2017

African American Female Principals at Urban Turnaround Arts Schools: Identification of Characteristics That Contributed to Their Success

Leona Robinson-Derden
Bethel University

African American Female Principals at Urban

Turnaround Arts Schools: Identification of Characteristics

That Contributed to Their Success

Leona Robinson-Derden

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

St. Paul, MN
2017

Approved by:

Advisor: Dr. Craig Paulson

Reader: Dr. Richard McGregory

Reader: Dr. Marta Shaw

1

Abstract

The purposes of this qualitative study were to (a) identify leadership characteristics of female African American principals at successful Turnaround Arts schools and (b) explore the leadership factors that allowed these principals to improve academic and behavioral outcomes among students. The theories applied in the study were self-efficacy, transformational leadership theory, and culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. Using a sample of four African American female principals drawn through convenience sampling and a one-on-one interview format, it was found that (a) there are specific orientations among African American female principals that are shared, (b) these orientations have a positive impact on both academic and behavioral outcomes among students, and (c) these orientations can be understood in terms of race- and gender-informed leadership. Specifically, the shared leadership characteristics identified in the study were (a) servant leadership, (b) leadership by example, (c) strength / commitment, (d) othermothering, (e) respectful communication and interaction, (f) remembering / applying roots, and (g) goal-driven leadership. These characteristics, and their usefulness in Turnaround Arts schools in particular, suggest the importance of developing and disseminating race- and gender-informed leadership approaches among African American female principals in predominantly African American schools.

3

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to give honor to God for allowing me to finally make it to the end of this lifelong dream. After a decade and attending three different universities, it brings tears to my eyes to know that I am finally Dr. Derden. It was a struggle to endure because of many life obstacles, but I thank God for giving me the strength to remain determined.

I would like to thank my husband, for believing and encouraging me to stay the course. When I felt like giving up, he was always there to help lift my spirits. Thank you for staying up late at night proofing my papers, tolerating my tantrums, supporting, promoting, and cheering for me. I love you!

A thank you to my three children, my mother and my cousin Margie for always being there for me. My daughter Cynthia, I want to give a special THANK YOU for being an AMAZING daughter. Although, there were times when you would get on my "last nerve," you have been very instrumental in helping to keep me focus by saying – "mommy, did you work on your dissertation today?"

With gratitude and thanks to Dr. Craig Paulson, Dr. Richard McGregory and Dr. Marta Shaw for your guidance and support. I appreciate your advice, thought provoking questions, suggestions and guidance. I could not have made it without you. I am fortunate and grateful.

To my sister-girlfriends Cheri Gibbs and Donna Gingery, thank you for being there for me ALWAYS! Love you with all my heart.

Dedication

In memory of my grandmother, Cynthia Chew, who was my solid rock and raised me to be the woman that I am today. She was the pillar of our family. She only had a third grade education, but she encouraged and motivated me to excel in school. She would always reinforce the importance of education. I only wish she could be here to witness me walk across the stage to receive my doctorate degree. However, I believe she is smiling from heaven saying, "Well, done Lee Lee – grandma is proud of you!"

With respect and honor to my mother, Lucille Chew, who has endured many health issues and is a cancer survivor of 15 years. When I first started down this journey, I had to stop to support you when you were diagnosed with cancer the second time. I thank God for allowing you to live to see your only child complete this lifelong dream and journey.

To my cousin, Margie O'Quinn who has been more like a sister and a mother to me, thank you for supporting me my entire life. You were there for my very first concert in elementary school and throughout my college years. I remember the day, when we packed all my belongings in your car to drive me to Eastern Illinois University to start my freshman year in college. You have always been my number one cheerleader and for that I will always be grateful!

Table Of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

"If Black women don't say who they are, other people will and say it badly for them."

---- B. Christian (1985)

Having worked as a successful administrator in struggling urban schools for many years, this researcher has always been interested in what behaviors or characteristics administrators should possess to transform their school. It is my personal belief that great leaders can have a significant impact on their schools if their focus extends beyond only looking at academics. The principal of the future will need to be a "Cultural Change Principal" who is knowledgeable about the school environment, and able to think creatively to transform schools and teams (Fullan, 2001).

In an effort to transform my school (which was designated as being a priority school), a variety of school improvement reform initiatives were studied. According to the U.S Department of Education, priority schools are schools performing in the lowest 5% of all the schools in their state based on state assessment proficiency levels in both math and reading. Research was conducted on creative ways to bring rigor into instruction and lesson planning. After months of researching different school improvement reforms, the "Turnaround Arts" reform initiative was selected. After submitting a proposal, my school was chosen to participate as one of the first Turnaround Arts schools in the state of Minnesota.

Turnaround Arts is an initiative led by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and several private foundations united to bring art education resources into priority schools as a strategic tool for helping to turn schools around. Schools participating in the Turnaround Arts initiative receive professional development and a range of art supplies, and community support, so that the community is aware of their successes. The main principle of

Turnaround Arts is to build a rigorous art education program that is implemented with fidelity within the culture of the school while strategically addressing larger school challenges. As such, local program partners work closely throughout the school year with the principal and art leadership team to devise and help implement a quality art program. The program structure is based on eight pillars to guide arts-based transformation in each school. The pillars are: (1) Principal, who is an internal and external advocate; (2) Art Specialist, who provides rigorous sequential, and weekly standard based instruction to students; (3) Classroom teachers, who incorporate the arts into their class instruction; (4) Teaching Artists from the community and local organizations, who work with students and teachers consistently to enrich learning; (5) Parents, Community and School Officials, who contribute to and support the arts; (6) Comprehensive Strategic Approach, to support and target improving the whole school; (7) Professional Development training, which is provided to support teachers with integrating the arts in their classrooms; and (8) School Environment, where student work and creativity is displayed in physical spaces.

After integrating the arts into the culture and fabric of the school for two years, there was a rapid improvement in school climate and academics; which allowed the school to be removed from the priority list of schools. After reflecting about what made the difference in helping to transform the school in two years, this researcher need for a deeper understanding of the guidance or characteristics of the principal continued to emerge. Additionally, while attending the national Turnaround Arts professional development training in Washington DC, this researcher noticed that the majority of the principals were females of color. This observation provoked curiosity on the need to identify the characteristics and commonalities between African American female leaders in education.

Moreover, one of the things that became clear to me, as an African American female leader, is that issues of gender, race and culture have played a significant role in my personal life. Women in administration face many challenges in their careers. When additional characteristics of racial and ethnic differences are included, the challenges increase. In line with Marcano, (1997), the struggle of equality and advancement within school districts is a concern for minority women. African American female leaders have historically faced multiple racial and gender challenges in their careers (Murtadha & Watts, 2005).

Background of the Study

An examination of literature related to African American women in educational leadership positions affirms limited studies has been undertaken to discover the characteristics and self-identities of successful African American female leaders (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

Educational leaders across the state and country are faced with multiple challenges, including improving student achievement, closing the achievement gap, managing day to day crisis. Wong and Jain (1999) found that these challenges lead to a continuous lack of resources and confidence. African Americans and members of other minority group's experiences are magnified as leaders in urban school districts due to: a) competing with other districts to hire and retain experienced teachers, and b) lacking resources and access to instructional materials. Brunner (2000) stated that female leaders have to worry about the students and themselves in the midst of these challenges. According to Brunner (2000) self-confidence is how they are able to manage complex challenges and remain resilient.

Documented history regarding the exploitation and persecution of African American women slaves includes stories about how they were treated as nothing more than a person's property and denied respect (McCollum, 2005). McCollum contended these women were

confused, did not understand their purpose and had a depressing future. They were beaten, mocked, raped, and suffered verbal abuse, but nonetheless they remained resilient.

McCollum (2005), also revealed that African American women felt ridiculed and encountered many stereotypes of incompetence due to race. In order for the dominant culture to feel comfortable with them, they felt they had to assimilate or deny their culture. It has been over a century since slavery was abolished, but based on recent racial events, prejudice in society and education is still subsisting in the hearts and minds of the general population. The efforts of African American women being hired in top leadership positions in school districts is still a challenge. Although women comprise 70 % of teachers, the male dominance in public education is still largely prominent. Even though the percentage of African American leaders in education has increased, the percentage of females in upward mobility positions are not equivalent to others (Chase & Bell., 1993). African American principals appear to be hired in tough schools with students from low socio-economic status, buildings that are in need of repair, issues with student discipline and low academic achievement. They are placed in schools with unreasonable expectations (Kunjufu, 2014). However, Kunjufu (2014) stated the principals at these schools often times exceed the job expectations.

While research in this area has increased, literature about the characteristics and self-efficacy of successful African American female leaders is imperative. Research including the documentation of their individual voices to understand how they are able to remain focused in "the midst of the storm" is needed to inform aspiring African American female principals.

Statement of the Problem

Today's urban schools are often defined as failures. Many people in society have assumptions that urban schools are imaginary places where poor, minority children go allegedly to receive an education (Kunjufu, 2014). Policymakers want to know why we cannot get schools to change more quickly and be more responsive to students' learning needs (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2015).

According to Kunju (2014) often, many schools are not successful with "motivating students of color academically" because these students feel disassociated from the overall school environment. This disassociation might stem from the lack of creativity in the learning environment. The lack of creativity leads to student disengagement, and especially with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, these students have issues related to the dropout rate. Nearly one half of African American and Latino students fail to graduate from high school (Kunjufu, 2014). According to Bastos, Cosier, and Hutzel, (2012), the arts can transform urban school climates. Students attending Turnaround Art schools are making academic progress because the school environment permits creative ways of learning. The main principle of Turnaround Art schools is to construct a rigorous art education program that is implemented within the culture of the school with fidelity while addressing larger school challenges strategically. The principal plays a vital role in the success of implementing the arts to transform their school (PCAH, 2015).

Although principal leadership has been acknowledged as a critical factor that influences turnaround in low-achieving schools, there is not a significant volume of research to suggest "which" principal leadership skills and abilities influences low-achieving school environments

14

(Tucker, 2010); especially African American women principal leaders. According to the U.S

Department of Labor (2016), white, non-Hispanic workers and white males still hold the top

administrative positions in the workforce. Unfortunately, the progression of African American

educators into leadership positions is slower systematically (Ferguson, Henry & West, 2013).

History has provided stories about effective African American school leaders, but often much of

this limited focus has been on the contributions of African American men (Mohr, Rigotti, &

Stempel, 2015). It was not until recently that women of color in educational leadership start

gaining public attention (Banks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). Educators and scholars continue to

disagree about how race and gender impact the field of education, especially in urban schools

(Ferguson, Henry, and West, (2013). In order to make a positive impact on urban schools, the

voices of African American female principals who were able to meet the challenge of increasing

academics and creating a positive school climate must be heard because their experiences differ

from both white females and males (Alston, 2012).

Moolenaar and Sleegers (2015) reported that "transformational leadership is positively

associated with a school innovative climate that motivate followers to do more than they are

expected in terms of extra effort and greater productivity"(p 39). Research by Marshall,

Novicevic, and Owen (2015) suggested leaders are a key component in ensuring organizational

success. Their organizational success is linked to strategic decision making and social influence.

They also proposed effective leadership encompasses interpersonal interaction, strategic

objectives and task accomplishments.

In line with Marshall, Novicevic, and Owen (2015), there is a current educational need to

explore the characteristics and self-perceptions of successful African American women as school

leaders in successful Turnaround Art schools. This study sought to provide patterns of commonality across each leader.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the characteristics and sense of self that African American female principals in successful urban Turnaround Art schools possess. The "persistence and resilience" of successful African American women who meet the challenges of being in leadership positions need to be studied extensively" (Alston, 2005, p. 676). Alston further suggested that research should answer the following questions: (1) What motivates African American women to remain in leadership positions? and (2) What approaches do they use to combat institutional prejudices such as sexism, racism, and apathy?

Specifically, this study sought to understand how self-efficacy impacts how African American female principals take on various situations. The study explored patterns and commonalities around their attitude and leadership.

Research Questions

This study will use the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools, with success defined as 10% or more increase in math and 30% or more decrease in school suspensions.

RQ2: How do African American female leaders' perspectives impact academics and a reduction in behavior referrals at Turnaround Art schools?

Significance of the Study

This study examined how urban African American female leaders' philosophies and leadership decisions are making a difference in their school academics and reduction of behavior

referrals. More exploration is needed to determine how their distinctive characteristics and influences have shaped their leadership that made them successful at their Turnaround Arts schools (McCollum, 2005).

Historically, white males have had the highest percentage of top leadership positions in education, with white women ranking second, while only 5% of leadership positions are being held by males or females of color (Gewertz, 2006). It was not until recently that attention and research around the viewpoint of females and people of color in educational leadership started to become a focus (Banks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Glass (2000) found that the results from a survey taken by school administrators suggest that gender is a barrier to becoming a school leader. As suggested by Immegart (1988), little research involving practical experiences around why the gap of women in leadership still exist. Although, principal leadership has been acknowledged as a critical factor that influences turnaround in low-achieving schools (Burbach & Butler, 2005; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), there is not a significant volume of research to suggest "which" principal leadership skills and abilities influences low-achieving school environments (Tucker et al., 2010); especially African American women principal leaders.

By drawing upon scholarly literature and personal experience, this research study attempted to identify specific characteristics related to African American female leaders at Turnaround Art schools that helped to narrow the academic achievement gap which continues to exist in America's educational system.

Definition of Terms

Depending on how some of the terms are used in the text, they can have several meanings. Having a common language will help the reader to understand how the terms relate to the design and outcomes of this study.

African- American - a term that describes an ethnic group of Americans with total or partial ancestry from any of the black racial groups of Africa (Black, 2008).

Autoethnography – a qualitative research method is written in first person and allows a person to write in a personalized style drawing on their experiences. This method can include dialogue, emotion, self- awareness as related to stories affected by history, and culture (Patten, 2014).

Gender/sex - a term that is used to link the social expectations associated with femininity and masculinity. The rules of a person's life are informed by the role of gender and how it impacts others' perception of them (Lips, 2003).

Othermothering - African American women's maternal assistance offered to the children of blood mothers within the African American community (Dillard, 1995).

Priority School- schools among the lowest 5% of Title I schools in the State based on both achievement and lack of progress of the "all students" groups (U.S. Department of Education).

Resilience/resiliency – a process that includes positive behavioral variation that a person displays when they encounter significant adversity or trauma (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005).

Self-efficacy – the beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the actions needed to produce accomplishment of given goals (Bandura, 1997).

Turnaround Art School Reform – an initiative to implement a rigorous art education program within the culture of the failing schools, while addressing larger school challenges (PCAH, 2015).

Assumptions and Limitations

The manner in which a person is identified in society plays a critical role in how others perceive that person and how they perceive themselves. The participants were honest and candid about their experiences. They each stated that the interviews felt like a conversation and non-intimidating. They were excited to share the challenges they encounter as African American female leaders.

The limitations to this study:

1. The study utilized interviews from only four principals as well as a self-reflection from this researcher, so there was a limited number of participants.

2. The study only focused on African American women at Turnaround Art schools.

3. While the researcher identified with the participants' experiences, the respect for each individual's experiences was taken into account and was not generalized.

4. The researcher was cognizant of ensuring that only the participant's views and experiences were included.

5. The researcher did not generalize findings.

Nature of the Study

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the characteristics and leadership styles of urban African American principals. The researcher interviewed four principals to identify what similar traits and beliefs they each have that contribute to their

success when faced with adversity. An autoethnography is included with information about the character and leadership style of this researcher.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter two provides a review of the literature. The literature summarizes the history and role of African American women in education; Self- efficacy Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Culturally Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory.

Chapter three consist of the methodology including the qualitative method, the sample size, instrumentation used, data collection procedures, and how the data will be analyzed. Chapter three includes the limitations and ethical considerations associated with this study.

Chapter four provides the findings of the study. A thematic narrative of the patterns and commonalities across each leader is shared. It also includes verbatim responses from the interviews.

Chapter five gives a brief summary, conclusions and recommendations about the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to describe, analyze, and synthesize both theories and empirical findings relevant to the topic of successful leadership characteristics shared among African American female principals in urban schools, particularly those schools that utilize the Turnaround Arts program. In order to achieve this purpose, the literature review has been divided into several sections. The introduction contains an overview of the literature review's purpose and structure. The literature search strategy describes how appropriate theories and empirical research articles were identified. The historical overview contains a brief discussion of the history of female African American principals. The theoretical foundations discussion contains an overview of the primary and secondary theories utilized in the study. The review of research articles contains a discussion of empirical research relevant to the topic. The discussion of literature gaps highlights missing evidence and themes in the research base. The conclusion contains a summary of the literature review and provides a transition to the third chapter of the study.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search study was guided by two objectives. The first objective was to identify appropriate empirical articles for the literature review section of the study. The second objective was to identify appropriate theories.

Different strategies were used for these two objectives. Articles were identified through the academic database search processes described in Table 1. These searches resulted in the identification of 15 articles that were closely reviewed in this chapter. Based on an identification and review of the theories utilized most frequently by the scholars whose works were retrieved

through the literature search strategy, theories were identified after the empirical article search

was conducted.

Table 1

Literature Search Strategy

Search String	Academic Database	Number of Articles Chosen
Female AND urban AND leadership AND "African American principals"	Google Scholar	2
Female AND urban AND leadership AND "African American principal"	Science Direct	1
"African American women principals in urban schools"	JSTOR	1
"African American principals" AND "educational leadership" AND female	Academic Search Direct	1
"Female principals" AND "African American" AND urban and "educational leadership"	Education Source	2
"Female principal" AND "African American" AND urban and "educational leadership"	PsycINFO	2

.

The choice of articles was driven by both the purpose and methodology of the current study. The choice of search strings reflected the purpose and research topic of the study and therefore resulted in the identification of appropriate studies. As the current study was qualitative, emphasis was placed on the identification of qualitative articles.

Selection of Theories

Self-efficacy was chosen as a primary theoretical framework because of its frequent occurrence as an explanatory framework for the success of educators, including principals. Transformational leadership was chosen as a secondary theoretical framework because of its popularity in the literature and obvious explanatory power in terms of a principal's ability to positively transform a school. The theory of culturally sensitive school leadership, which emphasizes both the roles of color and gender in school leadership, was chosen because of its explanatory power vis-à-vis the unique contributions of African American principals.

Theoretical Framework

Henderikus (2010) wrote that a theory explains, describes, and provides predictive utility for a phenomenon. The phenomenon on which the current study is based is that of successful educational leadership as exercised by African American female principals. Based on Henderikus's criteria, theories included in the theoretical framework ought to be able to (a) explain how, why, and in what kinds of contexts problems typically experienced at urban schools can be remediated by African American female principals; (b) describe the phenomenon of successful educational leadership with reference to African American female principals; and (c) predict what kinds of characteristics among African American female principals contribute to their ability to solve educational problems at urban schools.

With Henderikus's (2010) criteria in mind, three theories were identified as being particularly relevant to the study. The primary theory is that of self-efficacy, and the secondary theories are those of transformational leadership and culturally sensitive leadership. Each of these theories has been discussed below.

Primary Theory: Self-Efficacy

The founder of self-efficacy theory, Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1977, 1994, 1997, 2000) defined efficacy as a psychological orientation that allowed people to bring together and apply their existing skills at a moment of necessity. Self-efficacy is what allows people to perform by applying what they already know how to do. Bandura emphasized that, for some people, elements of intrinsic and extrinsic pressure would damage their self-efficacy, rendering them unable to perform despite their possession of the necessary abilities.

With respect to educational leadership, scholars working from the perspective of self-efficacy theory have argued (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Pajares, 1996; Siwatu, 2007) that teachers, principals, and other academic personnel often possess the skills needed for leadership, but that factors such as burnout, personal disinclination, institutional resistance, or the sociocultural environment prevent them from being able to orchestrate and apply these skills. This conclusion aligns with the findings from several (Bernstein & Carayannis, 2012; Carmichael, Callingham, Hay, & Watson, 2010; Haga et al., 2012; Hoffman, 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Kuo, Walker, Schroder, & Belland, 2014; Rabaglietti, Burk, & Giletta, 2012; Richardson et al., 2013; Schomerus et al., 2011; Scott & Dearing, 2012; Tariq, Qualter, Roberts, Appleby, & Barnes, 2013; Taylor & Reyes, 2012) other self-efficacy studies in which the main barrier to performance has been found to be a deficit in self-efficacy rather than a deficit in ability. If self-efficacy theory is applicable to

successful African American female principals in urban schools, it can be predicted that such principals do not necessarily possess skills that their less successful counterparts do not, but that they are better able to integrate and orchestrate these skills.

There are numerous ways in which self-efficacy theory might apply to the experiences of African American female principals. Gender and race might be explanatory factors in the ability of such principals to orchestrate and integrate their existing leadership skills. For example, African American female principals might draw upon their experiences as women who occupy multiple roles (such as the roles of leader, mother, and othermother) in order to apply their existing skills to difficult leadership problems. The specifically African American concept of the othermother, as discussed elsewhere in this literature review, might also inform the ability of African American female school principals to integrate their existing skills in the service of leadership.

Secondary Theory #1: Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory has been defined (Arnold, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001; Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; Marks & Printy, 2003; Pearce & Sims Jr, 2002; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; E. J. Ross, Fitzpatrick, Click, Krouse, & Clavelle, 2014; Spreitzer, Perttula, & Xin, 2005) in numerous ways. One influential definition of transformational leadership theory was that of Northouse (2010), who described transformational leadership as acting among emotions, ethics, and goals through the galvanizing power of the leader. In transformational leadership, the leader sparks the engagement, motivation, and energy of followers through an appeal to emotions and shared values. This type of leadership requires a close, charismatic connection to followers that is likely to be improved if leaders and followers share a cultural background.

Transformational leadership has also been defined in simpler terms (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). According to Kouzes and Posner, a transformational leader (a) models, (b) inspires, (c) challenges, (d) enables, and (e) encourages. The guidelines presented by Kouzes and Posner constitute a brief summary of what transformational leaders do. However, transformational leadership was first defined by Bass and Avolio (1990) in terms of so-called multifactor leadership theory. Multifactor leadership theory is somewhat complex and requires further explanation, as it provides the context necessary to understand transformational leadership.

Bass and Avolio used (Bass & Avolio, 1990) statistical methods to identify seven factors of leadership, which are presented in Table 2. Of these factors of leadership, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are the components of transformational leadership. Contingent reward and management by exception are associated with transactional leadership, whereas laissez faire is associated with the laissez faire style of leadership.

If transformational leadership theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for the current study, then it can be anticipated that successful African American female principals in urban settings will share the qualities of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These predictions can be integrated with predictions made by self-efficacy theory. Transformational leadership theory suggests that successful African American female principals will possess the four factors of transformational leadership enumerated in Table 2, while self-efficacy theory predicts that successful African American female principals will not only possess these skills or qualities, but also be able to exercise them when necessary.

Transformational leadership is a useful part of the theoretical framework of the study because it highlights the specific aspects of leadership that are likely to be informed by the gender and culture of African American female principals. Transformational leaderships explains not only why leaders might be successful but also provides inspiration for questionnaires and instruments that seek to identify the specific facets of leadership that can be influenced by gender and race. Transformational leadership is likely to possess substantial explanatory power with respect to the research questions of the study.

According to Bass and Avolio (1990), the main characteristics of transformational leadership are:

- Being able to obtain trust from others and act as their model

- Motivating others

- Stimulating the minds and spirits of others

- Treating people as individuals with special needs and wants of their own

Based on the work of Dillard (1995), Jones (2002), and other scholars, these orientations within transformational leadership are likely to be present in the leadership styles of African American female principals.

Secondary Theory #2: Culturally Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory

Unlike self-efficacy theory, which was created by Bandura (1977), and transformational leadership theory, which was created by Bass and Avolio (1990), there is no one founder of culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. Culturally sensitive educational leadership theory is an umbrella concept for many overlapping theories of educational leadership that emphasize factors of race, culture, and gender. In the context of the current study, the most

relevant facet of culturally sensitive educational leadership theory consists of theories of African American female leadership.

Two of the most prominent advocates of African American female leadership in education are Gloria Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and Linda Tillman (Tillman, 2004). Both Ladson-Billings and Tillman adopted a strengths-based perspective to highlight the unique contributions that African American women can make, both in the classroom and to schools themselves. According to Ladson-Billings and Tillman, the main characteristic that successful African American female principals appear to possess is a combination of genuine caring and high standards, both of which are filtered through the historical experience of African American women as what Ladson-Billings referred to as promise-keepers. According to both Ladson-Billings and Tillman, African American female leadership is about maintaining continuity, justice, and compassion, especially in the face of external and internal forces that threaten to disrupt communities.

Culturally sensitive educational leadership theory can accommodate the African American feminist concepts discussed by Ladson-Billings (1999) and Tillman (2004). African American feminism is, as a theoretical concept, applied more to critical theory than to educational leadership. Culturally sensitive educational leadership theory has a long history of being applied to education and is flexible enough to encompass any approach to leadership that is rooted in a particular form of identity, including facets of gender, culture, and race. Thus, the use of culturally sensitive educational leadership theory in this study should not be considered to pre-empty African American feminist theory per se. In fact, the application of culturally sensitive educational leadership theory can be considered to be highly complementary to the theoretical lens provided by African American feminist theory.

Historical Review

The first African American woman who served as principal of a school in the United States was Fanny Jackson Coppin, a former slave who became principal of the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia in 1865 (Perkins, 1982). Coppin was not only the first African American female principal, but also the first African American female to serve as superintendent of a school district (Perkins, 1982). Most of Coppin's career as an educational leader was spent as a principal, and not as a superintendent (Perkins, 1982).

Coppin's pioneering role was not immediately followed by an influx of African American female principals. It was not until 1898, 33 years after Coppin's appointment as principal, that New York City had its first African American female principal, Gertrude Elise Ayer (Johnson, 2006). After Ayer, there was a gap of over half a century until the appointment of New York City's next African American female principal, Margaret Douglas (Pollak, 2009). Records indicate that, as late as 1966, there were only six African American principals in New York City, of whom Douglas was the only woman (Pollak, 2009). However, by 1969, there were 35 African American principals in New York City (Pollak, 2009).

The late 1960s, which coincided with the height of the Civil Rights Era, finally saw an opening of opportunities for African American female principals. The National Center for Education Statistics conducted a survey (NCES, 2013) in 2011 that disclosed that 9.4% of all principals in the United States, or 10,861 principals, were African American. The NCES survey indicated that 20.8% of the principals of public schools were located in cities (rather than in suburbs, towns, or rural areas). African Americans were recognized as being leaders mostly in the cities according to the NCES survey and more than half of African American principals are female (NCES, 2013).

Thus, the data indicate that there has been a steady rise in the representation of African American females among the ranks of American principals. African American women are particularly well-represented in urban schools (NCES, 2013). The late 1960s appears to have been the crucial moment in the ability of African American women to be appointed as school principals (Pollak, 2009).

Turnaround Arts

The focus of the current study is on African American female leadership within schools that use Turnaround Arts. Turnaround Arts is an arts-based education program designed by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts. Turnaround Arts was launched by the President's Committee on the Arts in 2012 and currently there are 36 schools in 15 states participating (TurnaroundArts, 2016).

Turnaround Arts was designed for schools that are priority-designated, meaning schools that perform in the lowest 5% of all schools in their state (TurnaroundArts, 2016). Schools that elect to participate in Turnaround Arts receive a package of arts-based education services, including curricular materials, assessment tools, guidance from the Turnaround Arts national program office, and access to art supplies and musical instruments, among other resources (TurnaroundArts, 2016). The purpose of the Turnaround Arts program is to leverage the arts to drive improvements in academic performance.

The Turnaround Arts approach began in 2012 and is highly reliant on the leadership of principals. Utilizing Turnaround Arts means managing and leading change that impacts all levels of the school (TurnaroundArts, 2016). As of 2016, there was no existing peer-reviewed research pertaining to the Turnaround Arts. For the schools and school districts that have adopted Turnaround Arts, it is imperative to understand how principals contribute to the success of this

approach. The focus of the current study is on the shared characteristics of African American female principals in urban Turnaround Arts schools.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to describe, analyze, and evaluate previous studies (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; C. Jones, 2002; Loder, 2005a, 2005b; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008) on the leadership characteristics of African American female principals. Because of the relatively limited nature of the empirical research base on this topic, only a few studies will be considered in depth. The next section of the literature review contains a discussion of the observed gaps in the literature on the leadership qualities of African American female principals, thus providing a rational for the current study.

Explaining the Late Development of African American Female Leadership

Allen et al.'s (1995) study on African American female principals emphasized the importance of mentors and sponsors in the development of appropriate leadership characteristics in this population. Allen et al.'s study presented a theoretical framework for understanding why gender- and race-specific models of African American leadership have been slow to emerge. Given that it was only in the 1970s that African American women began to enter the profession of principal in appreciable numbers, African American female principals have lacked the ability to provide support and development for each other.

Scholars (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2013; Rowe & Guerrero, 2011; Sinding & Bollingtoft, 2013) claimed that leadership develops as part of a culture in which leaders are acculturated by other leaders. Research supports Allen et al.'s (1995) conclusion about the lack of mentors and sponsors for African American female principals. This conclusion explains the connection

between the very late entry of African American women into the profession and principal and the slow flowering of theories of leadership that draw closely on the identities of African American women. While Allen et al. did not identify specific qualities or characteristics of successful African American female principals, the logic of Allen et al.'s (1995) study suggested that theories of African American female educational leadership would likely be underdeveloped. This insight appears to be borne out by the qualitative findings reviewed in the remainder of this section.

Social Justice and Successful Leadership

Loder's (2005b) study on 20 African American female principals in Chicago, Illinois was of interest because of both the diversity of the participants' ages and the emergence of distinct themes of leadership. Loder's (2005b) sample consisted of female principals who had been born before the Civil Rights Era and who conceptualized their entry into the position of principal as fulfilling a long-standing calling. For this generation of African American female principals, success appears to have consisted of a combination of purely administrative competencies and a form of activist leadership. Such leadership, Loder (2005b) argued, would have been particularly effective in urban schools with large numbers of minorities and minority teachers for whom participation in the educational system involved question of social justice and identity, not merely professional advancement.

Loder (2005b) also found that African American female principals born after the Civil Rights Era did not view their success in terms of social justice. For this cohort, the position of principal was a means of achieving their full professional potential. Loder (2005b) suggested that successful leadership among African American female principals might take different forms depending on their age and relationship to the Civil Rights Movement. This finding can be

32

related to transformational leadership theory. The older principals in Loder's (2005b) study appeared to be closer to the paradigm of transformational leadership. They explicitly draw upon social justice and related concepts to appeal to teachers and students to change the school environment. The younger principals in Loder's (2005b) study appeared to be closer to the paradigm of transactional leadership (the main counterpart to transformational leadership), in that achieved change through the exchange of favors more so than through charismatic and impassioned appeals and examples.

Loder's (2005b) findings have been challenged. Reed and Evans (2008) carried out a qualitative study on African American female principals that reached a conclusion markedly different from that reached by Loder (2005b). Specifically, Reed and Evans found that African American female principals were informed not only by the kinds of race-specific concerns and influences that shaped the older principals in Loder's (2005b) study, but also by forces of gender and professionalism. Reed and Evans'(2008) findings suggested that African American female principals' leadership styles are complex hybrids of several influences. There appears to be more evidence for Reed and Evans' position than for Loder's (2005b) position, giving that othermothering—a form of gendered and racialized leadership exercised by African American female principals—is a major theme in the qualitative literature. The evidence presented for othermothering in the next section of the literature review can be understood as a form of support for Reed and Evans' (2008) findings that African American female principals' leadership synthesizes race-, gender- and professionalization-specific influences.

Othermothering and African American Female Leadership

One of the questions raised by Loder's (2005b) study was whether African American females see themselves specifically as African American and female in their orientations to

leadership, or whether they have a view of themselves that is neither highly gendered nor highly racially specific. Loder (2005b) found that, for older African American female principals, their blackness is a foundation for a specific approach to social justice that informs their leadership, but that younger African American female principals are more deracinated in both their self-concept and exercise of leadership. Loder (2005b) did not engage in a detailed examination of what it meant for older African American female principals to incorporate and integrate both race and gender in their approach to leadership. Such detailed examinations appear elsewhere in the qualitative literature. The foundation for such studies is related to Pollard's (1997) finding that African American female principals have a self-concept that is both highly gendered and highly racially sensitive. Pollard argued that the leadership styles of African American female principals are impacted by how members of this population see themselves. This finding has been thoroughly examined in other studies.

Case's (1997) qualitative study utilized the concept of the othermother. This concept is vital in understanding the roles of both race and gender in explaining the leadership styles of successful African American female principals. Historically, the concept of the othermother can be dated to the conditions and circumstances of American slavery, in which slave families were constantly broken up by slave owners (Eltis, 1972). Although slaves' biological families were fractured, slaves nevertheless came together to form extended, hybrid families as a support structure (J. Jones, 2009). In these circumstances, African American female slaves played the crucial roles of forging and maintaining social ties between slaves, particularly with regards to children (J. Jones, 2009). As Case (1997) pointed out, the term othermother is most often applied to the ability of female principals to treat their students as children, but the concept of the othermother is directly related to the prosocial roles of African American female slaves carried

out forward into the contemporary context of the crisis (Bower, 2013; Condron, Tope, Steidl, & Freeman, 2013; Cooley Fruehwirth, 2013; Davis, 2012; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Hartney & Flavin, 2014; Kinsler, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2013; Tambra & Tyrone, 2014) in African American communities and education.

Case (1997) suggested that othermothering was also a specific orientation exercised by successful African American female principals. According to Case, African American female principals are able to exercise successful leadership throughout othermothering, which consists of treating students as they might treat their own children. The theme of othermothering also emerged in several other studies included in the literature review (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005a) and is therefore worth examining in greater detail.

Othermothering contains two basic components: (a) warmth; and (b) expectations, also known as demanding. Othermothering can be considered a particularly African American female version of warm demanding. This is an educational leadership orientation that has been defined (Bondy, Ross, Hambacher, & Acosta, 2013) as consisting of the following components: (a) Personal interest, (b) demonstrating care, (c) working hard for student welfare, (d) applying consistency in returning students to tasks, (e) using multiple modes of engagement in the classroom, (f) prioritizing academics, (g) reminding students of their full potential, and (h) ensuring that students are accountable (p. 428).

The themes identified by Bondy et al. (2013) also appear in the qualitative literature (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005a) on othermotherimg. There are also important differences between the identified theme of warm demanding and othermothering. For example, whereas the warm demanding literature (Bondy et al., 2013; Bonner, 2014; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Houchen, 2013; D. D. Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, &

Hambacher, 2008; Xu, Coats, & Davidson, 2012) suggested that the warm demanding orientation can be learned and exercised in a generic way by any teacher or principal, othermothering is a specifically African American and feminist framework.

African American feminism and othermothering. Dillard (1995) stated that African American female principals brought their own lives into the leadrership paradigm at urban high schools. In Dillard's case study, feminist leadership was conceptualized in terms of the specific contributions and insights arising from a female principal's gender. This feminist perspective was interwoven with a racial perspective on leadership. The principal profiled in Dillard's case study reported being informed by her gender as well as by her race, for example, in terms of (a) being aware of, and reacting against, institutional power structrures that work against the interests of minority students and teachers; (b) providing a form of gender-specific support to teachers—most of whom, at this principal's school, were women; and (c) incorporating racial / cultural knowledge, such as knowledge relating to communication, into leadership style. Dillard placed the principal's racially informed and gender-specific leadership style into the framework of African American feminism.

Dillard's (1995) case study raised the question of why African American feminist leadership is important in urban schools. Dillard answered this question primarily through the experiences of a single principal. In other studies, the importance of an African American feminist perspective has been established in more direct ways. One of the findings of a larger-sample qualitative study on African American principals' leadership was that race-informed leadership (as exercised by leaders of color) was more likely to resonate with students of color (Jones,. 2002), and that such leadership often benefited from gender-informed leadership as well. The African American feminist leadership perspective is particularly important in urban school

36

settings, because such leadership might be more useful in terms of building inclusivity, identifying and developing teachers of color, and also ensuring that white teachers are able to embrace cultural sensitivity.

Both Jones' (2002) and Dillard's (1995) findings can be related to transformational leadership. Dillard identified the role of African American feminist leadership in bringing about a transformation at an academically stagnant urban school, whereas Jones identified numerous transformational effects of African American feminist leadership. One of the weaknesses of these studies was the absence of a discussion on why African American feminist leadership is effective. Both Jones (2002) and Dillard (1995) established, in different ways, that such leadership is effective, with Jones identifying more specific mechanisms that explain the impact of African American feminist leadership. However, neither Jones (2002) nor Dillard (1995) presented a theoretical explanation of African American feminist is necessary in the first place. Such an explanation is a necessary part of making the case for African American feminist leadership and the paradigm of othermothering against rival theories of leadership.

One theory of transformational leadership that explains the usefulness of African American feminist leadership is that of Lukes (1974). Although Lukes' theory of transformational leadership was developed to explain political change, it is highly applicable to African American feminist leadership and othermotherning, which can be classified as either a reformist or radical application of transformational leadership. Luke wrote that leaders often act on behalf of followers who, because of their place of oppression, are not able to express, act upon, or understand their own best interest, requiring the intervention of a leader. Based on Lukes' discussion of transformational leadership, African American feminist leadership can be understood as a means of (a) listening closely to, and amplifying, the voices

37

and needs of minority students and teachers; and (b) being able to speak and act on behalf of minority students and teachers who are not able to express their interests or preferences at all. African American feminist leadership and othermothering among principals can be understood as utilizations of transformational leadership to redress the powerlessness of students and teachers.

Gaps in the Literature

The gaps in the literature can be understood in the context of the aims and characteristics of qualitative research. The six identified gaps were as follows: (a) dated research, (b) lack of contextualization, (c) lack of criteria for identifying success, (d) lack of systematic classification, (e) omission of self-efficacy, and (f) lack of a change management perspective. Cumulatively, these gaps justify further research on the leadership success factors of African American female principals.

Dated Research

The studies (Allen et al., 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; C. Jones, 2002; Loder, 2005a, 2005b; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008)
Identified for inclusion in the literature review were somewhat dated. Despite the use of temporal filters in the literature search strategy, it appears that most of the seminal qualitative studies on the leadership qualities of African American female principals were conducted in the 1990s and 2000s. It is possible that evolving social, economic, and pedagogical trends have resulted in the formation of new kinds of leadership qualities among African American female principals, qualities that were not covered in the studies examined in depth in the literature review.

Lack of Contextualization

The literature reviewed earlier in this chapter did not go beyond listing some plausible characteristics of successful leadership among African American female principals. While it is important for qualitative researchers to be able to identify the qualities of successful African American female principals, these qualities also need to be placed into context. In particular, the following questions need to be answered: (a) How do successful leadership qualities manifest themselves in actual leadership settings? (b) Why are successful leadership qualities successful? The literature appears to provide a partial answer to the first question and no appropriate answer to the second question. Transformational leadership theory provides a framework through which both of these questions can be answered. In particular, transformational leadership posits that the factors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are what make leadership effective. None of the literature reviewed earlier in the chapter attempted to identify the components of African American female principals' leadership styles as part of an explanation as to why or how their leadership is effective. This gap in the literature could be addressed through the use of transformational leadership theory, particularly through an attempt to discern elements of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration in the leadership styles of African American female principals.

Lack of Criteria for Identifying Success

The literature did not identify an objective or otherwise replicable criterion for identifying successful African American female principals. In several cases, success appeared to be either a self-ascribed condition or the researcher's own assessment, unaccompanied by objective criteria. Without specifying a means of sorting African American female principals

into successful and unsuccessful categories, studies of successful African American female leadership would appear to lack validity.

Lack of Systematic Classification

The literature does not appear to contain a means of classifying the characteristics of successful African American female principals in a systematic manner. This gap can be illustrated through a discussion of Loder's (2005b) study. Loder (2005b) found that the qualities that made African American female principals successful varied depending on the individual principal's proximity to the Civil Rights Era. Thus, Civil Rights Era principals drew upon social justice as part of their success, whereas principals after the Civil Rights era drew upon professional maximization as part of their success. Although Loder's (2005b) finding supported the inclusion of both social justice focus and professional maximization as success factors, it is clear that these success factors rarely coexist in the same principal. While Loder (2005b) was attentive to the existence of different success factors for different principals, the coding of the other studies did not contain similar attempts to differentiate between success factors.

Omission of Self-Efficacy

The studies reviewed in the literature did not contain an explanation of the role of self-efficacy in the expression of successful leadership behaviors among African American female principals. The studies focused on skills that the principals possessed. Bandura (1977) argued that, in many cases, people possess skills that are never actually expressed. It is possible that, in some cases, the differences between successful and unsuccessful African American female principals might lie not in the domain of skills but in the domain of self-efficacy. While self-efficacy was acknowledged as a concept in several of the reviewed studies, the qualitative analyses conducted in these studies did not systematically explore the role that self-efficacy

40

might play in the actuation of successful leadership behaviors among African American female principals.

Lack of a Change Management Perspective

Principals do not exert or fail to exert leadership in a vacuum. Rather, principals are embedded within schools climates and contexts that can impact both the effectiveness and the nature of leadership. For example, in the context of Turnaround Arts, principals' leadership is part of the context of trying to orient an entire school towards the adoption of a program that impacts the entire school.

In the qualitative literature reviewed earlier in the chapter, the leadership of African American female principals was examined in a static way rather than as part of the context of change management. For example, qualitative interviews of African American female principals appear to focus on the identification of general leadership skills, traits, and insights, omitting the possibility that how African American females exercise leadership—and whether that leadership makes a difference to school outcomes—is itself a factor of what is taking place at the school.

Turnaround Arts represents part of a new approach to school management, one in which evidence-based interventions, accompanied by grant money and other tangible and intangible resources, are brought in to impact struggling schools. Principals have long had to exercise leadership in a manner determined by their schools' reliance on such structured approaches (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011). In such environments, what matters more than learning about a principal's general leadership orientations is determining how these orientations arise within the context of adherence to an outside program such as Turnaround Arts.

Turnaround Arts is not a widely used program, and it did not exist when any of the qualitative studies reviewed earlier in this chapter were written. Nonetheless, schools often implement programs similar to Turnaround Arts, which is why it is important to try to distinguish between the general characteristics of a principal's leadership and a principal's leadership characteristics as they exist within the context of program application. In Turnaround Arts in particular, the role of the principal's leadership has to be considered in the context of the sweeping changes taking place throughout the schools as the result of integrating the arts, and the role of the principal in managing these changes. This kind of contextual analysis was absent from the qualitative studies reviewed earlier in this chapter. While these qualitative studies might be useful in terms of identifying the general characteristics of successful African American female principals, they do not address the question of what constitutes successful leadership in an environment roiled by change, such as a school that has adopted and is implanting Turnaround Arts.

Strengths of the Literature

Overall, the research was strong in terms of applying culturally sensitive frameworks to the assessment of African American female principals' leadership. Several of the studies were able to demonstrate and identify specifically African American and female qualities of successful leadership through the explanatory theme of othermothering. While there were gaps in the literature with respect to the utilization of self-efficacy and transformational leadership, one strength of the literature was the successful utilization of elements of culturally sensitive leadership theories.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to describe, analyze, and synthesize both theories and empirical findings relevant to the topic of successful leadership characteristics shared among African American female principals in urban schools. The introduction contained an overview of the literature review's purpose and structure. The literature search strategy described how appropriate theories and empirical research articles (Allen et al., 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; C. Jones, 2002; Loder, 2005a, 2005b; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008) were identified. The historical overview contained a brief discussion of the history of female African American principals. The theoretical foundations discussion, contained an overview of the primary and secondary theories utilized in the study. The review of research articles contained a discussion of empirical research relevant to the topic. The discussion of literature gaps highlighted missing evidence and themes in the research base. The purpose of the conclusion is to present a summary of the literature review and provide a transition to the third chapter of the study.

There appears to be a consensus in the qualitative literature (Allen et al., 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; C. Jones, 2002; Loder, 2005a, 2005b; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008) that there are certain characteristics shared by successful African American female principals. These characteristics include the following:

- Awareness of social justice

- Maximization of professional opportunities

- Engagement in othermothering

- Practice of warm demanding

- Practice of culturally sensitive approaches

- Practice of feminist approaches

While characteristics such as those listed above have been ably identified in the literature (Allen et al., 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; C. Jones, 2002; Loder, 2005a, 2005b; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008), there are several gaps in the literature that require further analysis. The most important of these gaps pertains to the identification and analysis of African American female principals' leadership skills in the context of a larger change management program such as Turnaround Arts. The methodology described and defended in Chapter 3 is a means of closing this and other gaps in the qualitative literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A basic qualitative research approach using interviews and an autoethnography approach was employed to explore the leadership and philosophies of African American female principals at urban Turnaround Art schools. According to Merriam (2009), basic research is inspired by a person interest and desire to attain knowledge in a particular area of study. A qualitative approach for this study was chosen because it helped describe similar characteristics of successful African American female leaders. This chapter described the methodology used to conduct this study, including the procedure used to employ the sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data organization, and data analysis. The chosen methods were intentional to address the two research questions.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the characteristics of African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools, with success defined as 10% or more increase in math and 30% or more decrease in school suspensions.

RQ2: How do African American female leaders' perspectives impact academic success and a reduction in behavior referrals at Turnaround Art schools?

Philosophy and Justification

A qualitative approach for this study was chosen because it helped describe the parallel characteristics of successful African American female leaders. Qualitative methods allow for distinctions and similarities of what is being studied and is not intended to result in generalization of information to a particular population (Merriam, 2009). John Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves

emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of data" (Creswell, 2014, p. 247). He concluded that the final written report has a flexible writing structure that builds a complex, holistic picture with analyzed and detailed views of informants (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Further, Creswell (2014, p. 20) offered the following considerations to guide decisions about whether qualitative methods are appropriate choice for particular study topics and questions:

- If a concept of phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach.
- If the topic is new and the subject has never been addressed with a certain sample group of people.
- Existing theories are not available to explain behavior of the participants or their population of study, and theories need to be developed.
- Researchers' personal training and experiences can influence their choice of approach. The interest in writing in a literary style. The pronoun "I" is used as the writer engages in storytelling form of narration.
- Researchers' writings are for an audience that will accept their research. The audiences may be journal editors, faculty, conference attendees or colleagues in the field.

Autoethnography as Qualitative Research

Autoethnography is a form of autobiographical writing in which personal experiences is intertwined with culture and told in a narrative form. This form of writing can include stories, and events that can provoke emotions and feelings that might not be revealed during ordinary

autobiographies. Autoethnograpahy is a relatively new research approach that has only been used for approximately 20 years. It builds on qualitative research term while introducing a new way of pursuing social knowledge. Moustakas (1990) "labeled the method heuristic inquiry" (cited in Wall, 2006, p.4). Researchers who support this model have argued that this approach is more authentic than traditional approaches because of the personal formality. It uses the voice of the insider and is more likely to be more accurate than an outsider's assessment (Wall, 2006). According to Hughes (2008), this approach is gaining more credibility and influence in education, communication studies, and qualitative research.

Chang (2008) defined autoethnography as a narrative that combines personal interpretation and cultural analyses, which allows this kind of research to surpass an autobiography. The focus of an autoethnography is not just about focusing on self, but more about searching for understanding of others through oneself. According to Chang, these personal experiences can be used as primary data and have been found to be a useful tool in research.

Hughes (2008) addressed the connection of autoethnography to research in education, proposed five key decisions of what he terms a "good enough method" (p. 125), and discussed and how this approach can be applied to expose and address "educator biases relating to the matrix of race, class and gender" (Hughes, 2008, p. 125). Hughes (2008, p. 127) described three bridges connecting autoethnography research in education to teaching and learning. The bridges are:

1. Autoethnography teaches one about self-reflection

2. Autoethnography teaches an individual how to share his or her emotions publicly

3. Autoethnography teaches how to criticize oneself objectively

Hughes (2008) shared how he used himself as an African American male professor to show how his relationships, identifications, and exchanges are related to self-efficacy. Hughes stated that (a) accepting and adopting subjectivity in one's own experience, (b) dealing with the emotional challenges of writing against self, (c) finding and confronting one's authentic voice, and (d) coping with the vulnerability of revealing old-self and new-self-narratives were all important components of the ethnographic method. Hughes' research offers an example of how autoethnography is an appropriate methodological approach to apply to African American female leaders.

As someone with personal experience of having been a Turnaround Arts school principal, and as an African American woman, I consider autoethnography to be a relevant qualitative approach to the study. My own experiences were informed by my gender, race, and culture, and these experiences have created a context through which to apply autoethnography to understand the experiences of other African American female principals of Turnaround Arts schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study integrated self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. Each theory is discussed to help frame this study of African American female principals.

Many of the leadership theories in the 19th and 20th centuries focused mostly on male leaders, thus "ignoring the contributions of feminist based leadership" (Rusaw, 2005, p. 386). Attention towards feminist theories did not become prevalent until the emergence of civil rights and suffrage movements (Giddings, 1984).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the focus was on women in management who had a genderless style of leading. Transformational leadership theory was used to help identify how these leaders

48

created a vision to guide and encourage their staff to infuse the arts to help improve their schools. According to Northouse (2011), transformational leadership is the ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. Self-efficacy theory is the primary theory because of its frequent occurrence as an explanatory framework for the success of educators. Self-efficacy is defined as the beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the actions needed to produce accomplishment of given goals (Bandura, 1997). The study included culturally sensitive educational leadership theory, because this theory emphasizes the roles of color and gender in school leadership and therefore possesses explanatory power to explain the contributions of African American principals (Billings 1999; Tillman, 2004).

Research Design Strategy

A basic qualitative research approach using interviews and an autoethnography of this writer were employed to explore the leadership and philosophies of African American female principals. This approach gave a detail account of the lived experiences of African American female principals. Purposive sampling of four African American female principals from successful Turnaround Art schools was carried out. Artifacts and data were viewed from the National Turnaround Arts Directory and each principal school website to demonstrate improvement in math scores and reduction in behavior referrals.

Measures

Fifteen unstructured/informal interview questions were used to collect data to support the two research questions. Table 2 aligns the research and interview questions. The third column helped to discover themes. According to Merriam (2009) interviewing in qualitative studies are often open-ended and less structured allowing for conversation. Merriam (2009) stated that this method is primarily used in ethnography, case studies and observations.

49

Population and Sample Design

The target population for this study was African American female principals. Sampling sizes in qualitative studies are typically smaller than those in qualitative research. Purposive sampling involves intentional selection of participants who are likely to share rich information with respect to the study purpose (Merriam, 2009). Participants for this study were selected based on their experience, profile and relevance to the research problems and questions. The Directory from of the National Turnaround Arts was used to identify the participants. This directory includes math, reading and behavior referrals data. Staff recommendations from the National Turnaround Arts were also used to identify participants.

Data Collection Procedures

A standardized open interview method was used to seek meaning from the participants. "Questionnaires and interviews are used extensively in educational research to collect data about phenomena that are not directly observable, inner experience, opinions, values, interests and like" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p, 228). Autoethnographic data was also used to help informed the study. Chang (2008) stated, "data collection, analysis and interpretation activities often take place concurrently or inform each other in a cyclical process" (p. 120). Analyses are further used to determine the basis of the researcher's claim and to lay groundwork for future research. Writing an autoethnography can be an overwhelming task; however, it is an appropriate qualitative method giving voice to personal experiences to help extend sociological understanding.

Each participant was thanked in the beginning for their participation in the study. Information was provided to each participant about the significance of the study, and they were informed that the interviews will be taped and reassured that the information will be kept

confidential. Each interview took between a half hour to one hour. During the interviews, questions were asked in sequential order to aid in identifying themes from the data. Probing questions also occurred throughout the interview to help gain a deeper and clear understanding of their responses. At the end of the interview, each participant was asked if they needed clarification or had further questions about the study, including ways in which data would be presented, organized and used. Artifacts and data were discussed, and viewed from the National Turnaround Arts Directory to demonstrate improvement in math scores and reduction in behavior referrals. Each principal shared visual artifacts and documentation during the interviews to substantiate success.

The interview questions for the study have been presented in Table 2. The questions encompass the core issues related to self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and culturally sensitive educational leadership.

Table 2

Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions	Alignment to RQ
RQ1: What are the characteristics of African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools?	Why were you chosen as a Turnaround Arts School? What artifacts do you have to support the increase in math scores and decrease in behavior referrals?	Background Information
	Do you have any previous Fine Art experiences such as playing an instrument, vocal, visual, etc.?	Characteristics
	How would you describe your leadership philosophy and orientations? How you would describe your image of yourself? How are you able to apply aspects of your race and gender to your leadership? What motivates you to remain focused? Have you experienced racial micoagressions as an African American Principal? If so how did it affect you as a leader? What strategies do you use to keep you focused?	Self-Efficacy Theory
RQ2: How do African American female leaders' perspectives impact academic success and a reduction in behavior referrals at Turnaround Art school	How have you been able improve student engagement? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts? How have you been able improve teaching practices? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Transformational Theory and Culturally Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory
	How have you been able to transform school climate? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Transformational Theory and Culturally

	How have you been able to transform teacher orientations and practices? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory
	How have you been able to transform the disciplinary environment? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	
	How have you been able to transform student relations? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	
	How have you been able to transform parent relations? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	

Field Test

      The researcher asked two urban African American principals with proven academic success in Minnesota to field-test the interview questions. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment and Measurement (MCA) of Academic Progress (MAP) data were used to determine the performance for each school. The purpose for field testing was to ensure the questions will answer the proposed research questions precisely. The mock interviews were completed in person. After completion of the field test, the researcher had to revise a few of the questions for better alignment to answer the research questions.

      The field test helped to identify problems before the actual study began. It also helped to test the validity and reliability of the questions. The researcher was able to gather feedback on the appropriateness of the questions being asked and how the questions related to the study. After the field test was completed, the researcher revised the interview questions. Mujis (2001) stated that repeated measurements of the interview questions increase reliability.

Data Analysis

An ethnographic analysis was incorporated to describe the characteristics of African American female principals at Turnaround Arts schools. The researcher recorded each participant's interview using an iPhone audio memo app. The audio records were saved to a secured-password Dropbox folder and a secured-password external hard drive. The recorded information was transcribed verbatim for coding by a hired transcriber. Merriam (2009) stated, "verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis" (p. 110). Copies of each transcript was sent to each participant inviting them to comment and make additions or other changes. Each participant was satisfied with the transcription and did not offer any feedback. In order to discern themes, each transcript was reviewed to gain a holistic understanding of each participants' story shared. Data from the interviews were imported to the MaxQDA data software for organization, coding and identifying theme. Findings that emerge were captured using a chart and narrative writing.

Limitations of Methodology

According to Merriam (2009) qualitative studies have certain limitations due to the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator. The researcher is responsible for collecting, and analyzing data. Without proper training in observations and interviewing, the guidelines of constructing the final report, relies on the researcher's disposition. The limitation can include personal biases, which can create issues with reliability, validity and generalizability (Merriam, 2009, p. 52). Another limitation of this study is that the Turnaround Art approach started in 2012, and there are a limited number of Turnaround Art schools representing this new approach to school reform. Therefore, there is a limited amount empirical research available. Another limitation is the study only focused on five African American principals. While self-efficacy is

the primary theory, the qualitative analyses in the literature did not systematically explore how self-efficacy impacts the actuation of successful leadership behaviors among African American female principals.

Ethical Considerations

The Bible has many scriptures that support living a Christ-centered and ethical life. The scripture that informs ethical values and moral leadership for this researcher is Matthew 7:16 - 20, which states the following:

> 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them (NIV).

The validity and reliability of a study centers around the ethical obligation of the investigator (Merriam, 2009). Patton (2014) discussed the importance of honoring the participants' privacy rights and being cognizant of not harming participants both physically and psychologically. Patton stated that the key to promoting ethical values is informed consent. Ethical considerations are crucial to the safety of all subjects as well as those conducting research. The Belmont Report (1979) addresses three ethical principles; respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

Respect for Persons was one of the most important ethical principles for this study, as the purpose is to explore the characteristics and sense of self of African American female principals in successful urban Turnaround Art schools.

The first aspect of this principle is treating individuals as autonomous agents, and second, that individuals who are vulnerable are entitled to protection (Belmont Report, 1979). This researcher ensured that each participant understood that they could step out of the study at any time if they were not comfortable answering the questions.

The second principle, beneficence, ensures that individuals/subjects are treated in an ethical manner by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, while making an effort to secure their well-being (Belmont Report, 1979). The participants stated that they felt comfortable answering the questions and did not feel exposed to significant risk(s); so the interview process was not interrupted.

The final principle discussed in the Belmont Report is the topic of justice or equality among subjects involved in the study. An example of this would be unjust treatment or practices geared toward principals who answer questions in a negative or bias manner. Each participant was enthusiastic about sharing their stories and felt the interviews were more like a conversation versus an interview.

Informed consent is another important ethical aspect. This aspect was shared in writing, signed and discussed with each participant before beginning the interviews. The informed consent process involves an aspect of answering any questions that the subject(s) have about the research so that they understand their role in the study (Hicks, 2014). It is important for the subjects of research to understand why they are part of the experiment and any risk that might be associated with the research project. Patten (2014) suggested that "This information should be provided in writing, and that participants (or their guardians) should sign an informed consent form to indicate that they understand it and freely agree to participate" (p. 25). In order to protect all individuals from ethical malpractice the researcher included her personal contact

information, and the contact information to the researcher's dissertation advisor in the consent to

participate form (located in Appendix A) allowing the participants to contact the researcher at

any time with questions or concerns related to the study. Another step is permitting the

participants adequate time to process the information the researcher provided during the

informed consent process, so that no impulsive decisions were made (Hicks, 2014). The finally

step in the informed consent process was obtaining voluntary agreement from the participants to

take part in the study. Each participant signed a letter to participate (located in Appendix B).

The researcher in an effort to protect the anonymity of the participants removed

identifiable information and used numbers for the participants. The researcher coded the

material collected from the participants, so that the researcher is the only one able to identify the

participant's. The Belmont Report (1979) was followed and shared with fidelity.

As mentioned earlier, as ethical leaders, it is important to bare positive fruits when

representing Christ and His Kingdom. He does not expect the wicked to bring forth ethical fruit,

He expects His branches to bring forth ethical fruit. Christian researchers today must therefore

claim nothing but Christ's righteousness as a foundation and His blood as security for their

salvation. Faith is the result of God's gracious gift and arises from no inherent goodness or

cleverness in people. Therefore, by the grace of God, living an ethical life is important.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The study represents a focused inquiry that has adopted tools and techniques of autoethnography and qualitative interviewing in order to concentrate on my personal memories, self-observation, self-evaluation and self-analysis. Within this process, four African American Female principals from Turnaround Arts schools were interviewed. To develop and substantiate the researcher's autoethnographic analysis, the four purposefully selected participants indicated they had experiences, challenges and successes in common.

The purpose of the study was to explore the characteristics and sense of self that these African American female principals possess. The first section of this chapter presents a short profile of each participant in the study, which will give the reader a better insight into the lives and thoughts of each participant. This section also includes "verbatim" response to some of the interview questions. The next section will include a summary of "my story" using the interview questions. The conclusions are presented in three sections, with each section corresponding to the research questions of the study using the four participant's responses only. The final section of the chapter consists of a summary and integration of the findings associated with each of the research questions.

Participants

The participants of this study are from Turnaround Art schools from three different states. The Turnaround Arts initiative is a partnership designed to help narrow the achievement gap and increase student engagement through the arts (Turnaroundarts.pcah.gov). Consent from each participant to participate in this study was obtained. All of the participants

signed an IRB - approved consent form (Appendix A). They agreed to participate and allowed their answers to be recorded (Appendix B). These women were hand-picked based on their decrease in behavior referrals and increase in academics after integrating the arts in their schools. When the topic for this research was shared with them, they enthusiastically consented to participate.

Each participant self-reported that integrating the arts helped to decrease behavior referrals and increase math and or reading scores. They each shared artifacts to support this claim.

Participant Profiles

Below are the profiles of the four African American Female Turnaround Art principals as well as this researcher profile. The profiles entail a general narrative of each principal including information about their schools. Their collective, sometimes varied, responses to the research questions will be presented verbatim from the interviews.

Participant One

Participant one has been in the field of education for 32 years. She has been married to her husband who is a pianist for 31 years. She is 56 years old. She has three siblings who are also educators. She is the youngest in her family. She has a bachelor's degree in music with a focus on voice and a master's degree in school administration. She was raised by both parents. She has two children. Both of her children have a master's degree.

Participant one attended an all-Black elementary school, junior high school and high school. She had not attended a white institution until started ungraduated college.

She has worked as a teacher in the same district her entire career. She started her career as an elementary music teacher. She worked at the district level as the Director for Fine Arts for

five years and then was promoted to be the principal of a high school and principal of a

Turnaround Arts school. She states that her leadership philosophy and image of herself is:

> *I believe that no one of us knows more than all of us combined, so my leadership style is to be amongst the people who are doing the work. I am a team leader. That means that, even though the final decision is mine and whatever happens good it's on me and if it's not favorable, that's on me, too, but as long as we decide as a team to move forward with something, then that's my leadership style. It's not all about me, it's all about what we can do together to improve the lives and the skills of our students. It takes a strong leader to select people who can move the needle, instead of being a top down type leader. You don't get buy in and build teacher capacity, if you are always telling people what to do. I lead by example but I am also a team leader and roll up my sleeves right along with my staff to do what it takes to make things work. I feel like I'm a strong leader because of not only my belief in myself, but belief in a higher power. I have to consider others before myself, so while I am a strong leader, I am also a strong follower, because it takes the two ends of the lama, one leading and one following, at some point the follower has to be a leader. I describe my image as just that. Two headed lama. One leading in one direction and one following and vice versa. Always believe that you have to treat other people the way you want to be treated, regardless of what the position you're in, you have to be a listener. Also my leadership style, is based on experience. When I go into a school, I look at those kids as being my kids. As an African American mother, as a ... I have to be a role model. I can't walk in there dressed down and with hair rollers and the head scruff, and be that. I have to bring it every time I stand before my kids, because not*

only am I standing before them, I represent them and their parents. Surely you want to be

recognized as someone who exudes confidence.

When asked what motivates her to remain focused? Her response was:

My motivation is looking at those kids who are not defined by where they live because

they don't have a job. I'm motivated by helping them do better so they can help their

families be better. Some of my students are students who went on to high school to finish,

and their parents did not. Some of my students are students who learned how to speak

English that has to help their parent because they did not learn English. As an African

American woman, what motivates me is helping my students have positive experiences

and having what I have. I know that my kids can be successful and have what I have.

That's what keeps me motivated, knowing that I have wonderful students who should not

be defined by where they live, but they should be defined by their skills and what they're

capable of doing.

In 2012, participant one was selected as one of the first principals to participate in the

first pilot for the Turnaround Arts initiative. She was chosen because of her transformational

leadership style and her ability to effectively build school wide capacity for integrating the arts.

She shared,

My superintendent then which was three superintendents ago, asked if I had presented a

proposal to have an arts magnet school in our district - because they were building a new

magnet school which was three wings in one. One of the wings I was pushing for to be an

arts magnet school, where it drew from suburbia, it drew from everywhere for students to

come to this school. Unfortunately, when I submitted the proposal, he accepted it and he

loved it, but he said you won't be in high school, you're going to turnaround this

elementary school that has been lacking. They wanted to close the school down, but that

didn't happen. I was called in and he said you're going to be the leader of this school,

and we want it to have an arts focus. At that time, it became a six code school which is

considered failing and it received a school improvement grant.

Her school serves 524 students in Pre-K through 8th grade. The student enrollment is 96% minority: 55% Hispanic, 38% Black, 4% White and 3% Asian. This school's minority enrollment is higher than the state average of 42% and 99% of the students receive free or reduce lunch.

Participant one stated that the mission of her school is to "develop lifelong learners who value the integral role the arts play in their academic and personal lives." After the implementation of the arts, she stated her school went from a "dull environment to a lively environment." Students became "excited about learning and classes were more rigorous and exciting."

During the first year of integrating the arts, the student's state math scores went from 34.6% to 36.9%. She stated,

We did see some increases, and the district has used quite a few tests over the years. They

changed testing instruments because of the change of administration and due to finances.

What we do have, is we have the results from the standardized testing. We have our

results from the district benchmark assessments that we have had to use. Plus, I have all

of the I Ready for reading results. So we've taken the pre-assessments by quarter, and

we've seen growth through that. In the use of these art integration strategies, we've

noticed that the kids are more engaged and their stamina is increased because now they

have a different tool that they can use to help them solve a problem. Their frustration

level is lower.

Participant Two

Participant two has been in the field of education for over 40. She is divorced and a

mother of four adult children. She has lived in her city her entire life. She is currently taking care

of both her senior parents. She is 67 years old. She has one brother who lives in a different state.

She has a bachelor's and master's degree in education and a K-12 administration certification.

Participant two attended predominantly white schools in elementary, junior high and high school.

She was not exposed to an "all Black institution" until she attended college in the south.

She has worked in the one district her entire career. She worked at the same elementary

school for 30 years. She started as a Kindergarten teacher and then became an Instructional

Coach in the same elementary school. After receiving her principal certification, she was

promoted to an assistant principal and then to a principal at two different elementary schools.

She states that her leadership philosophy and image of herself is:

I believe that it's a team effort. By team I mean it involves the families. It involves the

kids. It involves the staff. We all have to make this work. We all have to buy into what we

see our vision is. We have to all be on the same page then we understand that we each

have a role to play to make it work. I'm trying to think of what people call me. A lot of

people call me marshmallow. They say, Oh you're so soft. You just let everything happen

and you truly ask what do you think? How should we do this? You listen to us, you're not

one of those top down, I'm going to tell you this is how we do it and you better do it. But

I'm also able to make people aware of our challenges and our areas for growth. Try to

get them to understand that this is something you just can't sweep under the rug. We do

have to address it. Then how are we going to address it? That holds them accountable. If

you said, we need to address it this way then are you doing your part

When asked what motivates her to remain focused? She responded,

You don't have the opportunity to sit back and say, Woe is me. If you do, you not going to

go nowhere. You have to accept it. Maybe it's my age too. You go through many

experiences. I remember in high school being told by a counselor that ... It was during

the Vietnam War, "Oh no college is not for you. Do you know they have so many factory

jobs? Now that we are in a war there is a need for women to go to work. Then, once you

start your family, you'll be fine because you'll have this job where you're bringing in an

income for your family." I went home and told my mom what the counselor said that I

could go work in factories because of the war and stuff... My mom said, "No you're not!

Your father and I are not working this hard for you to do that and, that's not our vision

for you. You're not going into a factory, you're going to college and you are going to do

something big!" So it's been a fight throughout my entire school time. It's like there is

always been teachers saying to me and friends back then... You know you really shouldn't

pursue this…. Either it's because financially I know you can't afford this or…. they just

assume the fact that they think you should be in the home, raising kids or going to work

in a factory. Yeah, you cannot be anything other than what they thought your stereotype

role should've been. So it's ongoing. Both my parents had jobs to offset each other, so

that a parent was always home. Then they had a job on the weekend together cleaning

office buildings in order to make sure that we were going to get the best and be able to do

more than what they were able to do. They came from segregated south, so my parents

always wanted us to have more. That is what has kept me motivated over the years.

Participant two became a Turnaround Arts school during the 2013-14 school year. She stated that she inherited the school when she was transferred there to be the principal. She shared,

> *I didn't put in the application for a Turnaround Arts school. It was done by the arts coordinator with the district. He took it to the superintendent and she decided that the school would become a Turnaround Arts school. At the time, I was principal at a different school. I had just been approached and invited to return to this school, as principal. So I inherited the Turnaround Arts grant. Before I came, the reputation of the school was that they were struggling. The behavior was off the chain. The kids were not learning anything and they ran the school. They weren't in the classrooms. We had a lot of Teach for America teachers here at the time. That was something the district had decided to do. It was an experiment. A strategy. So they started off with eight, but there were only six Teach for America teachers left when I arrived. The understanding was Teach for America teachers had this passion and they would go above and beyond to make sure that the kids learned whatever they needed. They would stay late -come early - those types of things. The district didn't take into effect that relationships were key. These people came in thinking that just because they had this idea that they were willing to go above and beyond outside of a duty day and know that they're not going to be compensated for it, that was going to take the place of them taking time to build relationships with the kids. So the classroom management was not there. They kept questioning why the kids weren't appreciating the fact that they are here. They really care about them. I really care about ... Why aren't they taking advantage of it? So all that to say that spring when I had accepted to become the principal, there were only two*

Teach for America teachers left. One was a fifth-grade teacher and one was a first-grade

teacher. When I came in during that spring, I had to hire, eight teachers because other

people were leaving just because they were burnt out and tired because of the poor

school climate and student behavior. So for me, having the opportunity and the resources

from Turnaround Arts to come in with a different philosophy really helped. It's like this is

not a sit and get. This is not a prison. The kids are kids. They need to learn that they can

express themselves as creatively as they want to be. And not have all these restrictions on

them. And it should not be seen as an add-on. This should be part of learning. How can

we even teach them if they're not engaged and motivated to learn? So, for me, having that

was really a huge benefit and I appreciated the fact that we had resources, financial

resources, to back it up. Also the expectations for having that money and program here,

helped the district view the school through a different lens instead of thinking -We might

close that sucker down because of those kids ... We'll just spread them out into the other

schools.

Her school serves 321 students in Pre K- through 6th grade. The student enrollment is

93% minority: 87% Black, 3% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 7% white. This school has a 99% free

and reduce student population. Since integrating the arts, the state math scores increased from

16% to 21.4% proficiency. She stated that her focus is really about growth because of how low

the students are. She shared,

So we use our Formative Assessment system for Teachers (FAST) assessments to monitor

and determine growth. I know we were recognized at the district for two years of math

growth. We had 17% increase from year to year since we had the Turnaround grant in

the growth score. In fact, at one of our horizontal, or they call them the portfolio

meetings for all the high priority schools with the research evaluation department –

(REA), that department wanted to know what we were doing to show such a huge gain in

growth for math. I shared that it was the Turnaround Arts strategies. They wanted a

different answer. It was interesting. They wanted me to talk about guided math and how

every teacher had been trained and all of that. That I had a math coach who was going in

and coaching teachers and modeling and that. Just to tell them that no it is the strategies

that allows the kids to understand - Learning's supposed to be fun. It is not this tedious

thing where you got to sit and get and not have any opportunity to get up and move and

interact with the curriculum. So, by telling them that, I could see on their faces that it

wasn't the answer that they wanted. After I gave that answer someone else said, "Well

isn't it also that you have a math specialist in your building…" They were adamant. Let's

put this on the record because we think it's all of these other technical pieces and it's not.

The fact that the kids are now more engaged in their own learning and can present their

understanding in different ways is what has made the difference.

 We use the discovery system to monitor behavior. So we look at the number of referrals.

When I first started here, I was told that there were 799 behavior referrals. That wasn't

an accurate number because they were so overwhelmed, the behavior deans hadn't

inputted all the information into the system. So seven hundred and something, I'm

thinking, "Seriously?" The suspensions which is out of school, were in the three

hundreds. So the end of the first year of Turnaround Arts, we had reduced that.

Suspensions were less than 10. They want to know, "What are you doing?" "What are you

doing?" Or either there was a question. You aren't reporting information. It's like okay,

that was year one. So now we got to prove it with year two. Which we also saw a

continued decrease when we looked at the suspensions at the end of year two. We were at

seven but it only involved two kids. With those two kids were the ones that had really had

some issues that we truly could not meet their needs. They needed a different setting and

a different response. The discovery data and as well as the anecdotal data supported that.

The fact that I have staff that are not bidding out says a lot. So this year I had two people

that I had to replace. But those were for marriages and moving out of the state. In fact,

the people that worked as outsiders coming into the building have reported that they feel

a change. It's not the same school and how they like coming here."

Participant Three

Participant three has been married to her husband for 20 years. She is 49 years old. She

has three children; one in college and two in elementary school. Participant three attended

predominantly Black schools in elementary, junior high and high school. She did not attend a

white institution until undergraduate college. Her father is a pastor and her mother was a music

teacher. She has two siblings and is the oldest. She has a bachelor's and master's degree in

education. This is her second year as a principal. Her school was already a Turnaround Arts

school, and she was selected as principal because of her background in the arts. She sings with a

nationally known gospel group, and plays the piano for her church.

She worked as an elementary teacher and has always used the arts as a teaching strategy.

She stated that:

 I have 15 years of teaching through the arts. That's all I know. The transformation

 because of the arts that I've seen in our scholars was already familiar, so you take

 something that's familiar and apply it to something that's new – helps students to be

 more motivated, more engaged and more apt to follow through on assignments.

She states that her leadership style philosophy and image of herself is:

My philosophy around leadership, is shared leadership. I like to build capacity around leadership. I want to be able to leave a school that will run itself, with me or without me, because the beliefs are there and the commitments are there, and we did it together. I believe that all children can learn in the sense that, they may learn at a different pace, but it's up to us, the adults, to figure out what that means for individual scholars. It's about equity, and it's about mindsets. I believe as a leader it's important that people do not necessarily have to agree, but should push each other, to the best results and the best situations for our scholars that will matter. I believe in quality instruction. I believe that it is a mission. I believe the work we do for education is a mission. It's not a job. It's not a career. It is a mission, and I think for leaders it's important to help unpack that for staff. To ask, why are you here? What is your reason for being here? I build on the strengths of staff. I believe that when you build capacity you find those that are experts in those areas and you grow them and you spread that. There's beauty in us learning with each other and from each other, 'cause it gives us that growth mindset. It helps us to know that we're continuing to grow, that we've not arrived yet, because every year is different and every year we need to adjust. It's taken me a while to know myself, and be strong to be myself and there's a difference. I do know myself. It's Can I be myself? I like me. I think my mission is so strong and my beliefs are so strong that ... you adjust just as you would with respect to any setting or with any person that you're working with. I find beauty in being myself. That didn't come right away, because of needing to navigate through systems and cold switching, but I'm finally at a place in my 22, almost 23 years in education that I can walk through the doors and say, Here I am!

When asked what motivates her to remain focused? She responded, `

My child. My Karington, my oldest. You know, I resented at one point being a teacher,

because I was taking care of everybody else's children, doing well by them, in a system

that did not do well by my own child. That angered me. That keeps me focused every day.

I think about when we're talking about a child and discipline or talking about a special

ed. scholar or what have you... I think what would I want for my own children? How do I

want you to see this for the sake of my own child? My staff knows that I'm going to ask

certain questions of them about how they are pushing their students to the next level.

We've never arrived with our kids. We have to keep going and growing. But what keeps

me focused is my "why" to make a difference in the system for other Karingtons. I see

them. I want them to love the skin they're in. I want them to see themselves.

I just did a school challenge in my bulletin. I said, you know, just look at our walls. Do

our families know that they're represented here? Ain't a picture up there that represents

our families or student population? I talked to the staff at the staff meeting, and I said, we

don't even have our own scholars up in the main hall or our common areas. And some

teachers do really well with decorating their classrooms, but we need to replicate that

everywhere in our school. We got bulletins that say all are welcome here. Are they?

Who's welcome here? And how do they know that?" And so, it pushes me as well.

Her school was reconstituted in 2012 and was selected to become a Turnaround Arts

school in 2013. Her school serves 540 students in K through 8th grade. The student enrollment is

100% students of color; 98% Black and 2% Hispanic. This school has a 99% free and reduce

student population.

She stated the first year of integrating the arts, they saw a 4% increase in math and 6% in reading. Last year on the state tests her students went from 31% to 33% proficient. She shared although the proficiency scores are low, her students are making two-digit growth in both math and reading. She shared,

> *You have to have the right people in staffing. You want your music teacher to be able to understand your core subjects and how they align and connect with music. Again, with your art teacher, your dance teacher, or your Phy Ed teacher, etc…it's all about movement and engaging students. When you make those connections and you collaborate, you can take a music lesson and create your own music bars and then put them in 4/4 time and break those notes into a half, a quarter, an eighth and be able to add that up to make your whole ... you're doing math, but you're also creating music, so you can play that together. When you give scholars a different vehicle to learn and engage in their learning, the behaviors go down. The key thing is to get them engaged and motivated!*

Participant Four

Participant four has been in the field of education for 21 years. She is 44 years old. She has been married to her husband for 10 years. She has two school-age children. She was raised by her mother. She has one brother who is an engineer, and she is the youngest. She has a bachelor's and master's degree in education. Participant four has always attended diverse schools from elementary through college. She states that her leadership philosophy and image of herself is:

> *Let's see, if I tell you to do something you're going to see me doing it, okay? I see myself as a servant leader. It's not top down, it's like we're all in this together because I need*

you to make this happen and you need me to make this happen as well. It's like a community. I'm not going to ask you to do something that I wouldn't do. It's like hands on because if I want you to do something I better be able to do it too and if I can't I need to find support to help us get there so that's how we are. I see myself as a positive person, more of hands on and my staff can tell you that as well. I see myself as I'm here to support the staff and students and what can we do to make sure our students are doing well, it's not about me. If people do something I'm giving them credit for it. I see myself as just being in the trenches because I want to understand what they go through from day to day, so I can help better understand it. We need to understand what kids are going through or what the teachers are going through so we can provide the right resources for our students as teachers. I'm like if we're swimming, we're going to swim together. It may take us a while to get there but we're going to do it together."

When asked what helps you remain focused, she responded,

My kids because I really don't want anybody to mistreat my kids, so I'm making sure that whatever I say and do I'm doing it here as well. I'm not perfect but, yeah, I mean seriously they keep me grounded. When I'm here I'm all about the kids here. When I'm home it's all about them at home, but my kids seriously keep me grounded. My students have a lot going on in their lives. I want to make sure when they are here, they are in a positive and safe environment because they're going through some things. I'm like, Okay, I want my kids here to be exposed to many positive things, and we have to make sure we build those relationships and make a difference.

She has worked in the same district her entire career, but at different schools. Her current school was reconstituted two years ago. She was selected as the principal to fresh-start the

school. She stated she solicited feedback from staff before applying to become a Turnaround Arts school. She shared,

> *We solicited input from our families about what they would like to see at the school to help their students be successful. Parents were mentioning they wanted art, the visual piece, they wanted music. Different things like that so we were like, Okay, so we applied for the turnaround grant and was hoping that we would get this because this would help with what we were trying to do and it would help to support students. Not all students show everything they know on books and paper, but there's other ways they can show what they know. Implementing the arts would be an opportunity for us to do that. So, this is how this came about. Then I sent an email out to the staff, to see if this would be something they would want. Everybody said yes. Even though it might be out of their comfort zone but we are all willing to do what it takes to help our kids.*

Her school servers 322 students in 6th through 8th grade. The student enrollment is 94% minority: 83% Black, 5% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 6% white. This school has a 96% free and reduce student population. She stated since integrating the arts, they have made more growth in reading than math. She stated that they made approximate 12% growth in math and 17% growth in reading based on the common formative assessments. She has noticed more parent involvement and students being excited about school. She shared,

> *What we're doing now is having more opportunities for students to show what they know. We're inviting parents to come in more -like doing math and literacy night that just happened. We provided academic strategies for parents and we also had some performances. A couple of kids sung, there were some drumming going on, there was storytelling. Our parent involvement numbers have increased a lot. We were comparing*

from prior to where we are now. We got a lot of feedback from parents on, just Thursday

night, about our literacy night and much fun it was. So I was like, "okay," so they say

we're moving in the right direction, I'm like, okay, okay, this is something that was

needed.

My Story

Conducting this study has provoked me to reflect more about who I am as an African American female leader. African American female educational leaders have historically faced racial and gender challenges (Brown, 2005). These perceived challenges could impact leadership practices. After interviewing the four African American female principals and learning that we had a lot of common characteristics ignited my excitement to share our stories. An examination of the literature review related to African American women in educational leadership affirms that there is not significant research on this topic. Using an autoethnography research approach has helped me to systematically analyze (graphy) the personal (auto) in order to understand cultural experiences (ethno) (Ellis, 2014).

My personal faith and philosophical foundation was formed when I was a small child. I grew up in a Christian home in which church, family and education was important. It was instilled in me as a child to always look to Christ for my salvation and that only what I do for Christ will last. My parents did not play an intricate part in my upbringing for a variety of reasons. My grandmother raised me and I thank God for her. As a result of my upbringing, I believe a solid foundation of believing in myself was formed.

The most significant implications of my faith is helping others and sharing my faith. When I am helping others, it makes me happy and fulfilled. In the book of Matthew 5:16, it says-

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." I try to live my life accordingly.

I am married and have three adult children and one granddaughter. I am 53 years old. I am an only child and was raised by my grandmother. I attended an all-Black school from K through 8th grade. In the early-70s the Chicago public schools were recruiting students of color because they were interested in integrating schools, so my grandmother decided that I would enroll in an all-white high school. This was my introduction to interacting with predominately white peers.

I started my career as a social worker in 1987. I transitioned to the field of education 22 years ago when I relocated to Minneapolis, MN. I started working as an elementary teacher and found my niche as a middle school social studies teacher. I worked in three different school districts and two different states as a principal.

I have worked with many students that come from difficult circumstances and have witnessed them being productive and working up to their fullest potential. I understand that the quality is not based on location or the ethnic and social make-up of the neighborhood. Quality is based on the high level of expectations and beliefs of the person in the front of each classroom and on the vision, and energy of the person in the principal's chair.

Leadership is key to transforming any organization. In order to effect change, it is necessary to create a sense of collaboration amongst staff. You cannot lead a team of one or two rather you have to cultivate collective responsibility from the entire organization. I believe in a team approach because "no man is an island." If you really want to move an initiative forward, people need to have a voice or be able to provide input.

I considered myself a transformational and charismatic leader. My goal is to motivate and inspire my staff to be their best. I lead by example and hold myself accountable for my actions. I lead with integrity and motivate my staff with a shared vision and clear goals. I considered myself authentic, empathetic, a great communicator and humble. The characteristics that define me as a leader are team player, patient, humble, sociable, efficient, responsible, tenacious, dedicated, trustworthy, flexible, good listener, negotiator, and supportive. I have the courage to stand by my convictions. My greatest conviction is creating a positive school environment in which students are learning and teachers are reflecting on their practice.

I have only worked in schools with a high percentage of students of color and a high percentage of poverty. I feel drawn to this population and consider it my mission. My students and their families keep me motivated because I can relate too many of their stories. My life story signifies that growing up in poverty does not have to dictate your future. When I encounter injustices, I begin to self-reflect, meditate, and look inwardly. I remind myself "why, I do what I do" and that I am an advocate for the students and families. This strategy has helped me to remain focused.

My school was selected to become a Turnaround Arts school during the 2013-14 school year. After integrating the arts into the culture and fabric of the school for two years, student behavior referrals went from over 200 per year to less than 40. Our state math scores went from 33.4% to 44.3%. My school was removed from the state lowest performing list of schools.

I believe my gender and race impacted how quickly I was able to transform my school because I was able to communicate with my students and families in a style that they understood. Elliott (2016) stated that African Americans communication patterns are generally passionate and animated. The patterns tend to perceive greater emotional intensity. Talking directly and face

to face with a person about a concern is preferred. Eye contact is important and it is considered disrespectful if the person does not look at the person when speaking. Gestures are normative and are valued as enhancing the communication. Vocal patterns contain a wide range of volume and pitch. A high pitch and assertive voice is considered appropriate.

Women are considered sensitive, nurturing and attentive to others (Rettner, 2012). These traits are conveyed in my leadership style. Over the years, I have combed my students' hair so they were not bullied or teased by their classmates, I have purchased food, collected donations to help families, etc. There are many stories that I could share. I am willing to do whatever it takes to support my student's emotional and personal development. I am also willing to provide resources, and support for my staff to help them continue to grow as teachers.

In May 2016, students from my school were invited to the White House to perform. The First Lady, Michelle Obama acknowledged the achievements that we had made in math, reading and decrease of behavior referrals after integrating the arts. The transcription of her speech is located in Appendix D.

The life experiences of the four principals that were interviewed mirrors my experiences. The theories presented in this study align with our self-image, character, and philosophies. Whether in the role as a female or an African American leader, each one of us developed strategies to cope with injustices. The development of these strategies is viewed as positive and imperative to be successful in our roles.

In summary, the findings of this study echoes who I am as an African American female leader.

Presentation of Findings

The findings have been presented in three parts. Each part contains the answers

associated with one of the research questions of the study. Each findings section contains

emergent themes, an explanation of how the themes emerged from the raw data, and the

presentation of supporting verbatim text from the qualitative interviews conducted for the study.

It should be noted that, to preserve privacy, each of the four principals from whom data were

collected has been identified by a number rather than by name.

RQ1 Findings

The first research question of the study was as follows: What are the characteristics of

African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools? In this research

question, success was defined as 10% or more increase in math and 30% or more decrease in

school suspensions. The first research question was broader in scope than the second research

question, with the goal of data analysis being to identify the shared qualities of the four

principals who contributed data to the study.

Table 3 below contains the summary of shared characteristics of African American

female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools. For each characteristic, there is either an

illustrative narrative justification or a direct quote from a participant.

Table 3

Shared Characteristics of African American Female Leaders

Theme	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Participant #4
Servant leadership	"I see myself as a servant leader. It's not top down, it's like we're all in this together…"	"My leadership style is to be amongst the people."	"I care about people. I think it is important to involve everyone including the kids and	"I want to be able to say that we did this together. I believe in building a community of

			"families."	"leaders."
Leadership by example	"If I tell you to do something, you're going to see me doing it…"	"I roll up my sleeves right along with my staff to do what it takes to make things work."	"We all have to make this work."	"It's a shared leadership."
Strength / commitment	"I'm going to take care of them…"	"I feel like I'm a strong leader because of not only my belief in myself, but belief in a higher power."	"As a black female, I have always been taught that you are strong."	"I build on the strengths of staff."
Othermothering	"We should treat every student as if they were our own. When I am here it is about my students."	"I look at those kids as my kids."	"It's counselor. It's motivator. It's mom."	"I think about when we're talking about a child and discipline or talking about a special ed scholar or what have you, I think about, 'What would I want for my own children? How do I want you to see this for the sake of my own child?'"
Respectful communication and interaction	"Even with a new assistant principal coming along, I had to say, 'Hey show respect'" [to the kids].	"I suppose them because I know. I've been there too."	"The fact that they see me in the lunchroom, in the hallways, in their classrooms, talking to them like they are important. Letting them know, 'Yes you are important.'"	"I don't ask my staff to do anything that I am not willing to do."
Remembering / applying roots	"As an African American	"As an African American	"I was taught we have to	"I need you to see me black. I

79

	female, I have always been taught you deal with whatever situation and you can make it work."	mother, I have to be a role model." "They can identify with me because I look like them."	model for our students and teach perseverance."	need you all to see what I bring forward in my blackness."
Goal-driven leadership	"I include my staff in decision making. I tell them we are swimming together."	"I'm motivated by helping them do better…"	"We use the FAST assessment to help monitor student growth."	N/A

The following themes emerged from an analysis of the raw data for RQ1.

- Servant leadership. The four leaders who contributed data to this study all saw themselves as being servant leaders whose mission was to elevate the outcomes of schools and families, not to aggrandize themselves. In their own language, each leader expressed a humble consciousness of being at the service of the school mission. The idea of top-down leadership was unanimously frowned upon.

- Leadership by example. Each of the four leaders reported her willingness to enter the trenches along with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Each leader was in touch with day-to-day developments at the school and made sure that she modeled whatever she wanted to see reflected in the behavior of teachers and students.

- Strength/commitment. The leaders were all committed to working as hard as possible to ensuring the achievement of school goals. The leaders also saw themselves as being strong—not in the sense of strong top-down leadership, but in the sense of a strong representation of prosocial and pro-academic values.

- Othermothering. The leaders acknowledged that their blackness and femininity informed their leadership; each leader saw herself as a symbolic mother who bore a deep responsibility for students and for the school community in general.

- Respectful communication and interaction. In keeping with their aversion to top-down leadership, the leaders were committed to speaking do, and dealing with, others as equals, not as subordinates. Even though leaders were prepared to make leadership decisions, they did so in a manner that was collegial and collaborative.

- Remembering/applying roots. The leaders were aware of their own positions not only as black women but also as people who had emerged from conditions of deep social and economic disadvantage, and who were determined to apply this consciousness of their roots to being empathetic with students and parents from similar backgrounds.

- Goal-driven leadership. Each leader in the study was informed by the achievement of academic and behavioral goals.

RQ2 Findings

The second research question of the study was as follows: How do African American female leaders' perspectives impact academic success and generate a reduction in behavioral referrals at Turnaround Art schools? The answer to the second research question was facilitated by the data analysis carried out for RQ1, in which the following characteristics of African American female leaders were discovered:

- Servant leadership
- Leadership by example
- Strength/commitment

- Othermothering

- Respectful communication and interaction

- Remembering/applying roots

- Goal-driven leadership

Using these categories, it was possible to determine how each leader in the sample could impact academic success. In some cases, the comments addressed specific impacts on academic success; in other cases, it was possible to infer the relationship between successful leaders' characteristics and academic success. The data have been presented in two tables below and will be the basis for a narrative discussion of how the characteristics of successful teachers helped to improve academic outcomes.

Table 4

Data Analysis, RQ2 (Academic Success)

Theme	Participant #1 Academic Success	Participant #2 Academic Success	Participant #3 Academic Success	Participant #4 Academic Success
Servant leadership	*Various examples of serving students' academic needs through placing students first.*	*Various examples of serving students' academic needs through placing students first.*	N/A	*Evocation of servant leadership in various contexts.*
Leadership by example	"Like I said, led by example."	*Various examples of leadership by example.*	*Various examples of leadership by example.*	"It's a shared leadership."
Strength / commitment	*Various examples of committing to academic excellence.*	*Evocation of committing to teacher development as a means of improving student success.*	*Various examples of committing to teachers and students,*	"I build on the strengths of staff."
Othermothering	"When you're here, then I'm mama." "I really do treat them like they're my kids."	"Our kids need to see people just like us so that we can model how they're supposed to act."	"It's counselor. It's motivator. It's mom."	"I think about when we're talking about a child and discipline or talking about a special ed scholar or what have you, I think about, 'What would I want for my own children? How do I want you to see this for the sake of my own child?'"
Respectful communication and interaction	"They know that I care…"	*Evocation of compassionate, active listening to improve student*	"The fact that they see me in the lunchroom, in the hallways, in their classrooms, talking to*	*Various examples of respectful communication*

		engagement and performance.	them like they are important. Letting them know, 'Yes you are important.' Letting them know, "Yes you are important." For them to understand that it's genuine and it's not just me giving them lip service. So that has, I think, allowed them to say, 'She does mean it when she says you can be confident.' 'Show what you have.' 'Be a risk taker.' 'Go out there.'"	*and interaction.*
Remembering / applying roots	"I can [take various actions] and maybe it does a difference because of my race."	*Evocation of cultural modeling*: "Put your model hat on."		"I need you to see me black. I need you all to see what I bring forward in my blackness."
Goal-driven leadership	"If something is not right, we work through it, and our job is to get better."	*Evocation of using different strategies to motivate students to learn.*	*Use of the FAST assessment.*	N/A

In their comments for RQ2, the participants articulated how their characteristics translated into academic terms. The common theme in these responses was that the leadership style of the principals could motivate students—whether through direct interactions between principals and students or through indirect means, such as the principals' ability to strengthen classrooms and home environments. The principals attributed some portion of academic performance to their own leadership traits.

The focus of the study was primarily on the phenomenology of leadership itself, the study findings did not establish causal links between leadership orientations and academic success. In each of the four cases, the principals discussed how the schools use to have substantially lower levels of academic performance. Three of the four principals suggested that their leadership

orientations impacted student achievement through the mediation of engagement. In other words, principals could deploy leadership orientations such as othermothering, leadership by example, and commitment to build students' investment and engagement in their academic lives, leading to measurable improvements in academic performance.

In the remainder of the RQ2 comments, the participants discussed their influence on school climate as the main explanation of a reduction in behavioral referrals. The participants expressed an expansive view of school climate, pointing out that climate extended from the school itself to the students' home environments and to the community at large. The participants believed that the task of leadership was to effect improvements in each of these venues. Othermothering was particularly important in this context, as the participants described it as a means of positively influencing not only the school climate itself but also the climates of students' homes. Other factors were important as well, with respectful communication and interaction playing important roles in creating positive influence not only within the school but also in student families and in the community at large.

Leadership by example was also important in this context, because principals were attempting to influence not only students but also parents, teachers, and others. The principals all displayed an awareness of school climate as being part of the larger climate, which they were determined to positively influence. This influence was exercised in several ways, all of which the principals were aware of.

Table 5

Data Analysis, RQ2 (Lowering Behavioral Referrals through Improved School Climate)

Theme	Participant #1 School Climate	Participant #2 School Climate	Participant #3 School Climate	Participant #4 School Climate
Servant leadership	*Various examples of improving the climate by placing students and teachers first.*	*Various examples of improving the climate by placing students and teachers first.*	*Various examples of improving the climate by placing students and teachers first.*	*Evocation of servant leadership in various contexts.*
Leadership by example	"Whatever I'm doing, they will want to do the same."	"In order for me to stand before my staff, I had to learn to use art more."	N/A	"It's a shared leadership."
Strength / commitment	*Evocation of trust-building to cement school wide commitment to excellence.*	*Evocation of trust-building to cement school wide commitment to excellence.*	N/A	"I build on the strengths of staff."
Othermothering	N/A	N/A	"I have heard from my family liaison that they appreciate the fact that I am black and I'm here. They have heard from their kids that I'm visible. That I care for them. That I take time to talk to them. That type of thing."	"I think about when we're talking about a child and discipline or talking about a special ed scholar or what have you, I think about, 'What would I want for my own children? How do I want you to see this for the sake of my own child?'"
Respectful communication and interaction	"They feel like they want to be here, they want to work here, and they love working with me." "Everybody has a voice."	"I want you to use the academic enhancement, the art, music, phys ed, library, I want you to use them, co-teach together. That's how I help them improve their practice because if they know it works	"The fact that they see me in the lunchroom, in the hallways, in their classrooms, talking to them like they are important. Letting them know, 'Yes you are important.' Letting them	*Various examples of respectful communication and interaction.*

		amongst their colleagues then they're willing to give it a try."	know, "Yes you are important." For them to understand that it's genuine and it's not just me giving them lip service. So that has, I think, allowed them to say, 'She does mean it when she says you can be confident.' 'Show what you have.' 'Be a risk taker.' 'Go out there.'"	
Remembering / applying roots	*Evocation of community-building based on shared cultural values.*	*Evocation of community-building based on shared cultural values.*	N/A	"I need you to see me black. I need you all to see what I bring forward in my blackness."
Goal-driven leadership	N/A	N/A	*Use of the FAST assessment. Use of data to reduce suspensions.*	N/A

Integration of Findings and Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the study. The findings were presented in two sections, with each section corresponding to one of the research questions of the study. The final section of the chapter contains a summary and integration of the findings associated with each of the research questions.

There are two main conclusions that can be reached from the data analysis. The first conclusion is that the phenomenology of leadership as disclosed by the four participants in the study involved both gendered and racialized concepts. The participants left little doubt that they looked upon themselves not as generic leaders, but as specifically African American and female leaders. The participants' gender identities were reflected in the emergent theme of

othermothering, per which the principals came to see themselves as playing maternal roles within the school. The participants understood othermothering in specifically racial terms; they were aware that the circumstances of many African American communities involve fragmented families and gaps in parental leadership that need to be remediated by principals and other school personnel.

Othermothering was a theme that was closely related to both servant leadership and leadership by example. As the principals saw themselves in other-mother terms, they also conceived of their purpose as involving service to the students and the need to fill the gaps in the development of the students. In this sense, othermothering was not a standalone theme or concept, but rather an all-encompassing paradigm that explained much of the data contributed by the participants. As other-mothers, the principals who contributed data to the study functioned as bridges between various gaps that exist in the public and private lives of disadvantaged students.

African American female leadership took on a very specific form during the participants' responses. This leadership was socially and historically aware. Just as othermothering began in the context of slaves seeking to mother children whose biological mothers were taken from them by the then-common practice of breaking up slave families, othermothering in Turnaround Arts schools reflected the principals' own experience of socioeconomic vulnerability, both in their individuals lives and in the lives of the African American communities in which they grew up.

In this context, the school leader as other mother is someone with a deep consciousness of the importance of remediating the vulnerabilities of disadvantaged communities. For such leaders, leadership is not merely a professional vocation—it is a personal mission, as was amply clear in the participants' comments. This mission is, in turn, informed by specific aspects of blackness and femininity, including:

- The concept of caring for a larger community

- The need to be a strong but compassionate model

- The need to work hard alongside others

- The need to overcome challenges and difficulties

- The need to represent oneself and one's race proudly

The findings isolated in this chapter will be drawn upon again in the fifth chapter of the study, with the specific purposes of (a) examining past theories and empirical findings, (b) providing recommendations for practice and (c) providing recommendations for future scholarship. In the concluding chapter, the limitations of the study will also be acknowledged. Finally, a summative conclusion will be provided.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are to (a) discuss the findings of the study in terms of theories and past empirical findings, (b) acknowledge the limitations of the study, (c) provide recommendations for future scholarship, and (d) provide recommendations for future practice. In addition, a brief summative conclusion will be provided.

Discussion of Findings

The three theoretical frameworks utilized in the study were (a) self-efficacy, (b) transformational leadership, and (c) culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. The findings of the study offered evidence of the explanatory power of each of these theoretical frameworks. Self-efficacy was observed in the way in which principals were able to orchestrate their pre-existing skills into school leadership. The key factor in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is not the generation of new skills, but the ability to call upon and apply existing skills even in the face of pressure. All of the principals in this study had leadership skills that were generated in previous capacities, and they were able to apply these skills at the Turnaround Arts schools.

The specific skills that the principals applied can be classified under the heading of both transformational leadership and culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. In terms of transformational leadership, the principals were able to inspire their followers through (a) leadership by example, (b) servant leadership, and (c) promotion of a positive vision. According to Bass and Avolio (1990), these orientations are representative of the construct of transformational leadership.

The specific kind of transformational leadership exercised by the principals was indebted to culturally sensitive educational leadership theory. Each of the principals in the study was acutely aware of serving a primarily African American student population. This population was served in culturally ways; for example, principals noted speaking to African American students

in particular ways, serving as maternal models, and taking color into account in numerous ways when exercising leadership. However, when dealing with students, staff members, and others who were not African American, the principals reported engaging in a form of code-switching—that is, the engagement of different cultural standards more appropriate to a non-African American population.

The principals' awareness and practice of culturally sensitive leadership was not merely keyed to the identities of the followers but also to the identities of the principals themselves. The principals were aware of themselves specifically as African American women, and they allowed race and gender—and the interaction between race and gender to inform their leadership. The construct of othermothering was particularly useful in defining the principals' leadership styles. As these leaders were aware of themselves not only in the role of female nurturer (that is, as a symbolic mother to children who, in many cases, came from fragile or fractured families) but also of a specifically African American nurturer aware of the added needs of members of the African American community.

The construct of other mother resonated deeply with participants in this study. As discussed in greater depth in the second chapter of the study, the families of African American slaves were typically split for economic reasons; in this milieu, it was all the more important for the women who remained behind to serve as mothers to all the children, not merely their own children. In this manner, a collective of strong and determined African American women were able to remediate some of the deficits in African American families created by the institution of slavery.

The principals in the study recalled growing up, being educated, and, in some cases, entering professional practice during times of great racial tension in the United States. Although

the principals each expressed an awareness of, and gratefulness for, improvements in the lot of African Americans, they were also aware that African American schoolchildren, parents, and teachers continue to face many special challenges. The principals applied the other mother concept to applying a form of leadership designed to address these challenges as only cultural insiders can.

Ultimately, the study triangulated previous empirical work (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Jones, 2002) in which African American educational leaders have applied culturally specific leadership practices. The study also went further. By providing evidence of not merely a race-informed, but of an intertwined race- and gender-informed form of leadership that can be encapsulated in the other mother concept. The study found evidence that profound support structures activated during the centuries of American slavery are not only alive in the context of school leadership but have also informed the leadership of mainly African American schools.

The key contribution of the study lies in explaining the mechanisms through which African American female leadership is effective. The study can be described, in Dixon's (2000) terminology, as (a) generating information from data and (b) generating knowledge from information. According to Dixon,

> Information [is] data that is 'in formation'—that, data that has been sorted, analyzed, and displayed, and is communicated through spoken language, graphic displays, or numeric tables. Knowledge, by contrast, is defined as the meaningful links people make in their minds between information and its application in action in a specific setting. (Dixon, 2000, p. 13).

Previous studies (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Jones, 2002) have provided substantial information about the characteristics of African American, and, in particular, African American female, leadership. In the current study, analysis of how these leadership characteristics improve academic and behavioral outcomes provided meaningful knowledge about how race- and gender-informed leadership and can improve school outcomes. While the context of the current study was Turnaround Arts, the knowledge generated is applicable to any predominantly African American school that has a female African American principal.

Limitations of the Study

The study had numerous limitations. The sample size of the study consisted of only four principals. It is possible that data saturation was not reached with a sample of this size. The study was limited by the quantity of the data. Although numerous structured and unstructured questions were asked, not all of the responses were relevant to the research questions, and, in some cases, participants gave brief answers. The study was limited by the absence of a focus group format. Because many of the principals had similar thoughts, it would have been useful, in retrospect, to place them in a focus group, as such a structure would have allowed the principals to interact, challenge, and amplify each other in ways that could have yielded richer data for the study.

The study was limited by the absence of alternative means of data collection. Given that principals' leadership was being explored, it would have been useful to triangulate data obtained from one-on-one interviews with the principals with data obtained from interviews with students, parents, teachers, administrators, or some combination thereof. Because leadership implies the existence of both leaders and followers, it would have been useful to obtain followers' as well as

leaders' perspectives on leadership. In the absence of this kind of triangulation, it is possible that the phenomenon of leadership was not adequately explored in this study. The study was limited by a single means of data analysis. Data were analyzed based on an identification of themes and a synthesis of data designed to answer the research questions of the study. A more open-ended form of data analysis could have resulted in a different set of insights.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future scholarship can be made on the basis of the observed limitations of this study. The first recommendation is for future scholars to draw larger samples. It is likely that a sample of 12-16 principals is more likely to yield the kind of data saturation that is desirable in qualitative research. The second recommendation is for future scholars to construct longer interview protocols that can result in the accumulation of more data than were obtained in the current study. The third recommendation is for future scholars to complement one-on-one interviews with focus group formats that can allow participants to engage each other in a manner more likely to yield rich data.

The fourth recommendation is for future scholars to consider alternate means of data collection. As mentioned in the previous section of the chapter, leadership does not occur in a vacuum; rather, leadership involves both leaders and followers in a complex web of relationships. Future researchers could achieve a richer understanding of black female school leadership by including data solicited not merely from African American principals themselves, but also from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. The fifth and final recommendation is for future scholars to engage in multiple forms of qualitative data analysis in order to better capture.

Recommendations for Future Educational Practice

There are a number of recommendations for future practice that can be made on the basis of the findings of the study. The main recommendation, for African American female principals themselves, is to allow both their race and their gender to inform their leadership style. The four principals who participated in this study and this researcher ascribed their leadership success—and, implicitly, the success their schools have enjoyed in improving academic and behavioral outcomes—to the deployment of culturally specific forms of leadership. The African American principals in this study acted in race- and gender-informed ways in order to inspire, empower, and engage the African American students or students of color who predominated in their schools. This model suggests that African American female principals should not try to assume a leadership style or identity that is somehow blind to race, gender, or the intersection of race and gender. Based on the findings of the current study, such a culturally non-specific approach would not be very likely to succeed with followers or in the larger mission of turning around a school.

Another recommendation is for educational leaders above the principal level to give more thought to formalizing race- and gender-specific leadership, especially in the context of minority-dominated schools. The principals in the current study did not report institutional resistance against their leadership styles; it seems that these leadership styles emerged more as a result of the individual principals' orientations than of guidance or training. Given the success of othermothering in particular when exercised by African American female principals in largely African American schools, educational leaders and policy-makers ought to consider adopting race- and gender-specific forms of leadership training and guidance into official materials and approaches.

Summative Conclusion

African Americans had no formal right to education until the 1860s, and, until the middle of the twentieth century, were systematically deprived of the resources necessary to be successful students. Although the African American female principals who contributed data to the current study are themselves beneficiaries of an improved educational system, and are also leading schools with the resources and backing needed to implement Turnaround Arts, they were acutely aware that African American students continue to face special educational challenges. Turnaround Arts is a structured program that attempts to improve the academic and behavioral outcomes of students of all kinds; however, in the presence of the race- and gender-informed leadership styles of African American female principals who lead predominantly African American schools, Turnaround Arts might be more effective.

Specifically, the main findings of the study were that (a) there are specific orientations among African American female principals that are shared, (b) these orientations have a positive impact on both academic and behavioral outcomes among students, and (c) these orientations can be understood in terms of race- and gender-informed leadership. The shared characteristics of principals in the study were as follows: (a) servant leadership, (b) leadership by example, (c) strength / commitment, (d) othermothering, (e) respectful communication and interaction, (f) remembering / applying roots, and (g) goal-driven leadership. An analysis of principals' responses indicated that these shared characteristics were useful because they served to motivate, empower, and inspire students, parents, teachers, and other administrative personnel, all of whom collaborated in the creation of a positive school environment. Finally, an analysis of principals' responses indicated that their leadership styles were explicitly driven by a gender- and race-informed view of both themselves and their leadership responsibilities to the school community.

These findings confirmed previous findings (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Jones, 2002) about the roles of race and gender in African American school leadership. The findings also provided additional details about how race and gender intersect African American female principals' leadership, and why such leadership is particularly important for schools that are predominantly African American. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations for future research and practice were also provided.

References

Allen, K., Jacobson, S., & Lomotey, K. (1995). African American women in educational

administration: The importance of mentors and sponsors. *Journal of Negro Education*,

409-422.

Aloe, A. M., Amo, L. C., & Shanahan, M. E. (2014). Classroom management self-efficacy and

burnout: A multivariate meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 26*(1), 101-126.

Alston, J. A. (2005, October). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering

in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 41(4). 675-688

Alston, J. A. (2012). Centering Race in a framework for leadership. *Journal of Research*

Leadership Education, 7, no. 237-253. doi:10.1177/1942775112455266

American Association of School Administrators. (2007). The study of the American school

superintendency. Retrieved from http://www.aasa.org/research.aspx

Anderson, K. D. (2008). Transformational teacher leadership in rural schools. *The Rural*

Educator, 8-17.

Arnold, K. A., Barling, J., & Kelloway, E. K. (2001). Transformational leadership or the iron

cage: which predicts trust, commitment and team efficacy? *Leadership & Organization*

Development Journal, 22(7), 315-320.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological*

Review, 84(2), 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human*

behavior (pp. 71-81). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in*

Psychological Science, 9(3), 75-78.

Banks, C. M. (1995). Gender and races as factors in educational leadership and administration. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 65–80). New York, NY: MacMillan.

Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*(6), 827-832.

Barth, R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers parents and principals can make a difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bastos, F., Cosier, K., & Hutzel, K. (2012). *Transforming City Schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Bass, B. (1998). *Transformational leadership: industry, military, and educational impact,* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1990). Developing transformational leadership. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 14*(5), 21-34.

Bell, D. (1992a). *Faces at the bottom of the well:* The permanence of racism. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Belmont Report. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Retrieved from http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html

Bernstein, A. T., & Carayannis, E. G. (2012). Exploring the value proposition of the undergraduate entrepreneurship major and elective based on student self-efficacy and outcome expectations. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy, 3*(3), 265-279.

Béteille, T., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2012). Stepping stones: Principal career paths and
school outcomes. *Social Science Research, 41*(4), 904-919.

Bequette, J. W. (2014). Culture-based arts education that teaches against the grain: A model for
place-specific material culture studies. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and
Research in Art Education, 55*(3), 214-226.

Bloom, C. M., & Erlandson, D. A. (2003). African American women principals in urban schools:
Realities,(re) constructions, and resolutions. *Educational Administration Quarterly,
39*(3), 339-369.

Bogler, R. (2001). The influence of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction. *Educational
Administration Quarterly, 37*(5), *662-683*

Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human
capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist,
59*, 20–28.

Bondy, E., Ross, D. D., Hambacher, E., & Acosta, M. (2013). Becoming warm demanders:
Perspectives and practices of first year teachers. *Urban Education, 48*(3), 420-450.

Bonner, E. P. (2014). Investigating practices of highly successful mathematics teachers of
traditionally underserved students. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 86*(3), 377-399.

Bower, C. B. (2013). Social policy and the achievement gap: What do we know? Where should
we head? *Education and Urban Society, 45*(1), 3-36.

Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and school leadership: An introduction.
Educational Administration Quarterly, 41(4), 585–590.

Brunner, C. C. & Peyton-Caire, L. (2000, December). Seeking representation: Supporting Black

    female graduate students who aspire to the superintendency. *Urban Education, 35*(5),

    532–548.

Bryk, S.A., (1989). The Effects of high school organization on dropping out: An Exploratory

    investigation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 26, 353-383.

Burbach, H. & Butler, A. (2005). Turnaround principals. *The School Administrator. 62, 6, 24-

    30.* Retrieved from http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=8514

Butler, X. C. (2012). *In what ways do principals impact school climate in 'turnaround'*

    successful high-poverty middle schools? (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

    http://gradworks.proquest.com/3490744.pdf. (3490744)

Carmichael, C., Callingham, R., Hay, I., & Watson, J. (2010). Statistical literacy in the middle

    school: The relationship between interest, self-efficacy and prior mathematics

    achievement. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology, (10)*, 83.

Case, K. I. (1997). African American othermothering in the urban elementary school. *The Urban*

    Review, 29(1), 25-39.

Charland, W. (2011). Art integration as school culture change: A cultural ecosystem approach to

    faculty development. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 12*(8).

Chemi, T. (2014). The Artful Teacher: A Conceptual Model for Arts Integration in Schools.

    Studies in Art Education, *56*(1), 370-383..

Chiswick, B. (1988). Differences in education and earnings across racial and

    ethnic groups:Tastes, discrimination, and investments in child quality.

    The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 103(3), 571-597.

Clinton, H. R. (2016, June). Presidential Nominee Speech. Speech presented at the National

Building Museum, Washington DC.

Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M. & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate:

    research, policy, teacher education and practice. *Teachers College Record, 111*(1),

    180-213.

Collier-Thomas, B. (1982). The impact of Black women in education: An historical overview.

    The Journal of Negro Education, 51(3), 173–180.

Collins, J. (2011). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap…and other's*

    don't. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, Inc.

Condron, D. J., Tope, D., Steidl, C. R., & Freeman, K. J. (2013). Racial segregation and the

    Black/White achievement gap, 1992 to 2009. *The Sociological Quarterly, 54*(1), 130-

    157.

Cooley Fruehwirth, J. (2013). Identifying peer achievement spillovers: Implications for

    desegregation and the achievement gap. *Quantitative Economics, 4*(1), 85-124.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods

    approaches. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Crow, T. (2009). Proof positive: Q&A with Michael Fullan. *Journal of Staff Development, 30*(5).

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*.

    Buffalo NY: Multilingual Matters.

Davis, C. (2012). Achievement gap woes. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education, 29*(17), 5-5.

Dillard, C. B. (1995). Leading with her life: An African American feminist (re) interpretation of

    leadership for an urban high school principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly,*

    31(4), 539-563.

Dixon, N. M. (2000). *Common knowledge: How companies thrive by sharing what they know*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Effelsberg, D., Solga, M., & Gurt, J. (2014). Getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the benefit of their company: Testing a core assumption of transformational leadership theory. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 29*(1), 131-143.

Elliott, C.E. (2016, Jan). Cross cultural communication Styles. Retrieved from http://www.awesomelibrary.org/multiculturaltoolkit-patterns.html

Eltis, D. (1972). The traffic in slaves between the British West Indian colonies, 1807–1833. *The Economic History Review, 25*(1), 55-64.

Farkas, G., Farkas, R., Grpne. S., & Shuan, Y., et al., (1990). Cultural resources and school success: gender, ethnicity, and poverty groups within an urban school district, American Sociological Review. *55(1)*, 127 -142.

Ferguson, D., Henry, W.J. & West, N. (2013, June). Programs 'by us, for us' – Support Black women. *Women in Higher Education, 22*(6), 11-12

Fitzpatrick, C. (2014, April 19). A Model School for Turnaround: James Sanderlin PK-8 IB world school once earned C's or D's and now parents line up to enroll their kids. *Tampa Bay Times, 2, 15-16.*

Ford, A. C., & Sassi, K. (2014). Authority in cross-racial teaching and learning (Re)considering the transferability of warm demander approaches. *Urban Education, 49*(1), 39-74.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA:Principals' Council.

Fulton, J. L., & Myers, B. K. (2014). Your children, my children, why not our children?: Dilemmas in early childhood teacher education. *Childhood Education, 90*(1), 3-10.

Getskow, C. (2006). Race, gender, and the superintendency. *Education Week*, *25(*41*),* 36-38

    (1, 24, 25.

Giddings, P. (1984). *When and where I enter: The impact of Black women on race and sex in*

    America. New York, NY: Amistad.

Glass, T. (2000). Where are all the women superintendents? *School Administrator*, *57*(6), 28-32.

Griner, A. C., & Stewart, M. L. (2013). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality

    through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education, 48*(4), 585-

    621.

Goldring, E., & Sims, P. (2005). Modeling creative and courageous school leadership through

    district-community-university partnerships. *Educational Policy, 19*(1), 223-249.

Haga, S. M., Ulleberg, P., Slinning, K., Kraft, P., Steen, T. B., & Staff, A. (2012). A longitudinal

    study of postpartum depressive symptoms: multilevel growth curve analyses of emotion

    regulation strategies, breastfeeding self-efficacy, and social support. *Archives of Women's*

    Mental Health, 15(3), 175-184.

Hallinger, P. (1999). Leading educational change: reflections on the practice of instructional

    and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *33*(3), 329-352.

Harrison, A., Hochwarter, W., Rainer, R., & Thompson, K. (1997). Testing the Self-Efficacy

    Performance Linkage of Social-Cognitive Theory. *The Journal of Social Psychology*

    137(1)79-87.

Hartney, M. T., & Flavin, P. (2014). The political foundations of the Black–White education

    achievement gap. *American Politics Research, 42*(1), 3-33.

Henderikus, S. (2010). Theory. In N. J. Salkind (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Research Design* (pp.

    1498-1502). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Henry, W.J. West, N., & Ferguson, D. (2013, June). Programs 'by us, for us' – Support Black

women. *Women in Higher Education, 22*(6), 11-12.

Hicks. L. (2014, September). Informed Consent – SBE. Retrieved from

https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1

Hoff, D. J. (2009). Title I turnaround programs due for big cash boost. *Education Week, 28*(25),

13.

Hoffman, B. (2010). "I think I can, but I'm afraid to try": The role of self-efficacy beliefs and

mathematics anxiety in mathematics problem-solving efficiency. *Learning and Individual*

Differences, 20(3), 276-283.

Hopkins, D., Stringfield, S., Harris, A., Stoll, L., & Mackay, T. (2014). School and system

improvement: A narrative state-of-the-art review. *School Effectiveness and School*

Improvement, 25(2), 257-281.

Houchen, D. (2013). "Stakes is high": Culturally relevant practitioner inquiry with African

American students struggling to pass secondary reading exit exams. *Urban Education,*

48(1), 92-115.

Hoy, W. & Woolfolk, A. (1993). Teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational

health of schools. The *Elementary School Journal, 93*, 356-372.

Immegart, G. L. (1988). Leadership and leader behavior. In N. J. Boyan (Ed.), *Handbook of*

research on educational administration (pp. 259–277). New York, NY:

Longman.

John, K. (2008). Sustaining the leaders of children's centers: The role of leadership mentoring.

European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 16(1), 53-66.

Johnson, L. (2006). "Making her community a better place to live": Culturally responsive urban school leadership in historical context. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 5*(1), 19-36.

Jones, C. (2002). Teachers' perceptions of African American principals' leadership in urban schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 77*(1), 7-34.

Jones, J. (2009). *Labor of love, labor of sorrow: Black women, work, and the family, from slavery to the present*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Keber, L. (1983). *The impact of women on American education.* Newton, MA: Women's Educational Equity Act Program Publishing Center.

Klein, A. (2012). School turnaround push still a work in progress; SIG seen a work in progress two years into program. *Education Week, 31*(28), 1.

Kinsler, J. (2013). School discipline: A source of salve for the racial achievement gap? *International Economic Review, 54*(1), 355-383.

Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2011). The occupational commitment and intention to quit of practicing and pre-service teachers: Influence of self-efficacy, job stress, and teaching context. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 36*(2), 114-129.

Klassen, R. M., & Durksen, T. L. (2014). Weekly self-efficacy and work stress during the teaching practicum: A mixed methods study. *Learning and Instruction, 33*, 158-169.

Klein, A. (2012). School turnaround push still a work in progress; SIG seen a work in progress two years into program. *Education Week, 31*(28), 1.

Korgen, K. (1998). *From black to biracial: Transforming racial identity among americans*. Westport, CT: Praeger

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2006). *The leadership challenge*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Kriger, M., & Zhovtobryukh, Y. (2013). Rethinking strategic leadership: stars, clans, teams and networks. *Journal of Strategy and Management, 6*(4), 411-432.

Kunjufu, J. (2014, February). White Teachers can't teach Black males. *The Black HomeSchool.* Retrieved from http://theblackhomeschool.com

Kuo, Y.-C., Walker, A. E., Schroder, K. E., & Belland, B. R. (2014). Interaction, Internet self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning as predictors of student satisfaction in online education courses. *The Internet and Higher Education, 20*, 35-50.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1999). Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. *Review of Research in Education, 24*(1), 211-247.

Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (2008). The impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes. *School Leadership & Management, 28*(1), 1-4.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.wallacefoundation.org.

Loder, T. L. (2005a). African American women principals' reflections on social change, community othermothering, and Chicago public school reform. *Urban Education, 40*(3), 298-320.

Loder, T. L. (2005b). On deferred dreams, callings, and revolving doors of opportunity: African American women's reflections on becoming principals. *The Urban Review, 37*(3), 243-265.

Long, J. K., & Soble, L. (1999). Report: An art-based violence prevention project for sixth grade students. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 26*(5), 329-344. doi:10.1016/S0197-4556(99)00024-6.

Love, K. I. (2012). Using theater of the oppressed in nursing education: Rehearsing to be change agents. *Journal for Learning through the Arts, 8*(1).

Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Marcano, R. (1997). Gender, Culture, and Language in School Administration, Another Glass Ceilling for Hispanic Females. Los Angeles, CA:Sage.

Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(3), 370-397.

Mascall, B., & Leithwood, K. (2010). Investing in leadership: The district's role in managing principal turnover. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 9*(4), 367-383.

Marshall, D. R., & Novicevic, M., Owen, J. (2015). Event System Theory of Instrumental Leadership: The Case of General Nathanael Greene. *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship, 20*(3), 8. Retrieved from Questia.

Mette, I. M., & Scribner, J. P. (2014). Turnaround, transformational, or transactional leadership: An ethical dilemma in school reform. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 17*(4), 3-18

Mohr, G., Rigotti, T. & Stempel, C. R. (2015). Think transformational leadership—Think female? *Leadership, 11*(3), 259-280.

Moolenaar, N. M., & Sleegers, P. J. C. (2015). The networked principal: Examining principals' social relationships and transformational leadership in school and district networks. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(1), 8-39.

Muhammad, A. & Hollie, S. (2012). *The will to lead, the skill to teach: Transforming schools at every level.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Murtadha, K., Watts, D. (2005). Linking the struggle for education and social justice: Historical perspectives of African American leaders in schools. Educational Administration Quarterly, *41*(1), 591 – 608.

NCES. (2013). Characteristics of public and private elementary and secondary school principals in the United States.   Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013313.pdf

Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nuttgens, S. (2010). Biracial identity theory and research juxtaposed with narrative accounts of a biracial individual. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 27*(5), 355-364.

Muhammad, A. & Hollie, S. (2012). *The will to lead, the skill to teach: Transforming schools at every level.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Orfield, G. Larson, D., Wald, J., Wald, J. & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing our future: How minority youth are being left behind by the graduation rate crisis.* Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University and the Urban Institute.

O'Sullivan, M. T. (2013). Early childhood education: an ignored solution to the achievement gap in the United States. *Journal of Law in Society, 14*(1), 107.

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research, 66*(4), 543-578.

Pearce, C. L., & Sims Jr, H. P. (2002). Vertical versus shared leadership as predictors of the effectiveness of change management teams: An examination of aversive, directive, transactional, transformational, and empowering leader behaviors. *Group Dynamics, 6*(2), 172-197.

Perkins, L. M. (1982). Heed life's demands: The educational philosophy of Fanny Jackson Coppin. *The Journal of Negro Education, 51*(3), 181-190.

Piccolo, R. F., & Colquitt, J. A. (2006). Transformational leadership and job behaviors: The

    mediating role of core job characteristics. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(2), 327-

    340.

Pollak, M. (2009). Pioneering principals.Retrieved from

    http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/nyregion/13fyi.html.

Pollard, D. S. (1997). Race, gender, and educational leadership: Perspectives from African

    American principals. *Educational Policy, 11*(3), 353-374.

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. (2015). *Report of the Turnaround Arts*

    Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.pchah.gov

Rabaglietti, E., Burk, W. J., & Giletta, M. (2012). Regulatory self- efficacy as a moderator of

    peer socialization relating to Italian adolescents' alcohol intoxication. *Social*

    Development, 21(3), 522-536.

Rahman, N., Reddy, P., Silk, Y., & Stoelinga, S.R. (2016). *Turnaround Arts Initiative*,

    President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities Retrieved from

    http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov/

Reed, L., & Evans, A. E. (2008). What you see is [not always] what you get!'Dispelling race and

    gender leadership assumptions. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,*

    21(5), 487-499.

Rettner, R. (2012, Jan 4) Men and women personality differences. Retrieved from

    http://www.livescience.com/36066-men-women-personality-differences.html

Richardson, M. P., Waring, M. E., Wang, M. L., Nobel, L., Cuffee, Y., Person, S. D., . . .

    Allison, J. J. (2013). Weight-based discrimination and medication adherence among low-

    income African Americans with hypertension: how much of the association is mediated

    by self-efficacy? *Ethnicity & Disease, 24*(2), 162-168.

Ross, D. D., Bondy, E., Gallingane, C., & Hambacher, E. (2008). Promoting academic

      engagement through insistence: Being a warm demander. *Childhood Education, 84*(3),

      142.

Ross, E. J., Fitzpatrick, J. J., Click, E. R., Krouse, H. J., & Clavelle, J. T. (2014).

      Transformational leadership practices of nurse leaders in professional nursing

      associations. *Journal of Nursing Administration, 44*(4), 201-206.

Rowe, G., & Guerrero, L. (2011). *Cases in leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rusaw, C. (2005). A proposed model of feminist public sector leadership. *Administrative Theory*

      and Praxis, 27(2), 385-393.

Schmidt-Davis, J., & Bottoms, G. (2011). Who's next? Let's stop gambling on school

      performance and plan for principal succession.   Retrieved from

      http://publications.sreb.org/2011/11V19_Principal_Succession_Planning.pdf

Schomerus, G., Corrigan, P. W., Klauer, T., Kuwert, P., Freyberger, H. J., & Lucht, M. (2011).

      Self-stigma in alcohol dependence: Consequences for drinking-refusal self-efficacy.

      Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 114(1), 12-17.

Scott, W. D., & Dearing, E. (2012). A longitudinal study of self-efficacy and depressive

      symptoms in youth of a North American Plains tribe. *Development And*

      Psychopathology, 24(2), 607-622.

Schunk, D., & Zimmerman, B. (2007). Influencing Children's Self-Efficacy

      and Self-Regulation of Reading and Writing Through Modeling *Reading and Writing*

      Quarterly 23(1). pp.7-25.

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). *Women in educational administration.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Shatzer, R. (2014). Comparing the effects of instructional and transformational leadership on

    student achievement:

    Implications for practice. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *42*(4),

    445-459. doi:10.1177/1741143213502192.

Sinding, K., & Bollingtoft, A. (2013). *Cases on management, leadership, and organizations*.

    Stockholm, Sweden: Samfundslitteratur.

Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and

    outcome expectancy beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(7), 1086-1101.

Spreitzer, G. M., Perttula, K. H., & Xin, K. (2005). Traditionality matters: An examination of the

    effectiveness of transformational leadership in the United States and Taiwan. *Journal of*

    Organizational Behavior, 26(3), 205-227.

Stein, L., 1953, Stein, A., 1955, & Stein, J., 1986. (2014). *Education disrupted: Strategies for*

    saving our failing schools. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Stempel, C. R., Rigotti, T., & Mohr, G. (2015). Think transformational leadership—Think

    female. *Leadership, 11*(3), 259-280. doi:10.1177/1742715015590468

Tambra, O. J., & Tyrone, C. H. (2014). The continuing legacy of freedom schools as sites of

    possibility for equity and social justice for black students. *Western Journal of Black*

    Studies, 38(3), 155.

Tariq, V. N., Qualter, P., Roberts, S., Appleby, Y., & Barnes, L. (2013). Mathematical literacy in

    undergraduates: role of gender, emotional intelligence and emotional self-efficacy.

    International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology, 44(8),

    1143-1159.

Taylor, M., Austin, C., Nanney, J., & Lusk, E. (2010). Biracial identity and its relation to self-esteem and depression in mixed Black/White biracial individuals. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 19*(2), 109-126. doi:10.1080/15313201003771783.

Taylor, H., & Reyes, H. (2012). Self-efficacy and resilience in baccalaureate nursing students. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship, 9*(1), 1-13.

Thomas, M. D. (1984). How can school leaders be courageous? *NASSP Bulletin, 68*(476), 36-40.

Tillman, L. C. (2004). African American principals and the legacy of Brown. *Review of Research in Education, 28*, 101-146.

Tucker, P., Higgins, J.A., & Salmonowicz. M. (2010). Teacher and principal perceptions of change in low-performing schools. *Educational Research Service Spectrum, Spectrum Journal of Research and Information,28 (4), 13-25.* Retrieved from EBSCO:ERIC (Accession Number: 07407874*).*

TurnaroundArts. (2016). What we do. Retrieved from http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov/what-we-do/

U.S. Department of Laborn(2016). Retrieved from https://www.dol.gov/wb/media/Black_Women_in_the_Labor_Force.pdf.

Woodson, C. G. (1998). *The Education of the Negro*. Trenton NJ: First Africa World Press.

Wu, C., & Wang, Z. (2015). How transformational leadership shapes team proactivity: The mediating role of positive affective tone and the moderating role of team task variety. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 19*(3), 137-151. doi:10.1037/gdn0000027

Xu, J. Z., Coats, L. T., & Davidson, M. L. (2012). Making science homework work: The perspectives of exemplary African American science teachers. *Teachers College Record, 114*(7), 1.

Appendix A – Informed Consent letter

Consent to participants,

You are invited to participate in a study related to identifying what characteristics African American female principals at Turnaround Art schools have in common. I hope to learn what aspects of your leadership philosophy influences the success of your school and how you apply your race and gender to your leadership style. If you have experienced microaggressions, I hope to learn what strategies you use to remain motivated and focused.

You were selected as a possible participant because of the growth your school has made in math and the decrease in behavior referrals. I believe your knowledge will provide rich information for my dissertation study at Bethel University.

If you decide to participate, you will be treated in an ethical manner. I will begin by answering any of your questions about the research and explaining your role in the study. I will present fifteen open-ended interview questions that will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to answer, related to your experiences as an African American female leader at a Turnaround Arts school. During the interview process, I will be asking you to share personal information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any questions, or refusing to take part in the interview. Also, throughout the interview process, if you should begin to experience any discomfort or anxiety, you will be able to take breaks or discontinue participation. If you feel that you will need to seek counseling as a result of participating, I will provide a list of local counseling services. However, please be cognizant that you will be responsible for any cost/fees associated with counseling. It is my goal to create an atmosphere where it will feel like a conversation.

Any information obtained in this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In the written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregated data will be presented. The interviews will be recorded and will be transcribed by a professional transcriber. The audio records will be saved to a secured-password Dropbox folder and a secured password hard drive. The audio from the interviews will be destroyed after the transcription is complete. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your current or future relationship with Bethel University, your school district or National Turnaround Arts in any way. If you decide to participate, again, you are free to discontinue participating at any time without affecting these relationships.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to this research topic. The findings could lead to greater public understanding about patterns and commonalities of successful African American female principals at Turnaround Art schools.

The research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and or research

participants' rights, please contact me at (763)-742-3739 or my advisor, Dr. Craig Paulson at (651) - 635-8025.

If you are willing to participate, I will send the consent form for you to review. I will need your signature before I can start the interview process. By signing this form you are granting consent to participate in this research

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B - Letter to Participate

Hello,

My name is Leona Robinson-Derden, and I am a doctoral candidate at Bethel University. I am in the process of writing my dissertation and part of the dissertation process is to conduct a research study. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate voluntarily in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the characteristics and sense of self of African American female principals at Turnaround Art schools. You are invited to participate in an interview in which I will asking fifteen informal open-ended questions to collect data to support my research study. This process should take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to complete. My two research questions are:

1. What are the characteristics of African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools?
2. How do African American female leader's perspective impact academic success and a reduction in behavior referrals at Turnaround Art schools?

The goal of the research questions are to gain a deeper understanding related to identifying what characteristics and sense of self African American female principals at Turnaround Art schools have in common. Your participation will help me understand the commonalities and patterns across African American female leaders.

Upon completion of transcribing the interviews, a copy will be sent to you inviting you to comment, make additions or changes. In order to discern themes, each transcript will be reviewed to gain a holistic understanding of each participant's shared story. Findings which emerge will be captured using descriptive or narrative writing. The audio of interviews will be deleted upon completion of the transcription.

Thank you in advance,

Leona Robinson-Derden
Cell: 763-742-3739 Email: ler43264@bethel.edu

Appendix C – Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions	Alignment to RQ
RQ1: What are the characteristics of African American female leaders in successful Turnaround Arts schools?	Why were you chosen as a Turnaround Arts School? What artifacts do you have to support the increase in math scores and decrease in behavior referrals?	Background Information
	Do you have any previous Fine Art experiences such as playing an instrument, vocal, visual, etc.?	Characteristics
	How would you describe your leadership philosophy and orientations? How you would describe your image of yourself? How are you able to apply aspects of your race and gender to your leadership? What motivates you to remain focused? Have you experienced racial micoagressions as an African American Principal? If so how did it affect you as a leader? What strategies do you use to keep you focused?	Self-Efficacy Theory
RQ2: How do African American female leaders' perspectives impact academic success and a reduction in behavior referrals at Turnaround Art school	How have you been able improve student engagement? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts? How have you been able improve teaching practices? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Transformational Theory and Culturally Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory
	How have you been able to transform school climate? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Transformational Theory and Culturally

	How have you been able to transform teacher orientations and practices? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	Sensitive Educational Leadership Theory
	How have you been able to transform the disciplinary environment? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	
	How have you been able to transform student relations? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	
	How have you been able to transform parent relations? How has your race and gender facilitated and informed your efforts?	

Institutional
Review Board
3900
Bethel Drive

PO2322
St. Paul, MN 55112

January 16, 2017

Leona Robinson-Derden
Bethel University
St. Paul, MN 55112

Re: Project SP-06-17   A qualitative study of African American female principals at
Urban Turnaround Arts Schools

Dear Leona,

On January 16, 2017, the Bethel University Institutional Review Board completed the
review of your proposed study and approved the above referenced study.

Please note that this approval is limited to the project as described on the most recent
Human Subjects Review Form. Also, please be reminded that it is the responsibility of
the investigator(s) to bring to the attention of the IRB any proposed changes in the
project or activity plans, and to report to the IRB any unanticipated problems that may
affect the welfare of human subjects. Last, the approval is valid until January 15, 2018.

Sincerely,

Peter Jankowski, Ph.D.

Appendix E – Transcript from First lady, Michelle Obama- (see blue highlight)

MICHELLE OBAMA

First Lady of the United States: 2009-2017

Remarks by the First Lady at the Turnaround Arts Talent Show

May 25, 2016

MRS. OBAMA: Thank you all. Everyone, please rest yourselves. Hello, and welcome to the White House for what is my favorite event of the year! (Applause.) Oh, I am thrilled that all of you could be here for our second White House Turnaround Arts Talent Show! (Applause.) And we've spruced it up here. This year, we've upped it. We got lighting and all kinds of atmosphere going on. (Laughter.)

Let me start by thanking the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Education for their leadership and their love and their passion for this program.

And of course, I want to recognize everyone from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities for their outstanding work. Let's just stop there for a moment. Because this isn't in the remarks, so everybody is like, oh, no, what's she going to say? (Laughter.) You all are champions. You have worked just so hard. You've delivered -- (applause) -- you have delivered on every possible wish, hope that I could have had. And I just thank you all for your wonderful work and your friendship.

I want to thank Kathy Fletcher, the National Director for Turnaround Arts, for her great work. (Applause.) I want to thank two champions, George and Margo. You two, man, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. You have led this so gracefully and passionately. I'm indebted to you, but I love you. Thank you both. (Applause.)

To Mary Schmidt Campbell, as well -- Mary Schmidt, thank you. Thank you, Mary. You are amazing. (Applause.) To Damian, Damian Woetzel. Is he performing or doing something? He's usually very involved in everything. There you go, Damian. Thank you, thank you for all your great work. (Applause.) And to Megan Beyer, Megan, thank you. Great job. Great job. You filled in well, doing a great job. Thank you. (Applause.)

I also want to welcome all of the legendary artists and all the performers and all the folks who have made today possible and have helped us have another terrific year, including Keb' Mo', Tim Robbins, Bernie Williams, Lil' Buck. Happy birthday, again, Lil' Buck. (Laughter.) And so many of you, thank you all for joining us here today. Thank you for loving these kids and working so hard. We couldn't do this. You make this even more special than it is.

And most of all, I want to recognize the stars of today's show, our students who are here from all over the country. We have students here from New York, my home state of Illinois, Iowa. (Laughter.) Chicago? (Applause.) We're a little nuts like that. (Laughter.) Minnesota. (Applause.) So you can't be outdone. (Laughter.) Louisiana. (Laughter and

applause.) Connecticut. (Applause.) Cali, California. (Applause.) And my adopted home state of Hawaii. (Applause.) My in-law state. (Laughter.) And my current hometown, right here in Washington, D.C. (Applause.)

Now, for many of you, this isn't your first trip to the White House. Over the years, Turnaround Arts students have helped us welcome visitors from around the world, including just two weeks ago when some of the students from the Savoy Elementary School performed for the spouses of leaders from the Nordic countries at our state dinner at the Renwick Gallery. Megan hosted that. And they made the spouses cry, I'll just leave it at that. They were amazing. And today, I understand that you're all going to be bringing down the house with your singing and dancing. So I can't wait to see what you all have pulled together. I've heard you from upstairs. (Laughter.) My staff has said, these kids are going buck wild in here. (Laughter.) That was a quote. Tina, I won't tell you from who. (Laughter.)

But before we get to the show, I want to just take a moment to talk to you about how we got here, and why we will not rest until every single student in America has the kind of opportunities you all have given these students to engage with the arts.

It was about five years ago, and across the country, arts classes were being cut back or eliminated altogether. Over a million students weren't getting any music education, and nearly 4 million students had no access to the visual arts at all. And these were serious losses for our young people, because we all know that kids who get involved in the arts have better grades. They have fewer behavioral problems. They're more likely to graduate, and they're more likely to go to college.

So the PCAH had also just released a report showing that arts education was the key to getting students excited about academics and possibly even turning around an entire school.

Now, my husband was already working to bring new resources to some of our nation's lowest-performing schools –- schools where test scores were low and teacher turnover was high. And where many folks were ready to give up and shut these schools down for good, we saw potential. And the PCAH decided to put our ideas about the arts to the test to see if schools like these could be turned around all across the country. And that's how Turnaround Arts began.

And it started with just eight schools, and they brought in art supplies and instruments. They trained teachers, enlisted some of our biggest corporations and non-profits, and recruited renowned artists to adopt schools. Musicians like Yo-Yo Ma and Trombone Shorty, they organized workshops. Artists like Chuck Close, who is here with us today -- Chuck, who is behaving himself. He told me. (Laughter.) Chuck helped to arrange exhibits of students' work. Actors like Sarah Jessica Parker and Kerry Washington taught theater classes and helped stage plays. And the results were beyond our wildest imagination.

Just take the example of Northport Elementary School in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. Back in 2013, less than half of their students had proficient scores on state reading, math, and science tests, and morale was very low. But then they became a Turnaround Arts school, and they started including the arts in every part of the curriculum. The music teacher helped students break down rap lyrics in English class -- the precursor to "Hamilton." (Laughter.) They started it in Minnesota. Lin doesn't want to admit it, but it was really the English class. (Laughter.) They hired full-time staff members to teach drama and dance. And businesses like Target and Home Depot donated materials so that over 150 students, staff and community members could paint murals and plant flowers on the school grounds.

And within two years, their test scores improved. They went from almost 200 student suspensions per year to

41, and Northport was actually removed from the state's list of schools that are the furthest behind. As Principal Leona Derden, who is here with us today -- Principal Derden, are you here? There you go. (Applause.) These are her words, she said, "The arts made the difference in the lives of our students." And we're so proud of you and all of the other principals and administrators who are here.

And this school's experience wasn't unusual. The Turnaround Arts program has been rigorously evaluated, and participating schools across the country have reported that class attendance and parental engagement is up. Math scores have soared by an average of more than 20 percent, and reading scores have improved by more than 10 percent. SO that's some good outcomes right there.

Now, of course, a lot of factors go into turning around a school -- factors like having a great principal, having wonderful teachers, having engaged students, committed parents. But this program helped show that the arts could be an essential part of this strategy. And once word of these excellent results got out, school districts across the country started clamoring to get involved. And by next year, Turnaround Arts will be in 68 schools reaching over 30,000 students nationwide. That's terrific. (Applause.) Well done.

So make no mistake about it, this program isn't just turning around schools, it's turning students' lives around as well. Take the example of Lionnell Wilson. He's a 6th grader at the Jettie Tisdale School in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Just last year, Lionnell was having trouble with attendance, and he was one of the shyest kids, I understand, in his grade. But fortunately, Jettie Tisdale is a Turnaround Arts school with an excellent theater program. And when they held a casting call for a "Willy Wonka" musical last fall, Lionnell worked up the courage and decided to try out. And I understand his voice blew the judges away.

After he was cast as one of the leads, he didn't dream of missing rehearsals, so his attendance problems disappeared. And then, of course, his grades started improving, and he then became a leader among his peers.

You were recording me and recording it back, weren't you? (Laughter.) I was like, that sounds familiar, that voice! (Laughter.) I just said that! But we'll get this for you. We'll make sure you get a copy. (Laughter.)

But here's the good news -- the special news is that we're going to hear from Lionnell today as the featured soloist in his school's big song. (Applause.) So he's here in the flesh, and he's going to sing for us! And I'm so excited.

So when we say that the arts are an essential part of our kids' education, this is really what we're talking about. We mean that no one should ever think that dance and music and theater are a luxury -- I say this every year -- because for so many of our students, they are truly necessities. They're the reason these kids show up. That's why we're putting on this show today. And that's why we're shining a big bright light on all these incredible students and all the administrators and the others who have made this program possible.

But here's the thing: For every student who is represented here today, we know that there are so many others who still don't have access to the arts. So while we're proud of the progress we've made, we know that we are nowhere near finished. We need to keep on advocating for arts education. We need to keep on expanding the Turnaround Arts Program, no matter who is sitting in the Oval Office next year -- absolutely. (Applause.) We may have started this program in the Obama administration, but it needs to be part of every administration from here on out. Yes, again. (Applause.)

And that's why my husband included funding for arts education in his budget and why we are implementing the

Every Student Succeeds Act that he signed last year, which will help give more of our kids the well-rounded education they need. And that's also why today, I am particularly proud to announce a new Turnaround Arts partnership with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This is good stuff. (Applause.)

As folks in this room may know, the Kennedy Center features world-renowned arts education programming, and they will be putting those amazing resources to use to help expand Turnaround Arts to even more schools and bring the arts to even more students across America. In other words, this might be the last Turnaround Arts Talent Show I'm hosting in the White House, but we are all committed to continuing this work to promote the arts and lift up students, and turn around schools nationwide for years to come.

I am just grateful for all of those who worked so hard to make this partnership possible, that this isn't the end, that this is the beginning of the conversation. And I want everybody out there to understand that these are real results. These are real kids and real schools that can be so much different and so much better if we give these kids what every other kid, our kids, have -- arts and sports and reading and love. They all deserve it, and with it they flourish.

So I am grateful to you all for this work. It has been an amazing seven and a half years being with you all. This is the highlight of much of what I do as First Lady, and seeing the faces on these kids and having them here in the house running around, making noise, eating the food. It is just the best. It is the absolute best. (Laughter.)

So with that I'm going to stop talking so that we can get on with the fun, because it's time for the show! Thank you so much, everyone. God bless. (Applause.)