celebrations that are important to him, he simply replied, "I go to whatever recognition they have, set up and smile and you know, do whatever I need to do, but I don't give any energy to it."

Chuck shared another story that exemplified his role as being fixed as a behavior manager. He explained,

I interviewed to be an elementary principal. By several members of the

committee, I know that I was the candidate over the person that was selected. But

the person that was selected was offered the job I currently have. They did not

want that job so that person was given the elementary principal job. And now I've

been a principal at that point and a district level administrator and so to lose out a

position at an elementary school to an inexperienced principal, at that point, I was

like, well, that's different. But then I was offered the job at the alternative school.

Chuck responded to this situation by saying,

Honestly, I was shocked. Not that I think I'm that great that I'm beneath not

getting a job or above it not getting a job, but to not get a job to an inexperienced

assistant principal, I was kind of shocked.

Nazir also experienced being placed in the fixed role as a behavior manager when

he said, "It seems from time to time that we tend to be marginalized as African American

male leaders because, you know, they expect us to do certain things that are non-

instructional related."

Performance Roles and Leadership Dispositions

After second round individual interviews that focused on marginal and partial

mattering were complete, I conducted a cross-case analysis to determine the similarities

and differences of how participants responded emotionally and behaviorally to situations

in which they experienced microaggression or racist acts. While analyzing the data, I

looked to see if there were consistent patterns of how participants responded to marginal

and partial mattering. Additionally, I analyzed how participants described themselves in relation to their personalities and leadership styles.

At the conclusion of my cross-case analysis, I recognized that each participant demonstrated a dominant "performance role" in their emotional and behavioral responses to marginal and partial mattering. Based on interviews with the Black male principals in this study, I identified "performance roles" that signify a combination of participants' personalities, communication styles, and leadership dispositions they used to deal with the negative impact of institutional racism and microaggressions. The impact of partial and marginal mattering ultimately leads them to "perform" a role rather than operate in their true identities in the P-12 environment. I grouped my analysis of the data from participants into three typologies that describe the performance roles of these P-12 Black male principals. Those were (a) Nazir as "The Director", (b) Chuck as "The Strategic Statesman", and (c) Ryan as the "The Purposeful Passivist."

During the focus group, the description of all three performance roles were presented to all three participants. After discussing how they responded in their individual interviews, participants agreed that their assigned performance role described them. After further discussion, the consensus among participants was that they saw themselves in all three roles. For example, Chuck, who was identified as the "Strategic Statesman" related to being a "Purposeful Passivist" when he was not hired as an elementary principal, but instead offered the job at the alternative school. Ryan, who was identified as the "Purposeful Passivist" identified with all three performance roles when he described the performance roles as seasons. He explained, "I just hope that people who

look like us do not live in the "Purposeful Passivist" category because we have so much more to offer. I understand that those seasons will come for each and every one of us. I'm sure we've all had one of those seasons."

The Director

"The Director" was Nazir's dominant performance role in response to marginal and partial mattering. The Director directly confronted situations with professional, direct, and tactful communication due to his self-confidence and core values. Due to his high level of confidence, underlying frustration and confusion occurred when he had to deal with experiences of distrust and rejection. For example, Nazir's role as "The Director" was demonstrated when he described his interaction with his superintendent after he questioned his integrity about his school's improved discipline rates. Nazir explained,

> It was very awkward, but from my end, it was my first year there, so I felt like I had to essentially prove myself to this gentleman so I didn't allow his response is to dictate mine. I didn't allow his commentary to dictate my responses.

In this situation, Nazir's direct response to this superintendent was rooted in his core belief that order and structure are essential to creating a purposeful learning community. Nazir explained, "Well, teachers can't teach in mass chaos. Teachers can't teach. Students can't learn if there is just perpetual chaos throughout the building." Additionally, Nazir was able to use a direct approach in this situation because he was confident that his school's PBIS structures and before school basketball program were producing positive results for both students and staff.

Another example of Nazir's directive style was demonstrated during the interaction between him and the district office staff member who got a district position over him. His response to the district office staff member when she invited him to do extra tasks for her office was, "Well, I mean, if I'm going to perform tasks that you want me to perform, I should just be working in your position." His frustration about being passed over for jobs he was qualified to perform was summed up when he reflected on the situation by saying, "Why am I going to go above and beyond what I currently do to assist you for the job that you hold that I interviewed for?" Nazir's direct responses, caused by confusion and frustration, were utilized in this situation to combat the district's limiting beliefs around his skill set and qualifications.

The Strategic Statesman

"The Strategic Statesman" was Chuck's dominant performance role in response to marginal and partial mattering. During Chuck's first round interview, he self-described saying, "I'm very diplomatic." Chuck further explained his diplomatic leadership style, "The opinions of others are valued and included. I believe in providing opportunities for individuals to lead while making sure I respect their leadership style." His core belief in diplomacy was evident in how he responded to being silenced at the district level. Chuck explained, "I typically don't, because I'm very diplomatic. What I do at that point in time, I find the plan for my school that is going to work." Chuck emphasized how he keeps the focus on being strategic and solutions-oriented at the school level by explaining,

So, if the end result is we need X, then I'm going to find a way within my school to do it the way that it needs to be done, but also give them X. Which should satisfy them because what they're concerned about is having X. They're not concerned about the process that you use to get to X. So if their process that they demonstrate is more tedious than what I think should be employed, then I typically create a much simpler process, but still give them the end result of what they want.

Embedded with "The Strategic Stateman" role is a self-silencing and withdrawal in order to simply maintain diplomatic relationship at the district level.

The Purposeful Passivist

Ryan's dominant performance role was "The Purposeful Passivist."[1] Due to apathy and the feeling that the system is not built for his success, Ryan described that he purposefully utilizes passive communication by limiting contributions/voice at the district level. Importantly, the passivist uses disrespect directed at him at the district level as fuel for innovation and instructional leadership at the school level.

During Ryan's second individual interview, he shared how apathy develops as a result of not being heard at the district level. Ryan described how Black principals are treated at district meetings by saying,

So, it goes back to what I was saying in our last meeting where representation matters. So, we can have a conversation where our voices are considered and factored. Now that doesn't mean that I necessarily can offer suggestions, and

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[1] The term passivist I use for the performance type should not be confused with the term pacifist which means peaceful. Rather passivist signifies self-silencing as will be discussed later.

those suggestions have to be implemented, but when you have 45 years of

experiences where you offer suggestions and they're not even factored in, you do

develop a level of apathy.

Ryan further explained how he passively responds to being silenced at the district,

So, what that does to me internally and has become a part of who I am, is an

unknown or recognized apathy. I'm not apathetic, but I understand that the system

doesn't see me, so I am reluctant to contribute to academic type conversations or

discussions. I just sit passively, and I think a lot of my colleagues who look like

me would say the same thing.

Ryan's passive responses were directed at the district level. Ryan used the lack of

affirmation and silencing at the district level as a catalyst to ensure he is operating

optimally at the school level. Ryan asserted, "But for me, I use it as fuel because I

understand the construct." Ryan highlighted his success at the school level by saying,

We were moving metrics all over the place. As for my culture, I have the lowest

teacher turnover rate in the district of all schools. I'm fully staffed for next year. I

have the highest morale scores of any school. As for my academics, we've tripled

our Gifted and Talented numbers, and we have less Tier 2 numbers. Our Special

Ed numbers are reduced to the point where they move programs from our school

because we didn't have a subgroup and our behavior is unheard of.

In sum, "The Director," "The Strategic Statesman," and "The Purposeful

Passivist" performance roles were developed from Du Bois's notion of double

consciousness which will be discussed at length in the following chapter. I found that

there was a distinct duality within each performance role (e.g., professional confusion at the district level juxtaposed with clear decision-making in school-level decisions). While each one of these performance roles limited Black male principals' potential, they found ways to make positive impacts at the school level as a result of their instructional knowledge, operating in their core values, and having confidence in their leadership ability.

Comprehensive Mattering

Findings in this section describe how participants conceptualized comprehensive mattering in P-12 settings. Carey (2019) defines comprehensive mattering as conceiving the fullness of mattering, being seen as fully human and valued for their mere existence. Carey believes comprehensive mattering will emerge from reimagined social structures that encourage liberating instead of confining structures (Carey, 2019). Based on my analysis of data from interviews, a focus group, and my analytic memos three themes emerged relative to how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that would account for their comprehensive mattering. Those were: desire to be recognized as instructional leaders, demonstration of deep care for students, and a rejection of standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning. In this section, I define each theme separately and offer excerpts from interviews and focus groups to demonstrate themes. Each theme supports the overall conceptualization of comprehensive mattering in this study.

Finding 1: Instructional Leadership

School leaders who practice pedagogical leadership seek to create schools where teaching and learning are valued through creating spaces that center collaboration and professional growth. An overall consensus by all participants was that each had the teaching skills and instructional knowledge to operate as an effective instructional leader in a P-12 setting. In this section, I will outline the three subthemes in instructional leadership that each participant acknowledged that would account for their comprehensive mattering in a reimagined P-12 space.

Subtheme 1: Self-Perception as Instructional Leader. All three participants perceived themselves as competent instructional leaders. In reimagined spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering, schools would allow them to operate in those roles that they both value and have training to effectively execute. For example, Ryan explained, "So that's what makes us (Black male principals) effective, is our aptitude to change the trajectory of students and the learning environments." Ryan further explained, "So my desire is to be an example, a catalyst, but more important for me is to be seen as an effective instructional leader." Ryan continued with his beliefs about Black male principals' unique abilities as instructional leaders,

> To your point, I think we are often limited in our aptitude or our ability to lead
> instructionally. Many times we aren't given the freedoms to choose a career path
> or an instructional path. We're kind of giving those things that if we step outside
> of what's given to us, it's a judgment or criticism that can hinder career path, your

employment, matter of fact. So, I think a lot of times we're reluctant to do. But if we were given the freedom to show our ability, I think they would be shocked.

Nazir emphasized that his strong instructional knowledge and skills are often under-utilized because he is relegated to discipline spaces. He explained,

I would say at the elementary level, I've got a strong knowledge of the intermediate grades, you know 3rd, 4th, and 5th. But oftentimes I was never given the opportunity to do anything from the instructional standpoint because I was tasked with doing the rudimentary things such as discipline, you know, things of that nature that didn't allow me to truly show my instructional side.

Similar to Nazir's explanation of being under-utilized as an instructional leader, Chuck explained, "So I'll say for me, I have a strong instructional background, unfortunately, the current positions that I'm in don't really allow that to come through." Chuck emphasized his identity as an instructional leader when he reflected on his career goals. Chuck expounded, "So I really would like to enter into the instructional realm within education providing strategies for principals and school leaders, possibly even becoming a superintendent." In sum, all participants emphasized that they held strong instructional knowledge that would improve school metrics relative to student achievement and growth.

Subtheme 2: Highly Effective Teaching. All participants held a strong belief that having highly effective teachers would be essential in reimagined spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering. During Chuck's first individual interview, he discussed

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the need for a non-traditional evaluation process and effective hiring practices that would ensure students are getting the best teachers in the classroom. Chuck pointed out,

>Because it definitely cannot be a traditional system for like evaluative purposes, where you, you know, you get basically at least in our state, you get three years to be horrible before anything is really done to you….and how many lives have been destroyed in that time frame of you getting yourself together as the adult?

In other words, Chuck was emphasizing that in a reimagined space, he would have the autonomy to implement teacher evaluation practices that ensured each classroom would have a highly effective teacher. Chuck added,

>But you gotta have the best. You know, I think that when you're dealing with students and there cannot be compromise in any area. If you're talking about complete comprehensive mattering, you can't compromise on the type of student that is in the school, and you can't compromise on the type of educator that you allow to be there as well.

>In a different way, Ryan utilized an example from his current school that demonstrated what effective teaching would look like in a reimagined space. He talked about a recent walkthrough he conducted with district office personnel,

>They had stations going to centers where students were working on personal pathways while they were remediating or enriching. So, it has to be tailored to individual or groups of subsets based on data. But it also has to be engaging our 4th grade. Students, we're learning about waves. And our innovation coach and our team got together and they made what's called a breakout box series. So, they had

a bunch of vocabularies, standardized test questions, personal challenges to learn about ways, and the teachers just sat back and supported or they served as facilitators. Well, they had all these codes that they had to figure out to get in the box to get the next challenge. They didn't even realize they were learning. But the engagement was so high which reduced behavior. They were learning actively, and I think they learned a lot. So, you have to be vulnerable enough to consider an alternative, and you don't have to be the giver of information. We have a wealth of knowledge in this building.

Ryan's story highlights his emphasis on differentiation and teacher as facilitator instead of teacher as giver of knowledge. In a reimagined space for Ryan, highly effective teachers would place student interest and implementing effective engagement strategies as the most important aspects of lesson planning and implementation.

Nazir described how high teacher engagement would be important in a space where he comprehensively mattered. Nazir elaborated, "Teachers would be mobile. They would be up, out and about immersing themselves in the classroom among the children. The children would be actively doing something that's going to maintain their attention." Nazir described a learning environment based on a "learning by doing" approach, where both teachers and students are actively engaged and immersed in the learning environment.

Subtheme 3: Mentorship With an Instructional Focus. During the focus group, we held a discussion about what optimal mentorship would consist of in a reimagined space that accounted for their comprehensive mattering. The mentorship we specifically

discussed was in the context of the mentor being in a district supervisory role. Ryan challenged the traditional notion of mentoring by saying,

So, I think mentorship is a buzzword, right? Let's kind of unravel this. We're all adults and we are in transactional relationship. There's a day, every month or every two weeks that you are mentored. It's called your check. So, let's make no mistakes about it, we're not motivated by words of affirmation. Yes, that might be your love language, but we're all here for a purpose. We're all here to give our best output for compensation and continued compensation moving forward when it comes to a person who looks like me.

In the focus group Nazir posed the question, "What can we do to be more transformational than transactional? Ryan answered, "We have to be willing to go to a place of vulnerability, to pull back the layers of prejudice, bias and perception and have uncomfortable, but open dialogue for improvement. And I think it has to be give-and-take on all sides." Chuck added the importance of utilizing norms in transformational communication by saying, "Most people don't think norms are necessary until you need them."

One of the topics we explored was if mentorship for Black male principals required a mentor that had to be a Black male or someone of the same racial identity. As a consensus, the participants agreed that optimal mentorship was less about having someone that looked like them, but rather more about forming a relationship with a mentor built on trust, grace, and effective communication. Nazir elaborated by saying, "I worked under a Black male superintendent and candidly speaking, but respectfully

speaking, he wasn't a mentor." Nazir then went on to describe optimal mentorship, "Somebody that actually takes the concerted effort to understand where you're coming from, take into account your social, emotional, and mental health." Ryan summed up the group's description of optimal mentorship, "I think it is giving people a relational environment where you can relate to, talk through or circumvent pitfalls, but it also gives them grace to be progressive, to try things, to be innovative without consequence." In other words, all three participants agreed that the most important aspect of mentorship is a relationship in which the mentor believed in and fostered the instructional skills of the mentee.

Finding 2: Deep Demonstration of Care for Students

Nazir demonstrated his deep care for students in how he recently interpreted the hoodie policy at his school after teachers started to complain about two students wearing a hoodie. Instead of simply reinforcing the policy, Nazir took the time to find out why each student wore the hoodie and took action to ensure each child was viewed as fully human in that moment. Nazir explained:

> Also, with the little girl, she was dealing with something that happened the night before at home, and so again physical appearance was an issue that they have themselves. And then secondly, based on the situation that happened at home, she wanted to cloak herself to make herself invisible. She didn't want anybody to see her. She didn't want anybody to see how she was feeling because something happened the night before. So, with that, having said that, I had to remind the teachers, ok, maybe these babies are wearing these hoods because of their

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physical appearance. They're not satisfied with their physical appearance. And then #2, they are cloaking themselves, making themselves invisible based on the circumstance and situation that happened at home that we can't control.

In dealing with a recent behavior issue at this school, Ryan discussed his approach to discipline in a way that emphasized "caring for" instead of "caring about" (Noddings, 1984). The student in Ryan's example was a "frequent flyer" in the office for demonstrating disruptive behaviors in class. Instead of just administering consequences, Ryan took a caring approach by bringing in both parents and having the child advocate for herself in a way that put her needs at the forefront. Ryan explained,

I put the child at the head of the table. I told her, "But you're gonna have to articulate to mom and dad why?" And I said, "This is habit #8, you're going to find your voice." She would not part her ways. I asked mom and dad, "Give me a few minutes." I turn her chair around to the wall, I said, "Zay, you're gonna do this?" And I said, "I'm gonna sit here and support you." I said "I'm gonna start you with a stem, and I want you to finish it. Mom and Dad, I feel." This is a second grader, she said, "I feel like you guys don't understand." And I said, "This is what I want you to tell daddy, I need." She said, " Daddy, I need you to be in my life. Mom interjected and said, "But he is in your life," I said, "Hush mom". I said, "This is her time. This is her floor." I said, "And you don't have to agree with it, but this is her experience." The student said, "I get sick of being at mom's house. I want to spend time with you, dad". I gave her the courage to speak her truth. She said, "I don't like just going to daddy's house on Friday, Saturday and

Sunday. I want him to be able to bring me to school and come eat lunch with me."

And look, I'm getting teary eyed now because those are the struggles of kids, right. And we are always thinking we're doing what's best. They know themselves the best. Our job is to govern their life in a path where, at minimum, we don't do them any harm. And I know life happens and we're doing life, but we just gotta take a moment to see them.

Chuck emphasized care for students as he explained one of his critical roles as a leader is for students to understand their identity and value systems. Essentially, it was important to Chuck for students to know who they really are so they can get the full benefit of their educational experience. Chuck explained,

I think that there needs to be a pretty extensive focus on self-inventory. You know, individuals need to have opportunities to learn who they are, how they operate. The types of things that are part of their value systems and those things that may not be. And I think from there, that would help build the trust and confidence that is needed for individuals to be open. Because if not, you can find yourself checking the box because it's school and this is the way that I've been taught that I should behave in school, and these are the things that I should say, but it is almost becoming a rote behavior as opposed to something that is life changing and meaningful.

Chuck further explained how he uses a child's identity when dealing with discipline issues at his school by saying,

I think it's an understanding of what the student and we talk about it. It's like, hey, I understand you think you're right now and I talk about the brain and the brain activities, the production of hormones and those types of things and how they make you want to do things that you may or may not understand fully what you're doing, but as a result, you get in trouble for it. So, when you get a teacher who says, you know, I had a 7th grader who talked back to me. Yeah, I can fully get that because that is that stage or an age where they tend to want to do that a little bit more, but it's through the conversation and through modeling the appropriate behaviors are the reasons I think we don't see as much of it in our school.

Chuck believes education can be life changing for students. Chuck's care for students is demonstrated through his belief that a student's self-discovery eventually leads to greater student outcomes in the P-12 setting.

Participants demonstrated a strong ethic of care for all students under their leadership. For example, Ryan explained,

I would say many times we are placed in position to perceivably care more about Black kids and I think we have a responsibility, and I would even say we are sensitive or have developed an awareness around that. So we make sure that we're equitable in our responses and interaction...I am the leader for all kids and no disrespect to anybody, but I can lead a little white girl's instructional trajectory as well as a young African American male. So that being said, I am intentional about that and I'm very sensitive and aware at all moments in every interaction that I am not pigeonholed or marginalized to being the Black principal for Black kids.

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Ryan's story demonstrates his belief that Black principals should care about all students, not just those who have the same cultural background.

Finding 3: Rejection of Standardization as an Approach to Teaching and Learning

All three participants discussed the need for autonomy and flexibility when it came to creating P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering. This rejection of standardization that currently exists in P-12 public schools took many forms as participants described reimagined physical spaces, student engagement strategies, and opportunities for student growth and reflection. Ryan specifically described how high schools could be reimagined to teach students real world skills that will prepare them for adulthood. Ryan believes education is more than just preparing students to attend college. Ryan explained,

I think our biggest opportunity is to reimagine the high school. Better, we need to debunk the myth that every kid is going to school. We need to teach financial literacy. We need to teach life skills. We need to teach boys how to sew, how to cook. We need to teach them brick masonry, auto mechanics. We need to teach them electricity. We need to teach them AI computer technology.

Additionally, Ryan conceptualized a reimagined educational space for lower socioeconomic students who lack parental support. This space would mirror how current private boarding schools operate. Ryan believes if we put students in a more college-like atmosphere, it will lead them to become more responsible and prepared for adulthood. Ryan elaborated,

So, to reimagine education, I would like to see where when you think about lower

socioeconomic status, those parents who are not involved, let's just say you don't

get policy, you take the subsidies that parents are forwarded, and you build

dormitories. Through those dormitories, you use people who are vested like your

teachers who chose to volunteer to live in the dormitories to provide extra

experiences like cultural arts. Teach them those trades that I was mentioning, but

you give them a nurturing environment, home cooked meals. You teach them how

to make a bed because we're not raising kids, we're raising adults and we have to

give them those skill sets, so you kind of treat it like college. And then on those

holidays where they can go home for two weeks, you can do like a foreign

exchange field trip, or you can go home to your family. I think that's how we

reimagine it. I think it needs to look more like a college environment, but in local

communities, big parks and community centers. Teach our kids to play chess,

that's analytical. Teach them how to knit. That teaches them patience, and those

are the things that are going to help cultivate adulthood in the next generation.

Because without it, we come into a gotta have it now, instantaneous gratification

type environment. So, it's a lot we can do, but it disrupts the dollar for those in

power.

Ryan believed that in our current standardized model, we are limiting their potential to be

analytical thinkers who know the necessary life skills to be productive citizens.

Nazir's approach to rejecting standardization focused on how teachers could create classroom environments based on movement and teaching strategies that promote authentic engagement. Nazir explained,

As I said before, we're still doing things from an industrialized standpoint. You know, is the child really understanding what you're talking about? Does that child love coming into your class? Do something that's going to cause children to love coming to your class. Do something that's going to cause children to hate missing school. Do something that's going to cause children to cry if they have to leave early. So, you got to do some things from a practical standpoint, you got to be physically mobile. You got to allow the children to have opportunities to have discussions, opportunities to be immersed in the lesson. Doing something that's hands-on, letting the children move. Everybody's up. Everybody's moving. It could be loud. It could be controlled chaos. But the children have to have a sustained level of learning based on whatever you're teaching.

Chuck's rejection of standardization was demonstrated by his idea of reimagining curriculum that meets the needs of students. He specifically wanted to reimagine curriculum that promotes growth and reflection. Chuck explained,

And so, I think that the curriculum should be comprehensive. It should provide opportunities for reflection and for growth, and to learn more about both the content as well as the individuals. But it takes a certain type of student to know how to do that and takes a certain type of leader and teacher to be able to properly implement that.

Summary

Chapter 4 offered the study's findings on how Black male principals respond to marginal and partial mattering in the P-12 setting. Additionally, findings on how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering were included in Chapter 4. Two key findings on how P-12 Black male principals responded to marginal and partial mattering were represented by the three performance types of (a) "The Director", (b) "The Strategic Statesman", and (c) "The Purposeful Passivist". Within each performance role, two themes emerged: (a) stress responses (e.g., confusion, apathy) at district levels in response to racism and (b) leadership dispositions (e.g., being solutions based, confident demeanor) used as coping strategies in response to oppression and racism.

Three key findings emerged relative to how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that would account for their comprehensive mattering. Those were:

(a) Instructional leadership

- Self-perception as instructional leaders

- Highly effective teaching

- Mentorship with an instructional focus

(b) Deep demonstration of care for students

(c) A rejection of standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning.

In Chapter 5, there is further discussion of findings as they apply to scholarly literature related to Black male principals.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter is organized into three sections. In the first section, I interpret the findings of how Black male principals responded to the three research questions in my study. In the second section I discuss my results in relation to scholarly literature and Carey's mattering framework. Lastly, I discuss the contributions that this study makes to the field and offer recommendations for future research and current practice.

Discussion of the Results

The voices of Black male principals in American P-12 settings have been silenced due to systematic racism. Systematic racism has been manifested through a deficit framing that has informed hiring and retention practices (Bailes & Guthery, 2020), promotion (Berry & Reardon, 2022), job roles (Brown, 2012), and job-related stress (Alexander al et., 2018; Brown, 2012; DuBois, 1903) unique to Black male principals. Working conditions caused by underfunding and a lack of resources in P-12 systems create environments where Black male principals too often marginally matter or partially matter at best.

The first question in this research study was "How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with marginal mattering in P-12 settings?" Participants described marginal mattering of Black male principals as communicated through district level messages of silencing, lack of affirmation, distrust, and disrespect. As described in Chapter 4, three performance roles were identified, (a)"The Director," (b) "Strategic Stateman," and (c) "Purposeful Passivist" to describe Black male principal responses to

racism in forms of coping mechanisms and leadership dispositions. I argue that these performance roles are rooted in Dubois's (1903) notion of double consciousness, that is—the duality of being Black in a White world.

Table 1.2

Performance Roles in Response to Marginal Mattering

Performance Role	Stress Response	Communication Style	Leadership Disposition
Strategic Statesman	Withdrawal	Diplomatic	Focus on being solutions-oriented at school level
The Director	Frustration Confusion	Directive	Maintain core values and self-confidence
Purposeful Passivist	Apathy Withdrawal Self-silencing	Passivity; intentional withholding voice at district	Emphasizing instructional leadership at school level

As noted in Chapter 4, Nazir's dominant performance was "The Director," Chuck was primarily "The Strategic Statesman," and Ryan was "The Purposeful Passivist." It is important to note that participants felt they utilized each one of these performance roles throughout their time in school leadership. Two key findings emerged as a result of the performance roles utilized by participants. Those two themes were (a) stress responses (e.g., confusion, apathy) at district levels in response to racism and (b) leadership dispositions (e.g., being solutions based, confident demeanor) used as coping strategies in response to oppression and racism.

As outlined in Chapter 2, Black males experience stress when dealing with racism in historically White institutions (Smith, 2004). Specifically, Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is the emotional, physiological, and psychological toll of confronting racism on Black men. RBF was embedded in the participants' thoughts and responses to marginal mattering. Participants reacted to marginal mattering that caused different manifestations of psychological and behavioral stress responses. In Table 1.2, I offer a table that describes how each performance role was taken up in responses to experiences with marginal mattering at the district level. The table connects participants' experiences with stress responses, communication styles, and leadership dispositions taken up in response to marginal mattering. To be clear, performance roles are not aspirational, meaning they have been adapted by Black male principals in response to professional contexts that are not ideal. However, describing these performance roles is a way to name and explain the leadership coping mechanisms that Black male participants created to face and survive oppression.

Black male principals in this study described their responses to marginal mattering in a variety of ways. In Table 1.2, I describe each performance role that has a common communication style associated with it (e.g., Strategic Stateman most commonly uses a diplomatic style of discourse). Each performance role is most commonly in response to (inter)actions that create particular stress responses that participants named as apathy, frustration, confusion, self-silencing and withdrawal. However, it is important to note that this list is not comprehensive, and the performance roles were sometimes used interchangeably by different participants. Leadership dispositions in response to marginal

mattering included being solutions-oriented at the school level, maintaining core values, displaying confidence, and emphasizing instructional leadership at the school level.

The second research question was "How do Black male principals respond to their experiences with partial mattering in P-12 settings?" Participants experienced partial mattering at the district level through a lack of opportunities for promotion and being viewed in fixed role as a behavior and/or logistics manager. Partial mattering yielded the same communication style preferences and leadership dispositions as marginal mattering as is indicated in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Performance Roles in Response to Partial Mattering

Performance Role	Stress Response	Communication Style	Leadership Disposition
Strategic Statesman	Shock Disappointment Apathy Isolation	Diplomatic	Focus on being solutions-oriented at school level
Director	Frustration Righteous-Indignation	Directive	Maintain core values and self-confidence
Purposeful Passivist	Baffled Apathy Isolation Self-silencing	Passivity; intentional withholding voice at district level	Emphasizing instructional leadership at school level

The primary difference between their experiences with marginal and partial mattering was diversity within their psychological stress responses where they described feelings of shock, being baffled (confusion), disappointment, isolation, and righteous-indignation. This difference is notable because it demonstrates the nuanced uniqueness of marginal versus partial mattering experiences. In other words, in the context of marginal mattering, it is clear to the participant that they are being sent the message that they are devalued and barely permitted into their positions as principals. Conversely, in the context of partial mattering, they are celebrated for particular, timely, or specialized skills and abilities that serve the institution. For this reason, these leaders experience moments of mattering and there are windows of hope that they could possibly be valued by the institution. Thus, while they may have the same stress responses in reaction to partial mattering (e.g., apathy, frustration), additional reactions such as shock, disappointment, and righteous-indignation point to an aspiration for mattering that is shattered when they are relegated back into spaces where they are dismissed and devalued by district decision-makers.

The third question in this study was, "How do Black male principals reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering?" Based on my analysis of data from interviews, a focus group, and my analytic memos, three themes emerged relative to how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that would account for their comprehensive mattering. Those themes were:

(a) Instructional leadership

- Self-perception as an instructional leader

- Highly effective teaching,

- Mentorship with an instructional focus

(b) Deep demonstration of care for students

(c) Rejection of standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning.

These themes represent how Black male principals described their comprehensive mattering in reimagined P-12 spaces. These themes are discussed more in-depth in the next section.

In summary, Black male principals reimagined P-12 spaces that would emphasize their skills as instructional leaders. These reimagined spaces would be characterized by a deep demonstration of "caring" for the students they serve. Lastly, Black male principals rejected standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning in reimagined spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering.

**Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature and Theoretical Framework**

Mattering

Carey's (2019) conceptualization of the mattering of Black boys and young men is based on five main tenants. Those tenants were:

(a) value and significance

(b) regard with which they are held

(c) how they are treated

(d) relational interest taken in them by individuals in society

(e) messages they receive in school.

In the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1), I take up Carey's tenets of mattering to structure my results into a mattering matrix. The matrix provides an overview of how participants actualized marginal, partial, and comprehensive mattering in their lived experiences as Black male principals. In the matrix, I connect the five tenants of mattering to the material and discursive ways that Black male principals responded to interpersonal, institutional and systemic interactions at the school and district levels as well as their vision for an imagined space where comprehensive mattering was possible.

Figure 1.

Mattering Matrix
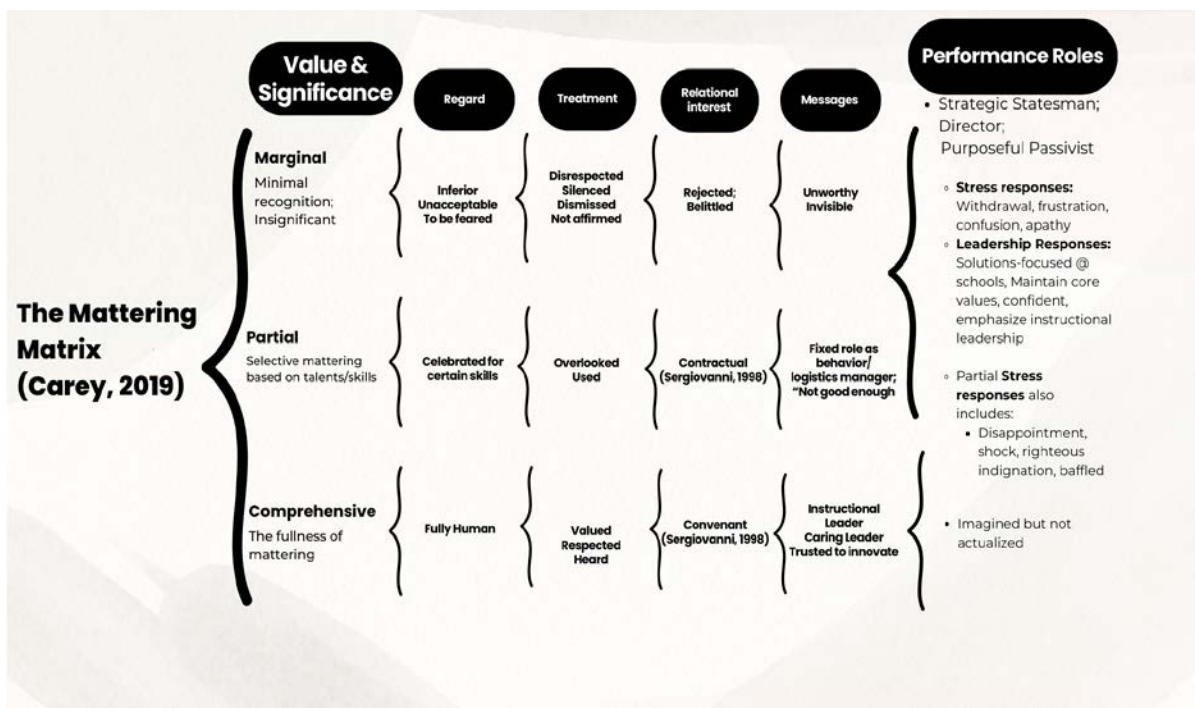
In next the section, I discuss my findings and connect them to scholarly literature. I will also refer back to the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1) as a way to ground my discussion within Carey's (2019) mattering framework.

Performance Roles as Responses to Marginal and Partial Mattering

The performance roles of "The Director", "The Strategic Statesman", and "The Purposeful Passivist" were identified as coping mechanisms that participants utilized in response to marginal and partial mattering. As noted in Chapter 4, while each participant had a dominant performance role, all participants agreed they have utilized each performance role in their leadership journey. In alignment with Du Bois' (1903) double consciousness, all three roles exemplified a duality with how they responded to racism and microaggressions in P-12 settings. The struggle that Black Americans experience as they reconcile their identities as an American and Negro who is oppressed because of their blackness (Du Bois, 1903) is the same struggle participants in this study experience as a Black leader working in a White system where they experience oppression. As reflected in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1.4), P-12 environments held participants in low regard, seeing them as inferior, unacceptable, to be feared and only celebrated for certain skill sets or talents. This duality within performance roles emerged through two themes: (1) Psychological and behavioral stress factors associated with Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) were evident in responses to partial and mattering, and (2) Black male principals, in the face of oppression, demonstrated leadership dispositions such as being solutions-oriented at the school level, maintaining core values, displaying confidence, and emphasizing instructional leadership at the school level as coping mechanisms in response to partial and marginal mattering.

Finding 1: Stress factors: Psychological and Behavioral Stress Responses Associated
with Racial Battle Fatigue

As noted in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1), participants in this study experienced partial and marginal mattering through being disrespected, silenced, dismissed, rejected, and overlooked primarily at the district level. As a result of these microaggressions and racist acts, psychological and behavioral stress responses such as frustration, apathy, withdrawal, confusion, shock, disappointment, isolation, and self-silencing were filtered into working theories about their status in the district and schools which ultimately informed participants' ongoing performance roles. Findings of my study align with a previous qualitative study of 39 Black male principals who experienced RBF as a result of microinsults and microinvalidations (Krull & Robicheau, 2022). Participants in that study experienced significant psychological stress responses resulting in sleeplessness, fatigue, and isolation. One notable difference in my findings as compared to Krull and Robicheau's (2022) study was that my participants did not mention any physiological stress responses such as fatigue, headaches, and exhaustion (Smith 2011). Participants exhibited behavioral stress responses such as self-silencing and isolation from district office staff in response to partial and marginal mattering, but discussions on how these stress responses impacted them physiologically did not show up in the data.

Despite participants' silence about the physiological effects of RBF, from my own experiences, I know that eventually psychological and behavior stressors lead to physiological stress responses. As a result, it is likely that physiological stress responses were experienced by participants. Additionally, as I reflect on my research questions,

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they were structured more to capture how participants emotionally or behaviorally responded to experiences, which is another reason why physiological stressors may have been deemphasized by participants.

Finding 2: Learned Leadership Dispositions as Coping Mechanisms

Leadership attributes such as being solutions-focused, maintaining core values, displaying confidence, and emphasizing instructional leadership at the school level were utilized as coping mechanisms in response to marginal and partial mattering. This research supported other research that demonstrated how Black male principals are empowered instructional leaders who are committed to student success (Adkins-Sharif, 2020, Black 2012; Jackson, 2018; Lomotey, 1993). More specifically, the leadership attributes highlighted in Lomotey's (1993) "ethno-humanist" and "bureaucrat/administrator" roles have strong alignment with findings in my study. Similar to the "bureaucrat/administrator" role, "The Strategic Statesman" and "The Purposeful Passivist" roles in my study emphasized instructional management and goal development through being solutions-focused. Additionally, the confidence and commitment to core values "The Director" displayed aligned with characteristics of Lomotey's (1993) "ethno-humanist role" for Black principals.

The duality of performance roles was exemplified by how Black male principals were able to effectively lead their schools through emphasizing instructional leadership, being confident, and maintaining core values while yet enduring P-12 environments that caused them significant psychological and behavioral stressors. Ryan's reflection as the Purposeful Passivist on experiencing marginal mattering at the district level captures the

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duality of performance roles when he explained how he uses rejection and disrespect at the district level as fuel to spur his leadership dispositions and academic successes at the school level. The presence of leadership dispositions within performance role solidifies that participants in this study have a strong belief in their own comprehensive mattering. Participants see themselves as valuable, highly intelligent instructional leaders despite routinely being sent messages from P-12 settings that they are invisible, unworthy, and fixed in roles as behavior managers. These performance roles represent the tension that exists for Black male principals who believe they comprehensively matter but are constantly told otherwise within P-12 systems and society at-large.

Comprehensive Mattering and Reimagined P-12 Spaces

In my study, I have come to a definition of comprehensive mattering of Black male principals based on relevant literature (Carey, 2019; Lomotey, 2022; Walker, 2000), my own lived experience as a Black male principal, and data collected in this study. I define the comprehensive mattering of Black male principals as imagining and believing the full humanity of the Black male, having systems see them as fully human, and being heard, seen, and valued by colleagues and society. Based on my analysis of data, three themes emerged relative to how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that would account for their comprehensive mattering. Those themes were:

(a) Instructional leadership

- Self-perception as Instructional leader

- Highly effective teaching

- Mentorship with an instructional focus

(b) Demonstration of deep care for students Black Masculine Caring

(c) Rejection of standardization as a way to lead teaching and learning.

Finding 1: Instructional Leadership. Based on participant responses, instructional leadership included having a student-centered approach to instructional matters; having the pedagogical knowledge to make critical instructional decisions; and a belief that teacher development and quality is essential to student success. Participant views on instructional leadership aligned with Sergiovanni's (1998) concept of pedagogical leadership. Pedagogical leadership emphasizes investing in the academic and social capital of students and creating communities that invest in developing professional and intellectual capital for teachers (Sergiovanni, 1998). Essentially, this form of instructional leadership defined by the participants places the needs and the development of both students and teachers as high priorities. As noted in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1), for Black male principals to comprehensively matter, P-12 systems should send them the message that they are valued and positioned as instructional leaders. In sum, within the imagined space of comprehensive mattering, Black male principals would be instructional leaders in their schools and districts. Pedagogical leadership would be not only an aspirational goal, but it would be recognized by the district and attainable as part of the job description.

Subtheme 1: Self-Perception as Instructional Leaders. Previous studies undertaken on Black male principals reinforce their positionality as instructional leaders in P-12 settings (Grubbs, 2021, Moultry, 2014; Lomotey, 1993). All three participants offered examples and assertions of their desire to position themselves as instructional leaders in

reimagined spaces. They all shared a general confidence and competence as evidenced by their past and current success with improving academic achievement in their respective schools. Participant's confidence and commitment as an instructional leader exemplify the leadership attributes in the "ethno-humanist" role for Black principals (Lomotey, 1993). Embodied in the "ethno-humanist" role are the beliefs that Black principals are instructional leaders, committed to the education of all children (Lomotey, 1993). In schools and districts where these Black male principals comprehensively mattered, these participants agreed that Black male principals would be seen and valued as instructional leaders who could effectively lead staff to improve student achievement outcomes. For example, Chuck led one of the highest achieving middle schools in his previous district, and Ryan currently leads a school with one of the highest academic growth metrics in the district. Chuck's quote describing his feeling about being passed over for several district positions perfectly describes the gap between district perception and how Black males perceive themselves when he said, "It's amazing how I could be unqualified for jobs that I want to apply for within our district but was qualified without hesitation to do the job that no one else had ever done before." Chuck's quote highlights the fact that Black male participants in this study see themselves as instructional leaders in reimagined spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering.

 Subtheme 2: Highly Effective Teaching. The findings of this study align with Lotomey's (1993) research on Black principals operating in the bureaucrat/administrator role identity. Curriculum planning and teacher supervision are two attributes Lomotey (1993) describes as key elements of the bureaucrat/administrator role identity. All three

participants viewed themselves as instructional leaders with the ability to describe, facilitate, and evaluate what highly effective teaching looks like in a classroom. All participants agreed that all students deserve a highly effective teacher in a reimagined space that accounts for their comprehensive mattering.

    Subtheme 3: Mentorship With an Instructional Focus. Previous research highlighted the need for effective mentorship for Black male principals (Hayden, 2022; Jackson 2018). One of the topics we explored was if mentorship for Black male principals required a mentor that had to be a Black male or someone of the same racial identity. As a consensus, the participants agreed that optimal mentorship was less about having someone that looked like them, but rather more about forming a relationship with a mentor built on trust, grace, and effective communication. Nazir elaborated by saying, "I worked under a Black male superintendent and candidly speaking, but respectfully speaking, he wasn't a mentor." Nazir then went on to describe optimal mentorship by saying, "Somebody that actually takes the concerted effort to understand where you're coming from, take into account your social, emotional, and mental health." In other words, all three participants agreed that the most important aspect of mentorship is a relationship in which the mentor believed in and fostered the instructional skills of the mentee. As I mentioned in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1) P-12 systems that support the comprehensive mattering of Black male principals prioritize covenant relationships over contract relationships (Sergiovanni, 1998). Covenant relationships are what participants described as optimal within a mentor/mentee relationship. Covenant relationships are reciprocal in nature with an emphasis on shared decision making while contract

relationships are more transactional, emphasizing compliance and procedures (Sergiovanni, 1998). Ryan summed up the group's description of optimal mentorship by saying, "I think it is giving people a relational environment where you can relate to, talk through or circumvent pitfalls, but it also gives them grace to be progressive, to try things, to be innovative without consequence." In conclusion, participants in this study placed a high value on being seen, heard, and valued as an instructional leader within mentorship relationships.

   Finding 2. Deep Demonstration of Care for Students. This theme of deep care for students aligns Bass's (2020) research on Black masculine caring (BMC). As mentioned in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1), P-12 systems that support the comprehensive mattering of Black male principals would view them as caring leaders. Seven emergent themes developed from Bass's research on Black male caring. Those themes were: (a) Black male caregivers view themselves as father figures; (b) Black male caregivers strongly identify and connect with a sense of spirituality; (c) Black male care, but feel they must mask their caring; (d) Black male caregivers derive a sense of pride from their caring; (e) Black male caregivers sometimes practice "rough love" as care; (f) Black male caregivers believe that action must follow caring; and (g) The present success of Black caregivers fueled their desire to demonstrate care.

   Participant responses most closely aligned with the themes of: (a) Black male giver believe action must follow caring and (b) Black male caregivers derive a sense of pride from their caring. For example, in Ryan's story about his interaction with a female student and her parents, he could have easily just sent this student home on suspension

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and skipped the parent conference. Instead, his deep care for students led him to give this child an opportunity to comprehensively matter by giving her the safe space to share her feelings with both of her parents. And as a result of his deep care for this student, Ryan has planted a positive seed in this child's family that could have lifelong benefits. Another example how participants demonstrated a high regard of care for students was Nazir's response to the hoodie issue at his school. While enforcing policy is important to Nazir, even more important is his core belief that all students should be treated with respect and dignity. Nazir talked about how the hoodie is a way for students to become invisible due to the many challenges they are facing in their daily lives. In this example, Nazir is confronting their invisibility by giving them the opportunity to be fully alive by listening to their stories and meeting their immediate need. He even took an additional step by emailing his staff explaining why it's critical to build relationships and ask "the why" rather than just focusing on giving students consequences for not following school policies.

Two themes of the Black masculine caring framework (BMC) that I initially thought would be foundational in the experiences of my participants were not as prevalent in their responses. First, I was surprised that participants did not have significant experiences with being viewed as a father figure or role model for students. The father figure and role model are typically the fixed roles that are associated with Black male educators (Brown, 2012). Second, the BMC theme of "rough love" as a discipline approach was rejected by Ryan and Chuck. Both Ryan and Chuck intentionally avoided the "rough love" as they dealt with discipline issues in their schools, especially

as it related to the discipline of boys. Because of their identity as Black men, participants were keenly aware of stereotypes about Black male principals as aggressive, behavior managers and actively engaged in behaviors that contradicted those stereotypes.

Finding 3. Rejection of Standardization as an Approach to Teaching and Learning. All three participants held the belief that our current P-12 system that emphasizes standards, pacing guides, and standardized testing limits the potential of students. As noted in the Mattering Matrix (Figure 1), P-12 spaces that accounted for the comprehensive mattering of Black male principals would view them as trusted and innovative leaders. Participants in this study reimagined spaces that would provide autonomy for both students and teachers to design assignments and assessments focused on reflection and growth. In the reimagined spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering, these leaders would ensure teaching strategies and curriculum were designed to teach the whole child. Participants described classrooms in which children would be actively moving, learning life skills and trades that would prepare them for adulthood.

Participants described learning environments that focused on authentic engagement, reflection, and growth. Ryan was the only participant who reimagined a physical space that was different than the traditional public school he currently operates in. Ryan's reimagined space would mirror how current private boarding schools operate, with more of an emphasis of having students operate in a college like atmosphere. Ryan's emphasis on providing a college like atmosphere for students that highlights what Carey (2019) calls "liberating" spaces that encourage comprehensive mattering not only for students, but also, for the leader of those students. Ryan went on to describe this

reimagined space as a learning environment where students would learn how to think critically through experiences in trades and the cultural arts. Ryan's reimagined educational space was a community-based approach that focused heavily on student autonomy and their individual interests.

This study's findings strongly align with pedagogical frameworks such as culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2013) and reality pedagogy (Emdin, 2011). The goal of culturally sustaining pedagogy is to affirm and respect students' cultural knowledge and ways of being as a means of promoting equality across racial and ethnic communities often marginalized within school settings (Paris & Alim, 2013). Emdin's (2011) reality pedagogy seeks to connect academic content to real world events. It views students as co-teachers and classrooms as spaces of connection and collaboration. Similar to how participants described their reimagined learning environments, reality pedagogy encourages teachers to foster critical thinking and confidence within each child (Emdin, 2011). In conclusion, participants rejected standardization within P-12 spaces and instead, valued autonomy, creativity, and critical thinking for themselves, students, and teachers in reimagined spaces that accounted for their comprehensive mattering.

Limitations

Due to the small sample size of Black male principals interviewed and the geographic location of the study, the findings cannot be generalized to Black male principals of predominantly white elementary, middle, or high schools in other geographic locations in the United States. By using semi-structured interviews, further limitations include observed external behaviors being influenced by the presence of the

researcher and interview responses being distorted by personal bias due to the personal relationships between researcher and participants.

Implication of the Results for Practice

Instructional Leadership

A key finding in my research was that Black male principals value instructional leadership and perceive themselves as instructional leaders; however, participants in this study described being limited to managerial roles. Districts have an important role in facilitating the Black male principal's role as an instructional leader. One specific recommendation for districts is to support Black male principals as instructional leaders through intentional mentoring and professional development opportunities targeted to enhance their skills as instructional leaders. For example, districts could conduct annual equity audits (Capper et al., 2020) with a specific emphasis on evaluating inequity of roles assigned to Black male assistant principals versus their counterparts (e.g., managerial tasks, disciplinary roles). Once these audits are completed, districts and Black male assistant principals should collaborate to ensure Black male assistant principals are provided the time and resources to lead and engage with instructional activities during their time in the assistant principalship. This process would help prepare Black males for the instructional demands and expectations of the principalship.

Mentorship

Another theme related to instructional leadership was that Black male principals desired mentorship with an instructional focus. Participants in this study emphasized that effective mentorship does not necessitate a mentor of same race. Instead, they described

their desire for mentors who could create trusting and supportive environments that demonstrated a sincere belief that Black male principals can be valuable instructional leaders. Participants also described effective mentors as educators who would encourage and trust them to take instructional risks in their buildings. Another recommendation for districts would be to develop mentoring programs for Black principals that emphasize partnering Black male principals with district instructional experts who could reinforce the instructional skills Black male principals already possess.

Self-actualization of Comprehensive Mattering and Advocacy

All participants in this study believed in their individual comprehensive mattering. This belief was manifested in how they described themselves and through the leadership dispositions (e.g., displaying confidence, being solutions-focused, maintaining core value, and emphasizing instructional leadership at school level) displayed during their responses to marginal and partial mattering. However, due to the permanence of racism (Bell, 1980), participants felt the current P-12 systems they worked in were incapable of conceiving their full mattering. It is imperative for Black male principals to create their own frameworks and networks that affirm their mattering in order to thrive in P-12 settings. One specific recommendation is for Black male principals to clearly establish and articulate their core values, non-negotiables, and leadership strengths as a way to evaluate their current employment situation and self-advocate for themselves when transitioning to new employment situations. For example, when Black male principals explore job opportunities, they could develop a list of interview questions for

potential employers based off their core values and non-negotiables to determine if the district would be a good fit for their talents and leadership style.

Black male principals could also benefit from networking with other Black male principals as a way to affirm their own mattering and promote their self-advocacy. A second recommendation would be for Black male principals to join educational networks specifically tailored to meet the needs of Black male educators. Organizations such as the Black Male Educators Alliance, National Fellowship for Black and Latino Male Educators, Center for Black Educator Development, and Men of Color in Education Leadership provide fellowships, coaching, conferences, professional development, and networking activities that Black male principals could utilize to strengthen their leadership skills and affirm their own mattering.

Performance Roles and Strategies for Self-Care from Racial Battle Fatigue

In response to marginal and partial mattering, participants in this study utilized three performance types that embedded the psychological stress responses of confusion, righteous indignation, defensiveness, apathy, frustration, shock, disappointment, and withdrawal associated with Racial Battle Fatigue. Those performance roles were (a) "The Director" (b) "The Strategic Statesman", and (3) "The Purposeful Passivist". The three performance roles in this study were developed based on a combination of participants' personalities, communication styles, and leadership dispositions they used to deal with the negative impact of institutional racism and microaggressions. For purposes of analysis in this section, I will equate performance roles to wearing a mask. The masks that participants had to wear hid their authentic selves and limited their leadership ability,

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specifically at the district level. While the three performance roles developed in this study

offered insight to how Black male principals respond to marginal and partial mattering,

they are not the only performance roles or masks Black male principals use as coping

mechanisms to operate within P-12 settings. The performance roles or masks worn by

Black male principals are numerous and how and why they are worn depend on personal

and situational factors. Simply put, as long as racism exists, Black male principals will

continue to wear masks and experience Racial Battle Fatigue in their lived experiences.

One specific recommendation is for P-12 districts to support Black male principals by

providing professional development and counseling resources to help combat the

negative consequences of RBF. Another recommendation is for Black male principals to

implement self-care strategies to combat Racial Battle Fatigue. Strategies include

building community with other Black educators, caring for their bodies, finding safe

space, using counseling, and unplugging from the people and places that cause harm

(Quaye et al., 2019). For Black male principals to thrive in the mist of racism, it is critical

that healthy habits, coping mechanisms, and self-care strategies are consistently

implemented as an act of self-preservation and resistance towards racism.

Recommendations for Further Research

Participants in this study emphasized being viewed as instructional leaders

contributed to their comprehensive mattering in P-12 settings. Research on Black male

instructional leadership is very limited (see Lomotey, 2022). In a review of literature on

Black male principals and their impact specifically on the success of Black students,

Lomotey (2022) notes there is little information on addressing how Black male principals

help Black students succeed. Essentially, Lomotey is stating that there is a need for research on Black male principal instructional leadership. Future research should be conducted on Black male principals and how they center themselves as instructional leaders and their leadership impact on academic achievement for all students in P-12 settings.

This research study generated a rich discussion about the importance of mentorship. Participants discussed the need for mentorship relationships built on open, honest, and authentic communication. Additionally, participants talked about the need for mentors to provide progressive environments that encourage risk-taking and collaboration. There was a consensus among participants that effective mentors could come from different cultural backgrounds. Future research is needed on Black male principals and their experiences with mentorship within P-12 systems. Research in this area could assist school districts with strategies and frameworks to better support Black male principals.

During the presidential address at the 2024 AERA Conference, Dr. Tyrone Howard discussed ways to disrupt organizational routines. Those were: (1) Understand who is harmed and the ways that harm is experienced (2) Identify how organizations should interrupt old routines and produce new ones (3) Determine how organizations should interrupt old routines and produce new ones that reduce or eliminate harm and produce racial justice. This study contributes to the first tenet in Dr. Howard's framework by solidifying that Black male principals experience partial and marginal mattering in P-12 settings and as a result, they experience stress responses associated with RBF. It

would be worthwhile to conduct future research using Carey's (2019) mattering

framework to address tenets 2 and 3 specific to P-12 settings.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the outcome of this research study is to help school districts with

strategies to facilitate Black male principal comprehensive mattering in P-12 spaces.

Additionally, I want to assist future and current Black male principals in creating

strategies and frameworks that will facilitate their transition from marginally and partially

mattering in P-12 spaces to spaces that account more for their comprehensive mattering.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the Black male principal and his journey toward

comprehensive mattering is rooted in hope and the possibility that P-12 spaces can be

safe and liberating spaces for Black male principals and the stakeholders they serve. In

other words, it is my desire for Black male principals in P-12 spaces to simply be free to

smile, free to laugh, free to make mistakes, but ultimately, free to be simply themselves. I

end with a quote from Robin Kelley that reflects the next steps for Black male principals,

> For us to make a better world, we must first imagine it, and it calls us to envision
>
> not what we are fighting against, but what we are fighting for.

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study of Black male principals reimaging P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering. This study is being conducted by Travis Howard, a doctoral candidate in the Teacher Education Department under the supervision of Dr. Tori Colson, University of Southern Indiana, Assistant Dean of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study. This form must be filled out before initial interviews begin.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of this study is to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize how Black male principals would reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering. Additionally, this study seeks to better understand how Black male principals respond to racist experiences in P-12 settings.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you agree to participate, you will do the following things:
Participate in two individual Zoom interviews and one Zoom focus group session.

How much time will it take?
Your participation in this study will take approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes of your time. Each Zoom interview will be scheduled for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The concluding focus group will also be scheduled for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

What are my risks and benefits?
Possible risks for participants in this study include emotional stress, discomfort discussing sensitive topics, or possible loss of confidentiality. The chances of these risks occurring for some participants are reasonably expected. However, research literature indicates that there is a need for Black males to engage in conversation about the roles that they believe power, race, and racism play in their educational experiences (Howard, 2014). Thus, the benefits of contemplating and discussing their experiences with racism in P-12 settings and providing them with an opportunity to reimagine P-12 spaces that account for their comprehensive mattering outweigh the potential risks. To minimize the possible loss of confidentiality, all participants will select pseudonyms that will be used on documents and transcripts. No actual names of participants will be shared orally, in writing, in conversation, or publication. If at any point any of the participants choose to opt out of answering a question, the researcher will omit the question and move forward through the protocol. The researcher will end the interview if it becomes apparent that the interview is causing distress to any participant. The participant will have the option to discontinue participation in the study or elect to reschedule the interview. Finally, the researcher will have available a list of potential counselors from the community who may be able to assist with any emotional or mental turmoil related to the topic of study (i.e.,

Black Male Therapists of Charlotte's database). There also may be other risks/discomforts we cannot predict.

The benefits of taking part of this study and contributing to scholarly literature makes it clear that there are many gaps in our knowledge about how Black males experience racism and power in P-12 settings (Howard, 2014). Additionally, the journey of ensuring Black male principals comprehensively matter in P-12 systems through being seen, heard, and valued is a project that aims to help future and current Black male principals with strategies to help them advocate for themselves in school systems who may not see their full value.

How will my information be used?
Information from this research project will be used for the researcher's dissertation, future journal articles, and conference presentations. Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All participants will select pseudonyms that will be used on documents and transcripts. No actual names of participants will be shared orally, in writing, in conversation, or publication. Your identity will not be shared if the study findings are published or presented. Interview data (Zoom recordings, transcripts, data analysis) will be secured within the Dedoose data management system on a password protected laptop. Dedoose is a password protected web-based data management system. All transcript data and analysis will be stored indefinitely, as it may be the basis for future research. Hard copies of consent forms will be stored separately in a locked desk drawer in the researcher's office at Western Carolina University. Zoom recordings will be erased and hard copies of data will be destroyed by shredding it after seven years. The researcher, Travis Howard, will be the only person with access to the data.

May I be eligible for compensation for participating?

A $50 Amazon gift card will be given to each participant after the study is complete.

Do I have choice in volunteering for this study?
Participating in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or may leave the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the investigator(s).

What are alternatives to participation?
Instead of being part of the study, you have the option of not participating in the study.

Who can answer my questions about this?
If you have questions about the study or encounter a problem with the research, contact the researcher Travis Howard at thoward@eagles.usi.edu, 864-354-5616.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or offer input, contact the University of Southern Indiana Office of Sponsored Projects and Research, 8600 University Blvd., Wright Administration, Evansville, IN 47712, 812-465-7000 or by email at rcr@usi.edu.

The research team members are not acting as agents of the University of Southern Indiana and do not have authority to bind the University. Any opinions, findings, or recommendations expressed in this study represent the researchers' own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Southern Indiana.

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT: I have read the information provided to me. I have had all my questions answered. Based on the statements above, I consent to participate in this study. I am of 18 years of age or older.

Your Name (Participant): _____

Your Signature (Participant):_____ **Date**:_____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature:_____ **Date**:_____

<h1>Appendix B</h1>

<h1>INTERVIEW PROTOCOL</h1>

Interview Script for First Zoom Interview

Researcher: *"*Thank you for your time this morning/evening. Before we begin, please make sure you are in a private location where you can talk freely without distractions or fear of others hearing your responses. The purpose of this study is to center the voices of P-12 Black male principals in South Carolina in order to conceptualize a reimagining of P-12 educational spaces where Black male principals comprehensively matter. The journey of ensuring Black male principals comprehensively matter in P-12 systems through being seen, heard, and valued is a project that aims to help future and current Black male principals with strategies to help them advocate for themselves in school systems that may not see their full value. First, we will begin with some questions about your demographic information. Next, I will begin asking questions about how you would reimagine P-12 spaces based on your comprehensive mattering."

Demographic Questions

Age Range

22-35   36-49   50+

Describe your racial identity:

Gender?

What degrees have you earned? Please include majors and the universities attended.

Years in Education?

How many years in administration?

What are your career goals as a Black male principal in education?

Describe the demographics of the P-12 schools in which you served as principal? If

multiple schools, please let me know.

Majority Black staff   Majority White staff   Diverse staff

Describe the demographics of the P-12 districts in which you served as principal? If

multiple school districts, please let me know.

Majority Black students   Majority White students   Diverse study body

How many years have you known the researcher?

Comprehensive mattering: (First round)

    1. How would you describe yourself as a person? father? son? friend?

    leader? school leader?

    2. What specific changes in curriculum, policies, or teaching methods would

    contribute to your comprehensive mattering?

    4. What would be your main role in the school as a principal in the

    reimagined space that accounted for your comprehensive mattering?

    5. How would you reimagine hiring and retention practices that would ensure

    comprehensive mattering for Black male principals?

Researcher: "Thank you for participating in our first round interview. Your next Zoom

interview is scheduled for_____.

<u>*Interview Script for Second Zoom Interview*</u>

Researcher: "Thank you for your time this morning/evening. Before we begin, please make sure you are in a private location where you can talk freely without distractions or fear of others hearing your responses. The purpose of this study is to better understand how Black male principals respond to racist experiences within P-12 settings. The questions I will be asking today will focus on how you responded to racist experiences during your time as a principal and your logic behind those responses."

Marginal mattering: (Second round)

> 1. Can you describe your responses in the P-12 setting in which you were made to feel insignificant due to your identity as a Black male? What was the logic behind your response/action?
>
> 2. Can you describe experiences in which your identity as a Black male hindered your upward professional trajectory within the P-12 setting?

Partial mattering: (Second round)

> 1. Can you describe your responses in the P-12 setting in which you were celebrated for certain talents and attributes while at the same time feeling the system did not fully value your identity as a Black male? What was the logic behind your response/action?

Researcher: "Thank you for participating in our second round interview. The next focus group session is scheduled for_____.

Focus Group Script

*Researcher: "*Thank you for your time this morning/evening. Before we begin, please make sure you are in a private location where you can talk freely without distractions or fear of others hearing your responses. Today, we will be reviewing themes that emerged from your individual interviews. We will review the similarities and differences of the themes that emerged from our first and second round interviews. As we review these themes, any additional thoughts and insights are welcomed in the conversation." Participants and researcher will participate in reviewing the similarities and differences of the themes that emerged from first and second round interviews.

Researcher: "Thank you for participating in this research study. Thank you for contributing to scholarly literature that will help close the gap in our knowledge about how Black males experience racism and power in P-12 settings. As a result of your responses in this study, it is my goal to develop professional developments and organizational frameworks that will assist school districts in South Carolina and nationwide on how to fully recognize Black male principals as fully human and competent in the work they perform for schools. You will be receiving a $50 Amazon gift card as thank you gift.