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Teacher Expectations of Students in a Predominantly African American School District

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The University of Southern Mississippi

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS IN A PREDOMINANTLY AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Durand Duron Payton

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
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ABSTRACT

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Wong and Wong (2004) reported teachers' perceptions could become a self-fulfilling prophecy when addressing the students. According to Haycock (2001) once teachers' perceptions had developed, even if they were inaccurate, teachers would begin to act as if their beliefs were factual. By acting as though the beliefs were real, teachers could essentially cause their perceptions to materialize into the expectations of students. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' expectations of students in a predominantly African American school district. Ferguson (1998) had considered the behaviors in which teachers' perceptions of the students' impact their expectations towards the students. Ferguson (1998) asserted that teachers in integrated schools can be *biased* in ways as simple as reinforcing a propensity of Caucasian children to speak more often in class. As a result, African American students may assume that the teachers think Caucasians are smarter and like the Caucasian students better than the African American students.

This study had several purposes. First, the study investigated the significance of a relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. Secondly, this study investigated the significance of a relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degree level, and grade level taught. Thirdly, the study investigated the significance of a relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and grade level.

The sample included 46 respondents that consisted of 33 female teachers and 13 male teachers. Respondents' answers to a 39-item questionnaire underwent statistical analysis including descriptive statistics and multiple regression tests to address three research questions. The major findings revealed no significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, ethnicity, grade levels, and certification, but revealed a significant relationship between teacher expectations and advance degree levels. The findings revealed teachers who possessed graduate degrees held lower expectation for students than teachers that held an undergraduate degree. Teachers possessing a Master's degree held lower expectations than teachers with a Specialist degree. No teachers that held a doctoral degree participated in this research. Nonetheless, this research did not support the premise that teacher expectations were connected to the other demographic variables tested.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT……ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS……..vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS……..vii

LIST OF TABLES……..……...….ix

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION……1

Significance of the Study/Statement of the Problem
Research Questions
Hypotheses
Definition of Terms
Assumptions
Delimitation
Justification
Summary

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE……..……18

Introduction
Theoretical Framework
The Impact of Segregation
The Hispanic Influence
The Achievement Gap
Ethnicity and Achievement
Minority Achievement Gap
Teacher's Expectations and Personal Background
Teacher Certification
Issues and Challenges to Alternative Teacher Certification
Effects of Ethnicity and Gender on Teacher Evaluation
Summary

III. METHODOLOGY……..……57

Introduction
Instrument
Reliability and Validity
Demographics
District Profile
School Profiles

Participants
Data Collection
Data Analysis
Summary

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA……..……77

Introduction
Survey Results
Beliefs about Teaching and School
Teacher Beliefs on Preparation and Expectations
Teacher Beliefs Towards Limitations On How They Teach
Statements that They Apply To Instruction
Gender and Achievement
Analysis of Data
Summary

V. DISCUSSION……. ……..……..94

Introduction
Restatement of the Problem
Conclusion and Summary of the Findings
Research Question 1
Research Question 2
Research Question 3
Other Findings
Implication for Practice
Limitations
Recommendation for Future Research
Summary

APPENDIXES……..…….……..108

REFERENCE……..…….…….…116

LIST OF TABLES

Tables

1. Subject Area Test Program (SATP), Algebra I, Biology I, English 10 and US History Percentages scoring Proficient and Above for School One……..…..…….……...68

2. Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Percentages scoring Proficient and Above for School Two ……..……...…..……..…70

3. Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Percentages scoring Proficient and Above for School Three …….....……...71

4. Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Demographics…..…..…….……..……...78

5. Beliefs about Teaching and School (N=46).…….……...……..…...…….81

6. Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Beliefs on Preparation and Expectations …….....……82

7. Limitations on How You Teach (N=46).……..…....……. 84

8. Statements as They Apply to Instruction (N=46)..……..……....…….86

9. Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Beliefs on Gender and Achievement……...……...……...…..87

10. Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Gender and Ethnicity on Teacher Expectations. ……..…....90

11. Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Degree Level and Grade Level on Teacher Expectations …….....91

12. Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Certification Level and Degree Level on Teacher Expectation……..……92

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

States, districts, schools, administrators, and teachers must be accountable for ensuring that all students, including disadvantaged students, meet high academic standards. States must develop a system of sanctions and rewards to hold school districts and teachers accountable for improving academic performance according to the *No Child Left Behind* (2002). The standards of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) have established accountability programming at every level of the public school system; however, no other groups have received greater attention than classroom teachers and the students that they instruct (Fullan, 2007). According to a former state superintendent of education, "Every hour on the hour, 1.5 students drop out of school in the state, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year" (H. Bounds, Back to School Address, August 3, 2006). Dropping out of school is an event that starts early in the student's educational career as opposed to late in the student's educational career. The former State Superintendent of Education of Mississippi, Dr. Hank Bounds, indicated the sole purpose of academic performance and standardized test scores is to establish rigor and validity to the educational process (H. Bounds, Back to School Address, August 3, 2006). Theoretically, the academic performance and the results of standardized tests are good indicators of the level of rigor and aptitude of students (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). The cumulative experiences of the student ultimately influence the success or the lack thereof within the educational setting (Payne, 1996). Payne (1996) stated that the development of emotional resources is crucial to student success. The greatest free resource available to schools is role modeling provided by teachers, administrators, and staff (Payne, 1996). Students

who have the support of their parents or a significant other tend to do better than students who lack that support group (Roscigno, 1998). This discrepancy is due to the level of expectations set forth by the parents or the significant other (Roscigno, 1998).

According to Perkins-Gough (2008), most parents (84%) said that they trusted the teachers at their child's school. Asian parents were the most likely to say that they trusted teachers (91%), followed by Caucasians (88%); Hispanics (87%); Native Americans (83%); and African Americans (79%). The majority of parents (87%) also felt that teachers respected them, but fewer (77%) felt that teachers respected their children. Perkins-Gough (2008) declared that African American parents were significantly less likely than parents of other ethnicities to imply that teachers respected their child or that teachers in their child's school were fair.

Society's interest in equality for all people has caused in-depth discussions as to whether or not there are differences between genders as well as ethnicity. Gender biases are present when individuals are treated differently based solely on their gender. This belief can cause individuals to direct students into particular educational fields based solely on their perceptions and expectations of genders. Some people assert there are differences between genders, but this belief is countered by research that states environmental influences greatly shape those differences. Those studies ultimately point to the conclusion that the students' academic performances are correlated to the expectations of the teachers placed upon the student. "The so-called *gender wars* have lately offered harshly contrasting pictures of how exchanges with instructors may shape the relative cognitive development and intellectual engagement of boys and girls"

(American Association of University of Women 1992; Kleinfeld 1998; Lewin 1998; Sadker 2002; Sadker & Sadker 1994; Saltzman 1994; Sommers 2000).

"Researchers have clearly established that there is no single or dual learning style for the members of any cultural, national, racial, or religious group" (Dunn, 1997, pp. 74-75). The latest debate over teacher perceptions and expectations of the different genders has concentrated on the idea that male students benefit at the expense of female students in the amount and quality of interaction received from teachers of both genders (Krieg, 2005). Nonetheless, other literature details the interactions between teachers and students and whether a difference in gender or ethnicity can cause a change in expectations placed on the students. Teachers who were the same gender as the students tended to have a different set of expectations for students in their classroom. This is called the Pygmalion Effect (Dee, 2004). One item of interest within this study is how teacher expectations have an impact on the students of different ethnic groups. High-poverty students and ethnic minority students are twice as likely as low-poverty students and majority students to be assigned novice teachers who are new to the profession (Ascher & Fruchter, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; Peske & Haycock, 2006). In addition, they are often taught by uncertified teachers (Ascher & Fruchter, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Shen, Mansberger, & Yang, 2004).

To address this problem, the issue of racial inequality in the United States has to be examined. Perkins-Gough's (2008) survey of African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic parents of school-age children revealed that 12% of parents claimed that race was a factor in the success of students at their child's school. About 16% of parents agreed with the statement "There are races of children who are smarter than others."

Asians and African Americans were the groups most likely to agree with this statement (21% and 18% respectively). Caucasian parents (8%) were significantly less likely than other parents to agree that some races of children are smarter.

It is no secret that there has been persistent academic disparity between African American and Caucasian students. Roscigno (1998) described a set of relationships that detailed the disadvantages of minorities within academia. According to Roscigno, race is not to *blame* for academic disparities, for there are many other factors that come into play such as teacher expectations. Even so, the author stated that race does have some impact on the students.

Roscigno (1998) has maintained that race influences three factors in education and student life: teachers and classes, family and friends, and school characteristics. This research will focus on the relationship between teachers and their classes. Although administrators have tried to address test scores instead of their supporting cast of faculty, the most authentic instruction is what takes place when administrators are not in the room and it is only the teacher and the students.

In this milieu, how can administrators ensure that all teachers are providing quality instruction? With the influx of so many different ethnic groups in the South Mississippi area, teachers need to ensure they are effectively addressing the needs of all children even though instructors may not have a clear understanding of how all their students learn nor the capabilities that all students possess. Teachers also need to understand things about different ethnic groups without forming negative perceptions of their habits, traits, and their limitations. It is difficult for all children to succeed if some teachers perceive that one group has more limitations than the other group. Einarsson and Granström (2002)

stated limitations such as age, gender, or ethnicity can cause teachers to alter their expectations. Altered expectations can be reflected in the student's success as well as in other areas. After observing 40 class sessions, Einarsson and Granström (2002) found that male teachers increased the attention paid to girls as pupils aged while female teachers consistently gave more attention to boys.

Ferguson (1998) found there is a connection between teachers' expectations and ethnicity but that there is very little supporting data. The data to support his claim was gathered just before the turn of the century. The information gathered by Ferguson was solid and dependable, but the demographics of the educational system have changed tremendously over the last decade. Even though the demographics have changed, the educational differences continue to persist. If the demographics have changed, then the teachers' mindset needs to adjust with the educational needs of the children. With this in mind, the basis of this research will focus on how the teachers' expectation of different ethnic groups influences students. Achievement level differences continue to exist between various ethnic groups. Inequities in access to qualified teachers are likely to play a significant role in long-lasting achievement level differences for students in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The caliber of instruction can have a direct impact upon the students' academic success. When the expectation of leadership is low, the students' performance tends to mirror the expectations of leadership.

This research is not set forth under the premise that there is a relationship between teacher expectations of ethnic groups and academic success, but if it is present then what does that impact entail? It is essential to discover if the perceptions of the teacher will affect the students. A teacher's personal perceptions may cause their students to receive

inadequate preparation for the future. These personal perceptions may be influential in the overall successes or failures of the educational system, and if those perceptions are influential, then how can the educational system address these potential educational barriers?

Are teachers' expectations and the level of rigor common among all students of different ethnicities and gender, or has higher expectations and rigor been reserved only for some students? In this study, the researcher is observing the teachers' expectations of students in a predominantly African American School District. If there is a relationship between the perceptions of teachers and the academic success of students in a predominantly African American School District, then all schools with similar demographics, small class sizes, positive environments and high expectations should benefit from having teachers with high expectations (De La Ossa, 2005). The educational beliefs of a community can become either a divisive or a unifying element. Without the proper level of rigor, the intellectual capital of a student's community can dwindle. Low academic performance is correlated with a lack of resources. Numerous studies have documented the correlation between race and low achievement (Hodgkinson, 1995). Is that due to teachers holding low expectations of the students that are a certain race? This research assists the educational system in becoming a unifying element; however, if the findings are divisive, the research should serve as a foundation for eliminating the divisions and replacing them with applicable programs to alleviate the disparities that may exist within an educational system.

Significance of the Study/Statement of the Problem

Accountability has been embedded in K-12 education since the Soviet Union's launch of the satellite called Sputnik in 1957 (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). The *No Child Left Behind* is just the latest tool of accountability. This unilateral accountability has caused school district personnel to analyze the way teachers educate children. The Department of Education supports the premise that without providing equal and continuous learning opportunities and resources for instructional improvement to all teachers, some students will be left behind.

No Child Left Behind is unlikely to promote student learning without looking at other aspects of education such as the teachers and the requirements teachers expect of students. Teachers are important components of the education system. This is one of the reasons that the *No Child Left Behind* requires that every state must provide every student with a highly qualified teacher in all core courses. The Department of Education's implementation of accountability measures for school districts may be unilateral, but the caliber of instruction within the schools can create noticeable educational disparities between the students that come from various ethnic groups (Hamilton, Stecher, Marsh, McCombs, & Robyn, 2007). However, the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* would eliminate those disparities. States have implemented their own accountability system to ensure compliance with the standards of the *No Child Left Behind.* Some states chose to implement exit exams as tools of accountability while other states chose to focus on specific areas of interests (Hamilton et al., 2007). The Mississippi Department of Education utilizes the Mississippi Curriculum Test 2 (MCT2) to access accountability for

students at the elementary level with emphasis being placed on language arts, mathematics, and the sciences (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

The MCT2 consists of customized criterion-referenced reading/language arts and mathematics assessments that are fully aligned with the 2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework Revised and the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework Revised. These assessments allow Mississippi to comply with the requirements of the federal legislation *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). The assessments are administered to students in grades third through eighth and include special education students that have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which specifies instructional goals that are aligned with the 2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework Revised and the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework Revised for the aforementioned grades.

The Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) is used solely at the secondary level schools in Mississippi. The Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) consists of four academic, end-of-course tests. Since the 2001-2002 school year, students have been required to pass the subject area test(s) as a requirement for graduation (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). These four Subject Area Tests are required for graduation purposes in Mississippi. The results of these assessments will be used in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System, specifically the Achievement, Growth, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Models. The results will also provide information that will be used for the purpose of improving instruction and accelerating academic proficiency among the students (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

The caliber of instruction can have a direct impact upon the successes and failures of students. Aronson, Fried, and Good (2001) concluded that African American students

have lagged behind Caucasian students for several decades. Educational gaps continue to exist between various ethnic groups. No one is saying that demographical characteristics do not play a part in achievement, but it is important to note that research states that some variables that affect the performance of the students may not be easy to identify. Aronson et al. (2001) asserted what leaders do to create a better environment for teachers and student learning has a clear, measurable, and profound impact on student learning. The academic success of the students tends to coincide with the level of expectation teachers have for the students.

Reeves (2009) stated that teachers should take their leadership and their teaching as seriously as teachers take their recreational activities. The quality of instruction has become one of the focal points of today's educational system. The requirement of *No Child Left Behind* shines a light on teachers' expectations of students and the level of rigor of the curriculum. *No Child Left Behind* helps to determine if those variables are common for all students of different ethnicities and gender, or has higher expectations and rigor been reserved only for a select group of students?

According to Haycock (2001), the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* requires all students to achieve at proficient levels; nevertheless, the difference in the level of achievement between different ethnic groups still exist and appear to have amplified. The intent of this research is to establish the types of expectations that teachers have of the students that reside in a predominantly African American school district. Once the types of teachers' expectations have been established, the research shifts to the connection between those expectations and other variable that may have an impact on the students.

The study explores whether a relationship exists between variables such as ethnicity, gender, grade levels, certifications, and advanced degree levels and teacher expectations. It is imperative to explore those scenarios to determine what influence those variables may dictate concerning a teacher's personal perceptions. This research will focus on teacher expectations of students while examining possible relationships between teacher expectations and descriptive variables pertaining to demographical data for School One, School Two, and School Three located in a school district in the southern region of Mississippi. The phrases *African American* and *Caucasian* includes students who are identified as being a part of that ethnic group upon enrollment into the School District A. The study will include teachers who come from various ethnic backgrounds. This study will also determine the relationship, if any, between those teachers' expectations and ethnicity and gender.

Research Questions

It is the intent of the researcher to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity?
2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degrees, and grade level?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications, and degree level?

Hypotheses

H_1 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity.

H_2 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advance degree level, and grade level.

H_3 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications, and advance degree levels.

Definition of Terms

Achievement Gap- is defined by the State of Washington's Office of Education (2010) as the gap between the test scores of minority and/or low-income students and the test scores of their Asian and Caucasian peers.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- is defined by the Mississippi Department of Education (2010) as being determined by comparing the percentage of students who scored *proficient* or above on a single state standardized test with the performance of the previous year's class in the same grade.

Advanced Degrees- for the purposes of this study advanced degrees refers to any academic degree conferred for completion of requirements beyond the undergraduate college level and includes master's, specialist's, and doctoral degrees.

Certification- for the purposes of this study certification refers to one of two routes, traditional or alternate route certification, in which a teaching license can be obtained.

Dropout- is defined by the U.S. Department of Education (2010) as an individual that was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year; an individual that did not enroll for the current school year; an individual that did not graduate from high school; an individual that is not in a public school district, private school or state/district approved educational program.

Dropout Rate- is defined by the Mississippi Department of Education (2010) as the total number of dropouts in a school divided by that school's total enrollment, expressed as a percentage.

Ethnicity- for the purpose of this study, ethnicity refers to a variable that distinguishes between the following ethnic groups: American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Caucasian, and Native Hawaiian.

Highly Qualified Teachers- according to the U.S. Department of Education (2010), must have: 1) a bachelor's degree, 2) full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach.

Mississippi Curriculum Test Second Edition (MCT2)- consists of customized criterion-referenced language arts and mathematics assessments that are fully aligned with the 2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised and the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework-Revised (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

No Child Left Behind- is defined by the National Educators Association as the current incarnation of one of the principal pillars of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which created the Title I federal aid program aimed at reducing educational disparities between rich and poor and among the races. This law states that all children will be proficient by the year 2014.

Pedagogy- Merriam-Webster defines pedagogy as the art or science of teaching; educating; or instructional methods.

Predominantly African American School District- for the purposes of this study Predominantly African American School District is a district in which more than 50% of the student body is identified as African American.

Subject Area Test Program Second Edition(SATP2)- consists of customized criterion-referenced Biology, U.S. History, English 10, and Algebra I that are fully aligned with the Mississippi Framework-Revised Editions for Biology I, U.S. History, English 10, and Algebra I. Student must successful pass all four tests as a requirement for graduation in the state of Mississippi (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

Teacher Expectations- for the purposes of this study teacher expectation refers to the perceptions that instructors have regarding the ability levels of students.

Assumptions

This study was based on two assumptions: 1) teachers responded openly and honestly throughout their questionnaire and 2) data collected from the Mississippi Department of Education were accurate.

Delimitations

In this study, the following delimitations were established:

1. This study is limited to a school district with a predominantly African American population.
2. This study is limited to three schools found within a school district located in one of the southeastern states.
3. This study is limited to the responses of instructors on a questionnaire.
4. This study is limited to the instructors who were responsible for teaching students who took the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT2) during the 2011-2012 year.

5. This study is limited to the instructors who were responsible for teaching students who took the Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) during the 2011-2012 school years.

Justification

Information gathered from the National Center for Educational Statistics Report (2009) showed how the education gap between Caucasians and minorities exists in reading, mathematics, and science. Data gathered in 1997 by the Center for Educational Statistics revealed that students regardless of race attended preschool at the same rate during the 70s, but over the next several decades, more Caucasian students began attending preschool as opposed to minority students.

The impact of the education gap between African American students and Caucasian students has been noticed on standardized tests, the different levels of rigorous courses that students have taken, the grades obtained in those courses, and the graduation rate for the two ethnic groups (Comer, 2001). There is evidence that suggests that teacher expectations can be a contributing factor to the educational gap. Ferguson (1998) stated that teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors probably do help to sustain, and perhaps even expand, the educational gap that exists between African American and Caucasian students' test scores. It is Ferguson's (1998) assertion that the students' performance was not the only factor that contributes to the existence of the educational gap and asserted that low teacher expectations could also contribute to the educational gap; however, these expectations are not always detectable.

Therefore, a study that explores these expectations is important. Students are dropping out of school at an alarming rate. Specifically, students of color are dropping

out in high percentages. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009) during the year 2007, the national dropout rate for students between the ages of 16 and 24 was 8.7%. With respect to race, the NCES figures further revealed that Caucasians had a dropout rate of 5.7%, African Americans 8.4%, and Hispanics 21.4%. Educational experts have come to claim that part of the solution is addressing how the teachers are instructing all children (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Haycock (2001) stated the expectations of teachers contribute to successes and failures of the students.

Ferguson (1998) has argued that instructing teachers to expect more from their African American students than what teachers had previously expected was not enough. Those expectations must be followed by actions, such as having standards that identify appropriate expectations teachers should have for all students and holding teachers accountable for implementing those standards. Ferguson's platform implied that academic leadership must require that some teachers change their teaching methods when dealing with African American students. Instructors must raise their own expectations of African American students by challenging their own innate beliefs as well as those of their students.

Some scholars have maintained that educators tend to undermine achievement through *misidentification*. The misidentification of low achieving students or high achieving students can stem from the perceptions and expectations of the teachers (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). Ferguson (1998) asserted that assigning students to teachers with unfavorable perceptions of a group of students might be difficult to explain without observing the interaction of the students and the teachers within the classroom.

Teacher expectations may influence students in a negative manner; therefore, the accountability of the *No Child Left Behind* has built validity into the test scores of the teachers and students and the significance of their roles in the classroom. When it is facilitated in the correct manner, it allows teachers to respond and encourage participation, which enables the teacher to identify if a student is improving or not. Haycock (2001) asserted the expectations of teachers contribute to successes and failures of the students. Ferguson (1998) also asserted that when a teacher is responsive to a child's situation and efforts, then the teacher's expectations would probably have less of an effect on student performance.

Summary

The belief that all children should be afforded a quality education regardless of their gender or their ethnicity is based on two essential themes: (a) today's educational system has built-in accountability at every level of the public school system, but the greatest amount of attention has been focused on the classroom teachers and the children they instruct; and (b) educators' attitudes and expectations are crucial components to improving the self-worth and academic success of students.

Because of this study, information will be gathered to observe the expectations of teachers that work in a predominantly African American school district. This study will be helpful in establishing if there is a relationship as well as understanding the attitudes and expectations of the instructors and the amount of education that has been obtained by the instructors. This study will serve to focus on the impact of gender, ethnicity, advanced degree levels, certification, and grade levels. The delimitations of this study focus on three schools within a predominantly African American community located

within the southeastern region. The definitions of terms were included within this chapter to assist in the comprehension of the educational scenarios presented throughout the research.

Through the implementation of a new law, the legislators have taken steps to transform the direction of the American Educational System. The *No Child Left Behind* is the latest tool of accountability that has caused school districts' personnel to analyze the level of expectations that teachers have for the students as well as the way teachers educate students. The hypothesis found in Chapter I addresses the teacher perceptions and expectations of students in a predominantly African American School District. These hypotheses serve as predictors to the possible relationships that may exist between teacher expectations and variables that help shape the public education system.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In a time when accountability has become synonymous with education, the gap in education between African American students and Caucasian students continues to grow. According to Logan (2004), very little progress has been made to eliminate educational disparities since the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision that occurred over half a century ago. An analysis of the results from the National Center for Education Statistics conducted by Rampey, Dion, and Donahue (2009) revealed that the average reading score increased for Caucasian students from 2004 to 2008 but showed no significant change for African American students. The persistent educational gap between ethnic groups states that enough has not been done to create equality for all children. Since the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision, can it be said that effective school reform has taken place? The creation of the *No Child Left Behind* sought a quality education for all children, but statistics continue to show that some children are being left behind the other students. The identification of the problems within the educational system will help to address academic disparities and make a quality education a standard and not a privilege for a select group.

The Introduction section is comprised of topics dealing with the overall impact of the achievement gap as well as smaller segments referred to as the *minority achievement gap* and *ethnicity and achievement*. These topics examined the impact that a quality education has on African Americans as compared to the overall population. This section

examined methods that are designed to increase the proficiency among African Americans students.

The Hispanic influence sought to engage the possibility that other factors may have played a role in increasing the disproportionate number of minorities not performing well academically. A series of landmark cases including *Brown v. The Board of Education*, *Sheff v. O'Neill*, and *The Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* will be presented to display the many changes that have caused the educational system to evolve into the institution that it is today. This opportunity cannot be adequately addressed without observing the impact of segregation along with other factors that may have contributed to the lack of achievement for African American students.

Theoretical Framework

To determine whether teachers have lower expectations for African American students than for other students, the current research is based on Mosley's (1970) Teacher Expectation Scale. Important clues of systematic research imply that the expectations of teachers are a crucial component to the academic success of African American students (Clark, 1983). A study conducted by Linda Grant (1984) explored the relationship between ethnicity, gender, and school experiences. Through classroom observations and teacher interviews, data was gathered to establish the expectations that teachers have of the different students with regard to race and gender. The findings showed that teachers had lower expectations of African American students, African American males in particular. The study revealed that teachers disciplined African American males more than any other group of students. It was Grant's (1984) assertion that instructors felt

advanced students or high achievers gave a good indication of their instruction while the slow students or low achievers served as a source of embarrassment for the instructors.

According to Gilbert and Gay (1985), the impact of the low expectations that instructors have for African American students is unfairly warranted. Gilbert and Gay (1985) stated that the poor results are due to the African American students' failure to comprehend the method of instruction by teachers as opposed to the student's inability to achieve. Gilbert and Gay (1985) reported that the students would start to internalize the attributes of other students who have been deemed as low achievers.

Another point of view is that the low expectation of the African American students is a direct reflection of the beliefs of the instructors. Because the instructors are more likely to claim that African American students are less successful than other students are, African American students tend to be held to a lower standard. Gilbert and Gay (1985) asked teachers to form predictions of students' academic performance. Even though the students possessed the same qualities and characteristics, instructors predicted that African American students, specifically African American males, would perform lower than other students would. Results have shown that African American males who were independent were feared by some instructors and were preferred least of all students. Instructors claimed that the independence and non-submissive nature contributed to the perceptions of African American students as well as their poor academic records.

Ross and Jackson (1991) reported that the teachers' negative expectations caused the African American males to live up to the low expectation as opposed to giving a valiant effort. Statistics state that African American males are doing worse than any

group with regard to education. A New Orleans study conducted in 1986-1987 stated that African American males made up roughly 45% of the student enrollment but made up roughly 60% of the students who were not promoted to the next grade level (Garibaldi, 1988). Hispanics make up the highest percentage of high school dropouts from the ages of 16 to 24 from the year of 1980 to 2009 (U.S. Census, 2012). African Americans make up the second highest percentage of high school dropouts from the ages of 16 to 24 from the year of 1980 to 2009 (U.S. Census, 2012).

A significant variable of how well students do is the students' teachers' perceptions of those students. Teacher expectations relate to the teachers' perception about how a student would succeed educationally over time (Sanders, 2001). Students were treated in accordance with the teachers' perceptions of the students. Teachers could not govern the socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or the neighborhood where the students reside; consequently, the perceptions of teachers could play a pivotal role in the students' education (Sanders, 2001). The expectations of African American students can be negative due to the low achievement of African American students. Clark (1983) implied that some of the characteristics that instructors expect to see in non-African American students are also found in African American students. Students are expected to adhere to the rights of the instructor even though the instructor may base the student's ability level on his/her skin color, ethnicity, socio-economic status, instructor subjective evaluations, as well as the attractiveness of the students (Clark, 1983).

African American students, specifically the African American male students, have utilized school as a place of obligation as opposed to a place of opportunity. The achievements of African American students have continued to decrease over the past

decade. The motivation of African American students has been impacted by the low expectations of classroom leaders. Payne (1996) stated that providing emotional resources through support systems, appropriate discipline strategies, the establishing of long-term relationships, appropriate instruction, and goal setting could help alleviate the obstacles that occur when dealing with children who may suffer from poverty. The present educational system continues to fall short of meeting the academic and motivational requirements of African American students.

The Impact of Segregation

The struggle of African Americans and their quest for an adequate education cannot be fully understood without having a true understanding of the *Jim Crow Era* and its influence on the established educational system. After the Emancipation Proclamation, southern Caucasian citizens sought an answer to solving racial tension. The solution was called *segregation*, and it was composed of a separation of the races, creating separate but equal establishments for the different ethnic groups. Spring (2012) reported that in the year 1865, when roughly 90 % of all African Americans resided in the southern portion of the United States. The attitudes towards race were similar to the situation of the Egyptian pharaoh and the Hebrew slaves of the biblical times of Moses. Spring (2012) stated that Caucasians feared or were extremely concerned about the newly freed African Americans. Spring (2012) felt that the Caucasians' true concerns were with those slaves who were *not under control* and those slaves who *did not know that they had to stay in their place*" even though slavery had been abolished. Southern Caucasians reported that legal actions were necessary to maintain the amount of control that they were sharing. This rationale caused Caucasian southerners to embed segregation into the legal system

from 1890 to 1915. This legal system allowed the systematic control of African American men and women. The laws known as the Jim Crow Laws, created within this legal system, enforced the ignorance of African Americans.

Jim Crow is a term that was used to characterize African Americans after the Emancipation Proclamation came into play. It was founded in the earlier part of the 19th century by a Caucasian minstrel known as Thomas *Daddy* Rice (Gavins & Hill, 2004). Thomas Rice duplicated the movements and gestures that African Americans exhibited while dancing and performing music. Rice developed the skit from the depiction of a routine that was performed by an elderly, crippled slave who was owned by Jim Crow. By 1890, *Jim Crow* became the term that stood for segregation between the races in the southern part of the United States.

The perceptions that southern Caucasians held during the Jim Crow era were upheld by many laws established through the southern region of the United States. In 1890, a law in Louisiana restricted railroad passengers from being present in a compartment, coach, or area in which his or her race had not been designated (Spring, 2012). An African American male by the name of Homer Plessey had purchased a ticket in the first-class section on the East Louisiana Railway. Homer was not allowed to occupy his seat because that section of the train was off-limits to African Americans. Homer Plessey was removed from the train by force and incarcerated in a New Orleans jailhouse. Homer Plessey claimed that, according to the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, his rights as an American citizen had been violated when he was not allowed the opportunity to occupy his seat in first class.

In *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896), the United States Supreme Court rejected Plessey's case by a vote of 8 to 1. The Supreme Court supported the stance of *separate but equal*, which also was the view of the vast majority of Americans at that time. Separatist tendencies or social prejudices are difficult to overcome by the implementation of social laws. Neither the legislature nor the sentiment of Supreme Court Justice Henry B. Brown was enough to influence the views on separation of the races. The African Americans who lived in the southern regions of the United States understood that their quality of life was directly correlated to the willingness of the majority of their locality. Usually, that majority consisted of Caucasians and their beliefs of superiority (Spring, 2012). The rulings of the courts and the establishment of the Jim Crow laws continued to solidify the unequal treatment of African Americans in the south for at least half a century.

Segregation of the races is hardly a new idea. Black Codes or segregations laws have dated back to the initial established post-Civil War form of government. After Reconstruction, Black Codes were replaced by various forms of discrimination. In 1966, a traveler from England wrote, "No matter the African American's legal rights, he knows how far he may go and where he must stop" and that "habits are not changed by paperwork" (Litwack, 2009). Likewise, this appeared to be the established mindset of communities regardless of their ethnic makeup. The Jim Crow laws continued to maintain Caucasian supremacy while reinforcing the subordination of African Americans in society (Gavins, & Hill, 2004). This stance was maintained by cruel treatment and unethical behavior towards African Americans. The intent of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896 was for the Supreme Court to take all information into account and reverse the

earlier ruling that Plessy lost by a vote of 8 to 1. The Jim Crow era ensured the separation of the races in public accommodations, the workplace, hospitals, courts, cemeteries, neighborhoods, and in education. The majority of the states had legislation in place that mandated separate school systems by 1885 (Litwack, 2009). This was a general concept amongst both Caucasians and African Americans. Residential patterns and educational groupings were firmly embedded into society throughout the southern region.

By 1890, racially segregated schools became commonplace in large southern cities such as Atlanta, Montgomery, and Richmond. It was nearly half a century later that educational reform occurred in the form of a favorable verdict in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Legal scholars, historians, and educators continue to debate whether or not the historic 1954 decision in the Brown case has done enough for the equality of education by mandating the desegregation of schools (Ipka, 2003). Debates have intensified over the years, and Jim Crow laws have been dismantled in an effort to desegregate schools and provide all students with a quality education (Ipka, 2003). A review of the ever-changing legislation on education and the presence of the achievement gap confirm that the aim of the Brown decision has not been accomplished as of today (Lewis, 2003). The desegregation of the public school system ceased being the priority of the federal government during the 1990s and became more of the focal point of the states. During this decade, states faced many challenges when it came to mandating desegregation in public schools. Many school districts refused to enforce desegregation laws and policies (Ipka, 2003). It is reported that the political leadership at that time did not care to reinforce the importance of desegregation. This caused the Brown decision to be viewed as a court decision on paper but not in reality. This lack of support led to

increased segregation among urban or inner city school districts because students had begun to return to the school districts that were established in their original neighborhoods (Orfield, 2001).

One of the focal points of desegregation was the small amount of attention that had been given to the academic performance of minority students (Willis, 1994). The primary purpose of desegregation focused on racial integration as opposed to creating equality within the schools for all children. Ipka (2002) stated that President Reagan and his administration discarded desegregation initiatives in order to present a politically correct stance. It was during the Reagan administration that the Justice Department decided not to force states to comply with mandates set for desegregation. These mandates have not been enforced by President Reagan, President H. Bush, President Clinton, or President W. Bush. President Reagan claimed that the mandates gave African Americans an advantage over Caucasians, which was referred to as *reverse discrimination*. President Reagan pushed for a platform that would eliminate racial quotas and eliminate *set-aside* programs because he felt that they were unconstitutional. Consequently, President Reagan's views began to shape the public policies according to the very sentiments that desegregation was designed to eradicate. In fact, his belief in a color-blind society permitted room for segregation to become re-established in the public school systems by legal standards and policies.

The aim of desegregation began to focus on integrating the various student populations in one school system throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. The consolidation of city schools with suburban schools was one of the first methods utilized in

desegregating school districts across racial lines. Districts began busing children to various schools and redrawing district lines to adhere to the desegregation stance.

The Supreme Court decision of *The Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1991) stated that school districts such as Kansas City, Denver, Cleveland, Austin, and Oklahoma City that were complying with the guidelines of becoming desegregated could be released by court-ordered desegregation guidelines and become a unitary school district. This allowed any district that complied with desegregation laws to discontinue desegregation measurements, such as busing and redistricting. Those districts were released from court-ordered desegregation requirements and court-ordered monitoring (Ipka, 2003). Desegregation requirements included desegregating students, faculty, extracurricular activities, transportation, and facilities. The courts stated that school districts were not responsible for correcting the possible segregation that may be found in the housing market (Fife, 1996). This gave school districts legal sanctions to disassemble what desegregation had established and formulate segregation according to neighborhoods (Weiler, 2000).

The *Freeman v Pitts'* decision of 1992 reinforced the court's explanation of *exercising* or *practicable* efforts. The Supreme Court stated that when a school district has exhausted reasonable efforts to become a desegregated district, then the district could be considered a Unitarian school district even if the district is not in full compliance with desegregation guidelines. The Unitarian status required a commitment to continue compliance with the efforts that allowed the school districts to be relinquished from the desegregation orders of the court (Ipka, 2003).

The comparison of de jure segregation and de facto segregation implies that segregation can occur at the hands of government or segregation can occur by the preference of the people and where they choose to reside. A natural form of segregation or de facto segregation occurs by the will of the people, and it is considered standard and continues to exist. However, any form of de jure segregation, which is a form of segregation dealt by the government, is considered illegal (Davis, 2004). The decision of *Freeman v. Pitts* became an important tool in removing school districts from desegregation requirements by which progress was monitored by the federal government and its agencies (Ipka, 2003).

The *Freeman v. Pitts* ruling allowed districts to be removed from judicial oversight incrementally as opposed to forcible regulations of desegregation (Weiler, 2000). School districts were no longer required to modify their educational policies and/or educational beliefs according to the court-ordered guidelines for desegregating school districts across the country; nor were school districts required to obtain unitary status in all areas of staffing, faculty, extracurricular activities, pupil assignments, and transportation. The ruling of *Freeman v. Pitts* caused many districts to become resegregated during the turn of the 21st century due to individual standard patterns of housing and comfort. This period became known as the resegregation era. The *Green v. School Board of New Kent County* ruling contributed to the identification of the *Green Factors*. These factors caused the Supreme Court to examine school districts that required desegregation to occur. The *Brown v. Board of Education* case detailed many of the concerns or *green factors* such as staffing, faculty makeup, extracurricular activities, pupil assignments, and transportation that were the segments that came together to create

a functioning school system. The green factors were severely impacted by the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision by releasing the obligation of desegregation in favor of the good faith initiatives of the unitary status (Fife, 1996).

The results of the Harvard University's Civil Rights Project (Orfield & Lee, 2004) stated that integration had been noticeable since the period of desegregation in the South. The results of the Civil Rights Project also revealed that an increase in school districts had occurred in the southern region of the United States, becoming more segregated over time. According to Richard (2002), Caucasian students and African American students were more segregated as of 2002 than in the 1990s. Segregated schools became common in the southern region of the United States. The integration of school districts found in metropolitan areas began to decrease in the 1990s. Most of these schools had large African American populations. In the state of Tennessee, Nashville school districts with a large population of minority students displayed an increase in minority enrollment, while gifted schools or magnet schools located in the suburban areas displayed an increase in Caucasian students, which also represented the dominant student population found in the suburban areas (Davis, 2004).

It was the case of *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) that defined the convolution of the desegregation legal battles that were being waged in the United States. The state of Missouri spent roughly $1.4 billion on an order from the courts for a Kansas City School District desegregation case from 1985 to 1995. The turning point came in 1995 when the United States Supreme Court stated that desegregation plans were not mandatory due to the subpar scores of minority students as compared to the national average. According to the rulings of the court, the state of Missouri was not required to supply resources or

finances for programs that were designed to foster greater achievements for minority students. The court system stated that the state of Missouri was only required to take practical steps in eliminating segregation in Missouri's public school system (Fife, 1996). The courts also ruled that the state was not responsible for integrating Caucasian students into the local school district as opposed to allowing Caucasian students to attend their home districts. The court's ruling stated that a disproportionate amount of African American students falling below the national average in the area of achievement was not a significant reason to require such mandates. A judge stated that Missouri had met all financial accountabilities once the $315 million settlement had been awarded in 1997 (Hendrie, 1997). However, the state of Missouri was still responsible for narrowing the achievement gap between African American students and Caucasian students until the end of the 20th century (Hendrie, 1997). Overall, the belief held by the Supreme Court was in direct conflict with the views of civil rights activists.

The decision of *Freeman v. Pitts* continued to segregate school systems as late as 2002. The Mumford study of 2002 concluded that the segregation of school districts was a direct product of the policies and guidelines that were reversed because of the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision (Logan, 2004). The Mumford study stated that the United States displayed a 2 to 3% increase in segregation between African American students and Caucasian students found in elementary schools during 1989-1990. The Mumford study does not display strong evidence of school systems with African American students becoming more desegregated since acceptance of the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision in 1992 than what school systems were prior to the case. Research comparing areas that adhered to desegregation policies and initiatives addressing ethical inequalities in schools

concluded, “segregation in schools was not related to the areas where the students lived,” but it was directly correlated to “the impact of segregation that took place as a result of the policies and guidelines that were rendered obsolete by the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision of 1992” (Logan, 2004, p. 12-13).

The implications of the rulings from the earlier courts led to segregated schools getting worse for the next two decades now that schools had to juggle the influx of African American students from the inner city and suburbs, as well as students from the Latino community. In 2001, Harvard Civil Rights Project published an article by Orfield (2001) that addressed the increasing number of segregated schools found primarily in the south. The information gathered indicated that public schools in the south became more segregated as it related to the schools, the districts, as well as the states (Orfield, 2001).

The Hispanic Influence

Education Weekly featured a report of significance on desegregation that conveyed the sentiments of civil rights activists that implied that the integration of the races would become more of an issue of importance as the nation begins to resemble a multicultural country or what Dr. Martin Luther King referred to as an *ethnic melting pot* (Davis, 2004). The steadily growing Latino community has contributed significantly to the minority student populations found in the United States since the 1960s, but the Latino community was not recognized by the Supreme Court as being recipients of the Brown decision until nearly two decades after the Brown decision was rendered. Latino students and their schools truly did not receive benefits supposedly implied by desegregation (Orfield & Lee, 2004).

Research released in July of 2001 focused on the emergence of the significant numbers of Hispanics in the United States. This emergence created greater segregation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Caucasians than the segregation that was present between Caucasians and African Americans. In 1998-1999, seven out of ten African American students who were enrolled in a K-12 school attended a predominantly minority school, as compared to 1980-1981, when roughly six out of every ten African American students attended a predominantly minority school. In 1998-1999, roughly 80% of Hispanic students were more likely to enroll in predominantly minority schools, as opposed to 1991, when roughly 70% of Hispanic students enrolled in predominantly minority schools (Orfield & Lee, 2004).

Hispanics had to endure many hardships in the form of segregation that were caused by race, poverty, and language barriers. These hardships caused Hispanics to isolate themselves from other ethnic groups within the school districts. Hispanics received very little recognition during the Civil Rights era due to the amount of emphasis placed on African Americans. With the sizeable presence of minorities in the western region of the United States, the Hispanic population became more prominent as the nation developed a region that consisted of school districts made up predominantly of minorities. This minority stronghold found in the west caused an increase in the segregation of Hispanics (Lee, 2004).

The Achievement Gap

In 2002, research gathered by the Department of Education estimated that three out of every four schools had an enrollment that exceeded 1,000 students. Districts with large schools must address the climate, culture, and the various ethnicities found within

those institutions. Many factors have contributed to the lack of significant numbers of minorities participating in the areas of mathematics and sciences. A study conducted by the National Statistics Foundation found that the public education system has not done enough to address the potential deficiencies found in the areas of math and science. Science and mathematics are the areas of education that have shown the most gains in terms of minority students, but the achievement gap has been present between Caucasian students and African American students since the establishment of separate but equal learning institutions. The turn of the century led to an increase in student achievements among minority students, but it would not diminish the education gap. The elimination of the achievement gap is essential to the United States remaining competitive since minorities have become the fastest growing segment found in the United States and its public school systems. The public school systems within communities consisting primarily of minorities usually bear the burden of being understaffed and being equipped with instructors who have been deemed less than highly qualified. Public school systems within these communities tends to lack sound judgment when it comes to identifying the abilities of their staff and suffer from the lack of resources, an ineffective curriculum, and incompetent instructors in the areas of science and mathematics (Orfield & Lee, 2004). With minorities becoming the largest group in the United States by 2050, the public education system will have to show tremendous strides in eliminating the academic disparities if the United States is to remain competitive in the global market.

Brown v. The Board of Education improved the quality of education for African American students for half a century. Data gathered from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2009) displayed significant gains on standardized tests from 1970

through the 1990s. The period lasting from the 1970 to 1980 displayed a decrease in the education gap between African Americans and Caucasians by 50% (Haycock, 2001). These gains were eclipsed by the increased achievements of Caucasians, which inadvertently caused the education gap to increase as opposed to decreasing.

According to research conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics in 2009, 1% of African American 17-year-olds could read and process technical information as compared to 8% of Caucasian 17-year-olds. The same research concluded that 1% of African American students were capable of solving complex word problems and intermediate algebraic problems as compared to 10% of Caucasian students. The research conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2009) concluded that 30% of African American students were advanced or proficient in the areas of averaging, percentages, and solving fractions as opposed to 70% of Caucasian students being proficient or advanced in the same areas. The data shows how the education gap continues to widen as students travel throughout K-12.

Coincidently, research outlined the fact that African American students performed lower on standardized tests than Caucasian student in various states including Virginia and Mississippi according to guidelines set forth by the *No Child Left Behind.* The *No Child Left Behind* obligated districts and states to display their overall performance data about ethnicity, socio-economic status, and demographics. Results from a wealthy school district in the state of Virginia supported the notion that African American students were performing poorer on standardized tests than Caucasian students were even though their socio-economic and educational backgrounds were quite similar. Statewide, the academic passing rate of African American students was equivalent to roughly 70% while wealthy

school districts displayed roughly an 80% passing rate. This reinforced the fact that wealthy school districts may possess increased achievement scores for minority students but the socio-economic status of the students and the districts cannot be considered an equalizer in terms of education.

According to the *Digest of Education Statistics*, student enrollment was to increase from 58.3 million students in the fall of 1980 to roughly 73.7 million students by 2007 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As student enrollment increased, so did the education gap according to a special report conducted by *Education Weekly* (Johnston & Viadero, 2000). Roughly, 3.5 million students were enrolled into a kindergarten program within the United States in the 2000. To the misfortunate of many of the young minority students, research conducted in 2000 displayed evidence that a sizeable educational gap was already present before the children even began their first day of kindergarten (Johnston & Viadero, 2000).

The education gap continues to increase between different ethnic categories as the student progresses through the K-12 grade levels. African American students in the fifth grade tend to be at least two years behind fifth grade Caucasian students in the areas of reading and mathematics. African American students entering the eighth grade are nearly three years behind eighth grade Caucasian students. When African American students entered the 12th grade, Caucasian students were at least four years ahead of African American 12th grade students (Comer, 2001). This gap in education is credited with producing a disproportionate number of African Americans that score lower than Caucasian students on standardized tests. Evidence of the education gap between African

American students and Caucasian students can be noted in high school graduation rates, standardized test results, course selections, and the grade obtained (Comer, 2001).

The odds of the success or failure of students could be predicted by simply looking at the student's ethnicity. The successes and failures of Asian Americans, African Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, and Native Americans can be found on any state's educational website. Data gathered from these websites continue to show the presence of a gap between the educational accomplishments of Caucasian students and African American students, one of the largest minority groups represented in the public education system in 2007.

By evaluating data presented by the *Digest of Education Statistics,* a researcher would see that there are correlations between the future successes or failures of students based on the ethnicity of the students. The data gathered by the *Digest of Education Statistics* also becomes a predictor of how students would perform in college as well as a predictor of the potential earnings that students would possibly earn once entering the workforce. The implementations of various laws such as the *No Child Left Behind* or the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* created by Lyndon Johnson were designed to increase accountability and to ensure educational success for all children. Despite all of the efforts and attention that has been given to education, an obvious gap still exists between students of different ethnic groups (Viadero, 1999).

According to the Raule Yzaguirre, president of an advocacy group for Hispanics, the education gap is a societal problem that must be addressed by society as a whole (Johnston & Viadero, 2000). Yzaguirre stated that anything less would be un-American and gave way to failure and the acceptance of racial inequalities. The Harvard Education

Letter (2006) stated that significant progress had been achieved in reducing the educational gap that existed between African Americans and Caucasians. Johnston and Viadero (2000) wrote that the education gap made underwent sizeable decreases between African Americans and Caucasians up until the end of the late 1990s. It was around this time period that the focus of education shifted towards accountability and test scores.

The rulings of cases such as the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision of 1992 or the *Missouri v. Jenkins* decision of 1995 gave states and school systems more flexibilities in dealing with the inequalities that stemmed from operating segregated educational systems. The shift of the educational system towards resegregation has been in step with the widening of the academic disparity (Logan, 2004). The Supreme Court ruling in 1995 for the *Missouri v. Jenkins* case ensured the erosion of affirmative action, which aided in the reduction of the educational gap. Over the next several years, the academic disparities gained national attention at the onset of colleges and universities denying minority students' entrance into programs and schools due to what the colleges and universities considered subpar candidates (Johnston & Viadero, 2000).

Ferguson (2008) discussed what some researchers termed as the academic disparities of the 21st century. This particular education gap seems to exist between students whose families have the same or similar educational backgrounds but different ethnic backgrounds. Ferguson (2008) asserted that the gaps that exist in the educational achievements of ethnic groups stem from the amount of exposure that individuals obtain throughout their lives.

Research supports the fact that exposure is not the sole factor that separates the achievement of ethnic groups. Many factors contribute to the achievement gaps that exist

between Caucasians and minority students, particularly African American students as it relates to education (Thompson & O'Quinn, 2001). Other factors include having crowded classrooms due to the schools being understaffed; schools not having adequate resources and the appropriate equipment necessary for quality instruction and engaging lessons to take place; the teacher's perceptions regarding the students' abilities and aptitude; the availability of high level rigorous courses; and the lack of highly qualified instructors that place emphasis on curriculum and driving instruction (Clark, 1999). Ferguson (1998) warned that the evidence is thin; the research he reviewed suggests that the teacher's beliefs, expectations, and behaviors may affect African American students more than Caucasian students (Borman, 2003).

It was Borman's belief that some factors had a stronger impact on African American and Hispanic students than on Caucasian students (Borman, 2003). To address the impact, programs such as Success for All (SFA) and Direct Instruction have been utilized by school districts in the past to boost the achievement of school districts that work with children that come from very diverse backgrounds (Borman, 2003). These programs have been known to be extremely effective in decreasing the achievement gap between Caucasian and minority students.

According to Borman (2003), a factor of significance that also contributes to the gap in achievement between students is the presence of the summer break. The lack of educational opportunities over the summer months has led to decreased learning opportunities for many minority students as well as students whose families are considered to possess low socio-economic status. This break in educational stimulus causes students to fall behind students who participate in educational opportunities over

the summer. To combat the problem many school districts have implemented summer programs or summer camps to keep their students educationally stimulated over the summer (Borman, 2003). These sorts of programs require that teachers review less of the old materials from the previous school year and implement fewer remediation activities for minority students (Borman, 2003).

Ferguson (2008) asserted the educational system should create an environment that is conducive to learning for all students. Wong and Wong (2004) reported that students who are projected to excel intellectually by their teachers display more intellectual growth after a single year than students who are not projected to grow. Haycock (2001) asserted that the influence of teachers could dictate the successes or failures of students, especially minority students. Research has shown that the influence of teachers with high expectations for their students, specifically minority students, have a greater impact in a positive manner and increases academic successes for students as opposed to the direct opposite for teachers that have low expectations according to Haycock (2001).

Ethnicity and Achievement

The academic achievements of African American students in rigorous programs such as Advanced Placement or gifted programs may not depict the true essence of African American students without addressing psychological issues that may exist. Moore and Rowley (2002) stated that the dichotomized approach and the bicultural approach were the two main views that help to show the relationship between ethnicity and the achievements of African American students in academia. The dichotomized approach implied that African Americans students psychologically wrestle with fitting in

with other African American students who may not be quite as astute or excelling in their academic studies, Advanced Placement courses, and gifted programs and setting themselves apart from their peers.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) stated that the African American students' view of *being or acting White* meant that the student chose to perform well academically (pp. 177). This struggle causes African American students to choose between being perceived as having an identity that does not embrace nor reward achievement and an identity that implies that African American students are not being true to their ethnicity. The true dilemma that rests with intellectually gifted African American students is that mental turmoil is a possibility when one stereotype is accepted without consideration of the other belief system.

Moore and Rowley (2002) stated that African American students who were thought to *act White* were isolating themselves from the rest of their culture while African American students who chose to embrace their heritage would have to sacrifice academic achievement to be truly accepted (pp. 64). The disconnect between the achieving African American students and non-achieving African American students causes the achieving students to feel ostracized among African American students who do not value an education. Their isolation can also include possible rejection from Caucasian students as well. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) implied that the lack of acceptance causes the African American student with the desire to achieve to feel isolated psychologically as well as socially and can result in a state of depression. This struggle caused Moore and Rowley (2002) to imply that African American students who are

intellectually apt would not be able to successfully crossover between different ethnic groups concerning social acceptance.

The connection between academically inclined African American students and the identities of the academically inclined African Americans implies that this particular group of individuals corral the ability to be situational adaptive which is perceived as being beneficial when interacting with other cultures. The situational adaptability allows this group of students to achieve academically and remain acceptable within the prospective social arenas (Moore and Rowley, 2002). Researchers such as Moore and Rowley (2002) implied that the crossover appeal of some academically astute African Americans increases the isolation, the feelings of depression, and the chaos associated with the African American students. The Moore and Rowley (2002) research further implied that the crossover appeal might evolve on an individual basis as opposed to the collective approach.

Minority Achievement Gap

During the turn of the 21st century, significant strides have been made in diminishing the achievement gap that exists between minority students and Caucasian students in the areas of science and mathematics. Research gathered by the National Statistic Foundation implied that the turn of the century was the point that the United States began to feel the impact of having too few mathematicians and scientists. The lack of scientists and mathematicians influences the United States economically in that it limits the amount of viable competitors in the global market. To increase the United States' standing in the global market, the United States must increase the number of advance degrees held by minorities in the areas of math and science. This stance is

supported by the prediction that in four decades from 2010, there will be more minorities in the United States as opposed to Caucasians. Minorities have become the fastest grouping population found in the public education system.

The lack of minorities participating in the areas of science and mathematics can be attributed to various factors. The lack of effective instructors along with being equipped with subpar equipment within minority schools has contributed greatly to the reason behind the low participation of minorities in mathematics and science. The perception of minorities' lack of abilities contributes to the low number of enriching scientific and mathematical courses. The scarce amount of resources and the ineffective usage of curriculum qualify the notion that mathematics and the sciences were not sound investments in minority schools (Orfield & Lee, 2004). The enactment of the landmark *Brown* case was designed to improve the educational experience of minority students throughout the United States. During the 1970s the United States saw the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students cut in half only to see it increase again in the late 80s (Haycock, 2001).

An analysis conducted by the *National Center for Education Statistics* in 2009 displayed a constant increase on the standardized test scores of African Americans for the last quarter of the 20th century. This data indicated that there was an increase in the reading scores of graduating African American students but the results also indicated that there was an increase in the achievement gap that has been established between Caucasian students and African American students dating throughout the last 30 to 40 years of the 20th century. Even though there was an increase in the reading scores of African Americans graduating from high school, there also was a decrease in the

achievement scores of ninth grade African American students in the area of mathematics during the same period.

The *National Center for Education Statistics* (2000) documented that less than 2% of 17-year-old African American students could successfully read, comprehend, and translate data of a technical nature as compared to roughly 8% of Caucasian students being able to complete the same task. The *National Center for Education Statistics* (2000) data also stated that 1% of African American students were capable of processing and correctly solving algebraic word problems that consisted of multiple steps as compared to 10% of Caucasian students. There is a large achievement gap that exists between the achievement of African American students and Caucasian students when it comes solving other mathematical computations. Thirty percent of African American students can successfully master percentages, fractions and averages while roughly 70% of Caucasian students could successfully complete the same task.

Data collected from the *National Center for Education Statistics Report* in 1992 supports the claims of Jencks and Phillips (1998) which stated that the educational gap that exists between African American students and Caucasian students could be tracked from kindergarten throughout their adult lives. Early childhood development plays a key role in the educational development of children. Data gathered by the *National Center for Education Statistics Report* (1992) indicated that 1 in 4 Caucasian children attended preschool from ages 3 to 4 while the same numbers were found to be present in African American children during the 1970s. Over the next 20 years the number of 3-year-old and 4-year-old African American students entering preschool increased only by 6% as compared to a 15% increase by Caucasian 3-year-old and 4-year-old preschool students.

Jencks and Phillips (1998) stated that this difference in early childhood engagement contributes profoundly to the gap in achievement between African American students and Caucasian students.

Some indicators suggest that socio-economic factors do not play a key role in the achievement gap that exists between ethnic groups. African American students who come from middle and upper middle class families displayed the largest achievement gap when compared to Caucasian students from the same educational and socio-economic background. According to research conducted by Zuckerman in 2001, minority students struggled academically regardless of their socio-economic status. Research gathered by Fletcher (2003) conveyed that African American students and Hispanic students suffer from economical disadvantages such as having fewer educational materials available in their homes even though they lived in wealthy school districts. According to the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), when comparing the reading scores of graduating high school seniors, the children of college educated African Americans and college educated Hispanics scored worse than the children of Caucasian parents who only possessed a high school diploma did.

The continuous research suggests that the achievement gap continues to exist as well as increase dating back to the Reagan Era when the United States, Department of Justice, refused to enforce desegregation mandates at the state level. Governmental programs and policies such as affirmative action faced constant legal battles asserting that the policies and programs were biased even though the programs and policies were designed to help minority students obtain access to the same quality of education that Caucasian students had received. The overhaul of the *Elementary and Secondary*

Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 created the *No Child Left Behind* during the Bush Administration hoping to decrease the achievement gap that exists between minority and Caucasian students. While the *No Child Left Behind* has not served to decrease the achievement gap, it has placed more accountability on individual school systems, which are responsible for providing a quality education for all students.

The *Sheff v. O'Neill* case of 1996 sought to mobilize the energy of *Brown v. Board of Education* even though efforts to carry out the law had ceased being a priority for many individuals within the presently integrated society. The court decision of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* created voluntary programs designed to integrate students into school districts that would not be an option for some students based on their location. The originators of the lawsuit claimed that the isolation of children based on ethnicity and location was a violation of desegregation laws created to establish equality amongst all students concerning education. The United States Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision and stated that the liability of eliminating inequality amongst students due to isolation rests with the state. This ruling caused states to invent ways to ensure that they complied with the law. In 2003, the United States Supreme Court ruled that affirmative action was a liability that needed to be addressed at the higher levels as well as the lower levels of education. The ruling of *Grutter v. Bollinger* solidified this requirement based on the stance of one of the Supreme Court Justices. The opinion delivered by Justice O'Connor asserted that, "Numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals" (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003).

The global market called for skill levels to be developed by interacting with individuals from diverse background, cultures, and ideologies. This reality became evident in the military forces of the United States as well by the development of ethnically diverse units to successfully complete missions on foreign soil. According to Orfield and Lee (2004), the United States educational institutions must become ethnically diversified in order to remain competitive in the global market. The assertion of the United States Supreme Court's decision reestablished the prioritization of *Brown v. Board of Education.* This Supreme Court decision led to the Bush Administration's revamping of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and created what is now known as the *No Child Left Behind.* The *No Child Left Behind* documented inequalities that existed and sought to eliminate the achievement gap those years of unequal education practices between Caucasian and minority students helped to establish. The language of *Brown v. Board of Education* calls for all children to access a quality education as well as the opportunity for economical pursuits. The designed impact of the *Brown* decision was to ensure the elimination of segregation even though the country has started to return to a segregated society after the *Brown* ruling. The goals and intentions of *Brown v. The Board of Education* continues to be challenging obstacles over half a century later. Orfield and Lee (2004) concluded that segregation does not work and that achieving desegregation requires explicit and enduring commitment.

Teacher's Expectations and Personal Background

Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) stated that there is a relation between the teacher's background or exposure and the expectations of the students. Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) implied that the impact of teacher's expectations being individualized according

to experiences is too subtle to identify and may vary from student to student. Teachers' perceptions can be derived from family history, teachers' experiences, and the caliber of teachers' peer as well as the internalized views of the students. Research has shown that teachers tend to bestow accolades on the students who the teachers claim requires praise to achieve. The research also states that teachers tend to deny praise from the students who teacher claims does not require praise as a motivational tool. The same type of double standard has been found in the teacher-student relationships that exist within the classroom. Teachers tend to converse and interact with the students who initiate dialogue more than the other students (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). The research states that detecting the expectations of teachers is difficult to do without taking into account other considerations (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007).

Teacher Certification

The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) has forced states and school districts to pay more attention to the caliber of teachers who are being hired in order to be in compliance. *No Child Left Behind* mandated that schools be filled with highly qualified instructors. According to *No Child Left Behind,* all teachers must be certified by the state that employees them. This requirement caused government officials and lawmakers to assess the guidelines and regulations of teaching programs and how teachers can receive their licenses as well as the requirements for re-certification.

Apprehension towards teacher readiness and teacher qualifications has increased the public's interest in the reform of the educational system. Fraser (2001) claimed that the change in direction is due to the belief that traditional teaching methods have become ineffective in the 21st century. The Department of Education has devised various tracks

that will enable potential instructors the opportunity to obtain the necessary credentials that would allow them the ability to become teachers. Consequently, there is not a national standard for what qualifies a person to become a teacher. The procedures for becoming an instructor vary from state to state. Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) inferred that "the licensure system in the United States lack uniformity. The variety of alternate pathways in the teaching profession is not governed by the Department of Education" (p. 136).

Issues And Challenges To Alternative Teacher Certification

Alternative teaching certificates implies that the method of obtaining a teaching certification is the non-traditional method (Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). Alternate route instructors are non-traditional teachers who obtained certification after the completion of an undergraduate degree in a field other than education. The category of alternative certification entails a range of practices that include emergency teaching certificates that are given to individuals without any training or teaching experience. The emergency teaching certification allows individuals the opportunity to become licensed for a designated period. The individuals who participate in this program tend to have an undergraduate degree in the area or content area that they desire to teach (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001).

Feistritzer and Chester (2000, 2001) have categorized roughly 10 separate classes of alternate route programs. The vast majority of the programs have been identified as focusing on first year instructors while the remaining programs are alternate route programs that have been established in states that did not have an alternate route certification program. Feistritzer and Chester (2001) identified the following 10

categories of the alternate certification program that have been utilized within the United States:

1. Class A programs are designated for potential employees who possess a bachelor's degree in non-traditional fields (fields other than education). This alternative teaching program utilizes mentors and instructions tactics that focus on theory and model teaching throughout the school year as well as summers. This non-restrict program does not focus on the employee totals, graduate levels, nor the subject matter.
2. Class B programs focus on teaching certifications created solely to recruit talented candidates who possess a bachelor's degree into the teaching profession. These programs are considered restrictive because they focus on content areas, grade levels, and teacher shortages.
3. Class C programs review the academic portfolio to conduct an analysis. The program is designed for in-services and course work necessary for certification. State and local school districts are responsible for the structure of the program.
4. Class D programs review the academic portfolio to conduct an analysis. The program is designed for in-services and course work necessary for certification. Institutions of higher learning are responsible for the structure of the program.
5. Class E programs are post-baccalaureate programs stationed on the campuses of higher education.
6. Class F programs are considered emergency certification routes. The potential instructor is given an emergency teaching certification that allows the alternate route instructor to teach without the oversight of a supervisor while

simultaneously pursuing certification through the completion of traditional educational coursework.

7. Class G programs are designed for individuals who only have a couple requirements remaining before obtaining full certification. In addition, this program is designed for individuals relocating from one state to another as well as individuals who possess an endorsement in one area but would like to obtain an endorsement in another area.
8. Class H programs allow individuals who possess *special* qualifications such as being a world renowned author, a Pulitzer Prize winner, or a Nobel Prize winner to become instructors in certain content areas.
9. Class I programs require that licensed teachers travel the traditional collegiate teacher education program route with no alternatives.
10. Class J programs were created to discontinue the process of issuing emergency teaching certificates. These programs require individuals who do not possess the minimum requirements to gain entrance into either a traditional route program or an alternate route program. (p. 37)

Some skeptics asserted that alternate route instructors are not as qualified as the traditional route instructors, Kwiatkowski (1999) implied that alternate route certification would allow greater diversity and competency to be found in the teaching pools in the urban school districts. The alternate route certification decreased the dependency upon candidates requiring emergency certification. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) did not support the usage of alternate route certification. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) utilized data from a 1998 survey of first year teachers in New York City that

entered the profession via the traditional method as well as teachers who entered the profession through the alternate route. Darling-Hammond (2006) concluded that instructors who entered the teaching profession via the traditional educational route implied that the traditional educational programs prepared instructors for the classroom better than the alternate route programs. The differences between the various certification tracks revealed that the impact of preparation plays a role in the way that instructors felt about their effectiveness as an instructor or their responsibilities towards the students as well as their duration in the teaching profession.

Traditional route instructors conveyed a greater level of confidence in their craft to provide instruction and communicate with their students than non-traditional route instructors (Flores, Desjean-Perrotta, & Steinmetz, 2004). Data collected from surveys displayed that the instructors' certification track did not have an impact on teacher efficacy because in terms of teaching efficacy the vast majority rated general efficacy greater than personal efficacy (Flores et al., 2004). Consequently, traditional route instructors who went through a traditional teaching program at a university tend to have a greater level of positive personal efficacy than non-traditional instructors (Flores et al., 2004).The research implied that alternate route instructors chose to enter the teaching profession via the alternate route program because it was less rigorous than the traditional education route. The findings stated that less alternate route instructors than traditional route instructors planned to make a career in education a lifelong career. This stance gave rise to potential questions concerning the alternate route instructors when it came to the quality of their instruction.

Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2002) also concluded that traditional educational programs were better than alternate route programs. Laczko-Kerr and Berliner's comparison of the advancements of elementary students taught by instructors from alternate route programs verses instructors from traditional educational programs revealed the students of the traditional route teachers produced better results than the alternate route instructors on standardized exams. It was the belief of Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2002) that instructors from alternate route programs contributed to the achievement gap that continues to exist between children of poverty and our students who come from families with high socio-economic status.

Effects of Ethnicity and Gender on Teacher's Evaluation

Research was conducted with 57 instructors of various ethnicities (African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian). The instructors were asked to assess the responses of African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic third grade students. The results concluded that answers implied to have been produced by minority students and Caucasian males were assessed less favorably than the same responses implied to have been produced by Caucasian females. This research implied that instructors tend to have lower expectations for minorities students and Caucasian males than of Caucasian females. Instructors of various ethnicities exhibited such low expectations but African American and Hispanic instructors appeared to display this behavior more than other ethnicities. In 2008, African American and Hispanic students scored an average of 25 points lower in reading and 23 points lower in math than their Caucasian peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The certainties contributing to such statistics are particularly difficult, consisting not only of the students' interactions with the instructors and the students' peers inside the classroom, but their private lives, and their language of social and cultural backgrounds, among many other variables. The details of how such elements interact are outlined in ethnographic accounts such as Heath (1983) and Lareau (2003). Although many variables unfortunately impact the achievement gap (for a review, see Jencks & Phillips, 1998), one of the most perplexing likelihoods is that instructors may unintentionally contribute to it by harboring low expectations for minority students (see, for example, Jussim & Harber, 2005). Education research that has considered gender (e.g., Center on Education Policy, 2010; Halpern, 1997; Pollack, 1998; Sommers, 2000) has found that, differing to popular beliefs of male governance, females are doing better in school than ever before and, in many relevant ways, are outperforming males. Females tend to be more interested in academics, better study habits. Females tend to have better attendances as well as they are more successful with completing assignments in almost every area than their counterparts. Males tend to be 1 or 2 years behind female students in the areas of reading and writing. Male students tend to be twice as likely to be retained in a grade, identified as having a learning disability, 10 times as likely to be identified as having attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Based on the results listed above, the conclusion behind the study revealed that instructors assess responses by minority students less favorably than Caucasian students do. In addition, it concluded that male students tend to be assessed less favorably than female students are. The results stated that Caucasian females obtained more favorable results than any other group, but the results could not determine conclusively if the

ethnicity coupled with the gender increased the negative effects of the instructors' responses. Consequently, minority males did receive the least favorable assessments of all groups.

Summary

In a time when accountability has become synonymous with education, the achievement gap between African American students and Caucasian students continues to grow. Literature exists on any argument regarding whether or not the history of our nation has played a part in the lack of equality between the races and the impact on student achievement. The review of literature provided research that looked at the theme of achievement and how the achievement gap exists between ethnicities. These topics examined the impact that a quality education has on African Americans students versus other ethnic groups such as the Hispanic influence.

The Hispanic influence seeks further to engage the possibility that other factors may play a role in the achievement gap as opposed to exposing students to material. A series of landmark cases including *Brown v. The Board of Education, Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), *Sheff v. O'Neill*, *The Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* and the *Freeman v. Pitts* decision in 1992 have been presented to display the many changes that have caused the educational system to evolve into the institution that it is today. This opportunity could not be adequately addressed without observing the role segregation plays in teacher expectations and the expectations of students as well as the other factors that may contribute to the lack of achievement for students.

This chapter contains research pertaining to the different types of teacher certifications and the possible impact those certifications have on student achievement.

Teaching certifications did not come with its own challenges and issues. Alternative certifications versus traditional certifications caused the level of expectations to come into question as it pertained to training and qualifications of the teacher.

Research literature identified a particular danger of low expectations combined with an attitude of futility communicated to certain students, leading to erosion of their confidence and motivation for school learning. The influence of teachers with high expectations can have a greater positive impact on students as opposed to teachers who have low expectations according to Haycock (2001). The ethnicity and academic achievement of African American students placed into gifted programs may not depict the true essence of the African American students without addressing the psychological issues that may be a part of the problem. This set of issues is connected to the minority achievement gap, which states that the existence of an educational gap between minority students and Caucasian students in the areas of science and mathematics continues to be quite noticeable even though great strides have been made. The impact of the teacher's expectations ties into that educational gap.

The role of teacher's expectations and personal background implies that teachers tend to deny praise from the students who teachers claim do not require praise as a motivational tool. The true discrimination that comes out of poverty is the lack of cognitive strategies. The lack of these unseen attributes handicaps in every aspect of life the individual who does not have them (Payne, 1996). This handicap holds true for the ethnicity as well as gender of the student according to the review of literature.

The impact of ethnicity and gender on teachers' evaluations transformed and promoted the research on the nature of teachers' expectations. Surveys of male and

female instructors of various racial/ethnic backgrounds gauged equivalent reactions apparent as spoken by African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic students. Payne (1996) implied that support systems are simply networks of relationships. Those networks of relationships lay claim to the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is organized around eight topics: instrument, reliability and validity, district profile, school profiles, participants, data collection, data analysis, and summary. This chapter provides an explanation of the procedures followed while conducting this research. The objective of this chapter is to characterize the methods and measures used to establish answers to the research questions and the hypotheses.

Instrument

The construction of the questionnaire used in this study stemmed from the teacher portion of the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study (HSLS: 09) which consisted of 225 questions (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). The questionnaire for this study focused on 40 of those questions that best addressed the three research questions. A panel of experts and a pilot group reviewed the questionnaire for errors and helped establish the validity of the instrument, and the length of time to complete the survey. Based on feedback from the panel, one item was removed because it was viewed as being redundant. The remaining 39 items were considered valid. It was also determined that the estimated time to complete the instrument was 15 minutes. The final version of the questionnaire included questions related to participants' demographics and perceptions of their students and their students' abilities. Also, the 39 questions (9 questions relating to background, 27 questions relating to the beliefs in teaching, and 3 questions that relate to beliefs in teaching and gender) addressed the expectations of the participants and whether

or not teachers' advanced degree levels, ethnicity, gender, certifications, and grade levels are connected to the teachers' expectations.

Questions 1-9 addressed the *teacher background* section. These questions consisted of multiple-choice formats. This section contained identifying characteristics such as demographics, grade levels taught certification, and years of experience.

Questions 10-36 addressed the *beliefs about teaching and school* section. Questions 10-16 were structured in the formation of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Questions 17-21 consisted of multiple-choice formats. Questions 22-30 were structured in the formation of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Not applicable* to *A lot*. Questions 31-36 were structured in the formation of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree.*

The *beliefs about teaching and gender* section consisted of three 5-point Likert scale questions that ranged from *females are much better* to *males are much better*. This section allowed the researcher to identify how the students' gender influenced the participants' expectations and the teachers' perception of the educational system.

Reliability and Validity

The instrument utilized in this study came from the teacher section of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 was validated. The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 consisted of a teacher questionnaire that had 225 questions. The teacher questionnaire required modification to reduce the number of items and to examine the instrument's reliability and validity. The researcher identified 39 questions for inclusion in the instrument used in this study.

The research instrument required the assembling of a panel of experts for instrument validation. Panelist One was a lead teacher with 25 years of educational experience in a public school system on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She received a doctoral degree in the field of education leadership. Panelist Two had over 20 years of experience in public education and served as a Principal. He had a doctoral degree that focused on educational leadership. Panelists Three had over 15 years of experience in public education, as well as certification in the field of school counseling. She had a doctoral degree that focused on educational leadership. The panel was asked to review the research instrument to establish content validity.

The panel of experts' validation of the instrument focused on the following indicators: 1) was the instruction clear and understandable, 2) were items worded clearly and correctly, 3) were the select responses adequate and correct, 4) was there an appropriate amount of details provided, 5) were there any items that needed to be deleted because they were irrelevant or nonessential, and 6) was the length of the questionnaire appropriate? The panel of experts requested minor modifications to questions 1, 2, and 8 but found no fault in the structure of the remaining questions. The panel found the remaining questions to be clear and concise. The potential answers to the questions were adequate and correct in nature and the panel suggested no additional changes beyond the aforementioned changes.

The teacher portion of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 focused on science and math teachers but not English teachers. English teachers were included in the modified questionnaire. A pilot group consisting of 15 instructors from a single lower elementary school field-tested the research instrument. The pilot study of 15 instructors

answered 39 questions. The pilot group's answers to the questionnaire were entered into SPSS 20.0. To maintain the reliability, the pilot study was tested utilizing the Cronbach's alpha. The analysis of the pilot study results was strictly methodological in intent. The pilot study was designed to observe the internal consistency of the 39 items. The Cronbach alpha for the pilot study was .701. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is deemed acceptable in social science research. Reliability and validity were found to be evident.

Demographics

The demographics of each participating school represent total enrollment of the student body for each school that took part in the survey. This research studied the characteristics and expectations of teachers that work in a school district that is predominantly African American. This study focused on three schools that possessed a student body where the majority of African American students consistently scored below Caucasian students on standardized tests. The individual school enrollments were separated according to grade levels. Additional information included the ethnicity of the students that participated in the Mississippi Curriculum Test 2 (MCT2) and the Subject Area Test Program (SATP). The performance of the students was categorized by grade level as well as by race for the SATP. Less than 1% of the high school population was comprised of Asian, Hispanic, and Native American students. The performances of African American and Caucasian students were a focal point of this study. The percentiles of all students that scored passing in the areas of language arts (including English 10), mathematics, science, and U.S. history were included in the results. The percentiles of students who tested as proficient or above in reading were also included.

Mississippi Department of Education defined proficiency as being a state when the students demonstrated solid academic performance and mastery of knowledge and skills required for success in the grade or course in the content area. Student scores were classified into four achievement levels, with minimal being the lowest and advanced being the highest (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). This grading scale was one of the central factors that determined the ranking of schools and districts for Mississippi Public Schools.

A detailed explanation of standardized testing program was found at the Mississippi Department of Education. Conversely, schools and school districts were provided a state accountability label based predominantly on the achievement data of the students that was gathered from the MCT2 and the SATP. Individual rankings of schools were calculated based on the annual growth achieved by each student on the MCT2 and the SATP. The growth of minimal students was not calculated unless the growth is substantial enough to change their scores from minimal to basic or better. In order for the scores to be valid, individual schools must test at least 95% of the students in each of the subject areas. The Mississippi Department of Education required that all students in the third through the eighth grade take the language arts and mathematics tests. Meanwhile, fifth grade and eighth grade students were required to take the Mississippi Science Test while fourth grade and seventh grade students were previously required to take the Mississippi Writing Test. The requirements for taking the Mississippi Writing Test have been removed since the completion of this research. No Mississippi Writing Test results were available for this study. The Mississippi Department of Education also required all high school students to take and pass the Biology I, Algebra I, English 10, 10th Grade

Writing, and the U.S. History Exams in order to graduate. Exceptions to passing all exams had been extended to students who had been identified as pursuing a certificate, as opposed to a diploma. Certificate track students were only required to take the exams but no passing score was required. Thus, the results reflected of this change in academic growth (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

School One consisted of 794 students in grades 9-12 and had 68 certified teachers. Thirty-three teachers were considered the core highly qualified teachers. The student teacher ratio was approximately 12:1. The student population was 80% African American, and 18% Caucasian. The remaining 2% of the population consisted students who identified as Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. Fewer than 6% of the students were English Language Learners. At the time of this study, School One had been rated an F school by the Mississippi Department of Education for the year 2011-2012 (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

School Two served as the only junior high school located in the school district that participated in the study. There were 23 core highly qualified teachers that taught the MCT2 classes. School Two consisted of 378 students in 7-8 grades. The student population for School Two was 74% of the African American, 22% Caucasian, and 2% Hispanic. Fewer than 5% of the students were identified as English Language Learners. At the time of this study, School Two had been rated an F school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

School Three was the upper consolidated elementary school that consisted of 375 students in 5-6 grades. As of July 2012, 72% of the students were African American, followed by the Caucasian students who represent 24% of the student population. The

remaining 3% comprised of the Asian students, Hispanic students and the Native American students. Less than 5% of the students are English Language Learners. Seventeen core high-qualified teachers were responsible for preparing all upper elementary students for the MCT2. School Three participated in the MCT2 in the state of Mississippi. According to the Mississippi Department of Education, School Three had been rated a D school for the 2011-2012 school year (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

Individual scores are used to determine the growth of the individual student. However, collectively the scores determined the growth by grade level and school. Collectively, the scores for the schools determined the growth and ranking of the school districts (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

District Profile

The participating school district will be referred to as School District A to maintain its anonymity. School District A was selected for this study because it was considered a low-performing district for three of four years since the 2009-2010 school years (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). The School District A consisted of four schools that served students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12: high school, junior high school, upper elementary school, and lower elementary school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

In 2011-2012, School District A had a D rating for the 2011-2012. The high school and the junior high school had an F rating. The upper and lower elementary schools possessed a D rating during the 2011-2012 school years (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). School District A was a public school district located in the southern

region of Mississippi. In addition to serving students from the city in which the district is located, it also serves students from two rural communities that had been annexed by the city.

School District A had 118 core highly qualified teachers that served the student body in the 2011-2012 school years. At the time of this study, there were 2,480 students enrolled in the district. The makeup of the student body was 49% female and 51% male. School District A possessed a minority population that consisted of 78% of the student body. The ethnic makeup consisted of 74% African American, 22% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic, and less than 2% of Asian and Native American students. Approximately, 89.64% of the district's students were eligible to receive free and/or reduced priced lunches. In 2011-2012 School District A consisted of four schools that serviced students in grades PK through 12: high school, junior high school, upper elementary school, and lower elementary school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

In 2012, School District A had a reported $13,158 in per pupil expenditures. Of that amount, the district spent 60.47% on instruction, 21.26% on other instructional expenditures, 7.04% on general administration, 5.71% on school administration, and 5.51% on operational expenditures. The school district had a ratio of 14 students for every full-time equivalent teacher, which was comparable to the average 15:1 student teacher ratio for public schools in Mississippi at that time (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

The district had a dropout rate of 23.6% in 2012, which was higher than the state average (16.7%) for grades 9-12. Fourteen percent of the students had an IEP

(Individualized Education Program), and the district served approximately 1% of English Language Learners (ELL) (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

School Profiles

Three schools from the selected district were included in this study. For the purposes of anonymity, they will be referred to as School One, School Two, and School Three. The three schools were the only schools within the district that participated in the standardized testing program. The following descriptions were provided for each school based on demographic data at the time of this study: student enrollment, grade levels, number of highly qualified teachers, racial makeup of student population, number of English Language Learners, and the school rating at the time of the study (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

School One Descriptive Data

During 2011-2012, School One had an increase of one point in the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI), moving from 120 to 121. During the 2011-2012 school years, School One was one of 107 out of 806 schools across the state of Mississippi to receive a grade of F for low performance (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

During the 2011-2012 school years, 91% of School One's teachers were identified as being highly qualified. Two percent of School One's teachers received emergency or provisional certificates. The courses taught by highly qualified teachers were equivalent to 90% of all of the courses. On the other hand, courses not taught by highly qualified teachers composed the remaining 10% of courses. School One had 794 students enrolled in the 9^{th} through the 12^{th} grades. Of the 794 enrolled students, only 697students (78%) of the students were enrolled in one of the four tested subject areas. Of the 697 students

enrolled in the four-tested subject areas, 693 students took one of the tests and produced a validated score. The students enrolled in Algebra I, English 10, and Biology I had a participation rate of 99% (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

A total of 33 core teachers taught the students that took part in the Subject Area Test Program. One hundred and eighty two students took the Algebra I test and 111 (61%) students passed the exam (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). The data gathered revealed that 52.7% of the male students passed and 69.2% of the female students passed. Only 72% of all Caucasian students and 59% of African American students that were eligible to take the Algebra I exam were successful in passing it. The gender results displayed 44% of males and 65% of females that were eligible to take the Algebra I scored proficient or better on the exam. Only 52% of African American students and 66% of Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the Algebra I exam. Eighty-two percent of all Algebra I students passed the exam. Sixty-five percent of all African American students and 84% of all Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the Algebra I exam (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

One hundred and seventy-five students took the Biology I test, and 99 (56.6%) students passed the exam. Results revealed that 50% of the male students passed and 63.5% of the female students passed. Seventy-seven percent of all Caucasian students and 52% of African American students who were eligible to take the Biology I exam were successful in passing the exam. Likewise, 34% of males and 45% of females who were eligible to take the Biology I test scored proficient or better on the exam. Only 34% of African American students and 63% of Caucasian students scored proficient or better. Across the state, roughly 75% of all Biology I students passed the exam, according to the

Mississippi Department of Education. In addition, 77% of all Caucasian students and 42% of all African American students scored proficient or better on the Biology I exam (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

One hundred and sixty students took the English 10 test, and 87 (54%) students passed the exam. The passing percentages, categorized by gender, revealed that 50.6% of the male students passed and 59.2% of the female students passed. A total of 55.2% of all Caucasian students and 53.8% of African American students who were eligible to take the English 10 exam were successful in passing. Gender results displayed 50.6% of males and 59.2% of females who were eligible to take the English 10 scored proficient or better. Only 29% of African American students and 49% of Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the English 10 exam. According to the Mississippi Department of Education, roughly 73.1% of all English 10 students passed the exam. Sixty-two percent of all African American students and 84.8% of all Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the English 10 exam. The educational gap is visible in all four of the subject areas. None is more prevalent as the gap that exists in U.S. History. Caucasian students produced almost twice as many proficient scores as African American students. Caucasian students had a proficiency rate of 52% while African American students had a proficiency rate of 27%. The educational gap is present amongst the genders as well. Female students produced more proficient scores than male students in all areas except for U.S. History. U.S. History was the only subject that males and females produced the same amount of proficient scores. This educational disparity may require additional attention because there is only one year of data to consider. Table 1 depicts SATP proficiency percentages in Algebra I, Biology I, English 10, and US History.

Table 1

Subject Area Test Program (SATP), Algebra I, Biology I, English 10 and U.S. History Percentages Scoring Proficient and Above for School One

Subject	All Students	Male	Female	Black	White
Algebra I	54	44	65	52	66
Biology	39	34	45	34	63
English 10	33	28	38	29	45
US History	31	31	31	27	52

*Notes: Percentages 0-4% are reported as 4% and percentages 96-100% are reported as 96%. Minimum N-count for reporting is 10 students.

School Two Descriptive Data

All students were required to participate in the Mississippi Curriculum Test 2 (MCT2) Program via language arts and mathematics except for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Table 2 displays the seventh and eighth grade proficient and above MCT2 Scores in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Eighth Grade Science for School Two. Forty-eight percent of students were female, and 51% of students were male. Seventy-four percent of the student body was African American, 21% were Caucasian, and 1% of the student body was comprised of Hispanic students (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). School Two had 23 core teachers that taught the 378 students that would be taking one of the MCT2. Of the 378 students, 366 (97%) took the language arts exam, 199 were seventh grade students and 167 were eighth grade students. Three hundred and sixty-four students (96%) took the mathematics exam, 199 seventh graders, and 165 eighth graders. Thirty-nine percent of all male seventh grade students scored

proficient or better on the language arts exam while 47% of female seventh grade students scored proficient or better. Forty-two percent of the seventh grade African American students scored proficient or better while 47% of Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the Language Arts exam (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

Additionally, the results of 2011-2012 MCT2 test revealed the African American students' proficiency levels were lower than the proficiency levels for the Caucasian students in Language Arts and Mathematics for both the seventh and eighth grade levels. Fifteen percent of eligible male eighth grade students and 51% of eligible female eighth grade students scored proficient or better on the Language Arts portion of the MCT2. Twenty-nine percent of eighth grade African American students and 35% of Caucasian students scored proficient or better on the Language Arts exam. A total of 28% of male eighth graders and 47% of eligible female eighth graders scored proficient or better on the Mathematics portion of the MCT2. Thirty-three percent of all eighth grade African American students and 46% of all eighth grade Caucasian students scored proficient or better, too. The test results displayed there is an educational gap present between the African American students' and the Caucasian students. The results of 2011-2012 MCT2 test revealed the African American students proficiency levels were lower than the proficiency levels for the Caucasian students in Language Arts and Mathematics for both the seventh and eighth grade levels. Caucasian students had more proficient students than the African American students on the eighth grade science test as well. The results revealed a large educational gap in language arts. The eighth grade female students

produced over three times the amount of proficient scores than the male eighth grade students.

Table 2

Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition, Language Arts Mathematics, and Science Percentages Scoring Proficient and Above for School Two

Grade Level	All Students	Male	Female	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	Native American
LA07	43	39	47	42	47	*	*	*
LA08	31	15	51	29	35	*	*	*
M07	41	37	44	36	51	*	*	*
M08	36	28	47	33	46	*	*	*
S08	56	56	57	41	72	79	61	61

*Notes: Percentages 0-4% are reported as 4% and percentages 96-100% are reported as 96%. Minimum N-count for reporting is 10 students.

School Three Descriptive Data

One hundred percent of the staff at School Three was highly qualified during the 2011-2012 school years (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). There were 17 core teachers that taught in MCT2 areas and 375 students enrolled in the fifth and sixth grades during the 2011-2012 school year. One hundred ninety five students in the fifth grade and 180 students in the sixth grade. The eligible student body consisted of 44% females and 55% males. The demographics of the eligible students in School Three consisted of 72% African American students, 24% Caucasian students, 2% Hispanic students, and 1% Asian students. Table 3 displays the fifth and sixth grade proficient and above MCT2 Scores in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science for School Three.

Additionally, the results of 2011-2012 MCT2 test revealed the African American students proficiency levels were lower than the proficiency levels for the Caucasian students in Language Arts and Mathematics for both the fifth and sixth grade levels. The Caucasian students in the fifth grade produced twice the amount of proficient scores as the African American students produced on the fifth grade science test. Table 3 depicts MCT2 Language Arts, Mathematics and Science proficiency levels for School Three.

Table 3

Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Percentages Scoring Proficient and Above for School Three

Grade Level	All Students	Male	Female	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	Native American
LA05	30	23	39	26	36	*	*	*
LA06	51	51	51	48	63	*	*	*
M05	37	33	42	32	45	*	*	*
M06	50	44	57	47	63	*	*	*
S05	54	55	52	36	72	74	50	42

*Notes: Percentages 0-4% are reported as 4% and percentages 96-100% are reported as 96%. Minimum N-count for reporting is 10 students.

Participants

The administrators from three schools within School District A were asked to select all teachers in their respective schools that fit the selection criteria for this study. The principals of School One and School Three, and the co-principal of School Two, distributed the questionnaires during faculty meetings conducted at each school. Only teachers who taught in tested subject areas in the SATP or MCT2 during the 2011-2012

academic year were identified in this pool of participants. School One teachers taught SATP classes. School Two and School Three teachers taught MCT2 classes. Seventy-three teachers were identified as meeting selection criteria (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010), including 33 from School One, 23 from School Two, and 17 from School Three. The actual number of teachers who participated in the study was 46, which represented a response rate of 63%. School One had 17 teachers to participate, which was equivalent to a 51.5% return. School Two had 13 teachers to participate, which was equivalent to a 56.5% return. School Three had the highest participation rate. School Three had 15 teachers to participate, which was equivalent to an 88% return. One teacher did not report their school on the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The superintendent of the participating school district granted permission (Appendix A) to conduct the research within the designated school district. The Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) granted the researcher the authority to conduct the study. The researcher informed the principals from participating schools that the Superintendent of the participating school district and The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board granted permission for the researcher to conduct the research within their perspective schools.

The researcher hand delivered the cover letters (Appendix C) and questionnaires (Appendix D) to the building level principals, who served as the designated contacts. The cover letter provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study. The cover letters and questionnaires were administered at the faculty meetings held on October 24, 2012. During the faculty meetings, the designated contacts distributed the cover letters and

questionnaires to all core teachers who had been identified by the principal as being SATP or MCT2 teachers for the district during the 2011-2012 school years. Any teacher that taught non-SATP or non-MCT2 courses was not part of study. The instructors were provided one hour to complete the questionnaire to allow the instructors the opportunity to work at their own pace although completion of the survey was estimated to take 15 minutes. The total time for completion of the questionnaire may have varied per participants. After completing the questionnaire, teachers were asked to place the questionnaires into a box as they exited the room. The administrator contacted the researcher when the materials were ready for pickup. Once notified by the administrator, the boxes were collected from the three schools by the researcher.

The responses from the questionnaire were input into an Excel spreadsheet. Each response was categorized with the corresponding question. All questions not answered by the respondents were left blank and notated as missing for reporting purposes. Raw data were stored in a computer located at the home of the researcher. The data were input into SPSS 20.0, analyzed, and stored until the SATP and MCT2 scores had been retrieved for the descriptive purposes of this study.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) posted the results of the 2011-2012 SATP and MCT2 on its website. The Mississippi Department of Education provided the ancillary SATP and MCT2 scores utilized for descriptive data for the participating schools. The data were retrieved from the Report section of MDE's website between October 2012 and December 2012. The Report section, formerly known as the Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS), contained scores categorized by grade level, gender, as well as the race of the students (Mississippi

Department of Education, 2010). The Report section provided information on enrollment verification, as well as demographics. The reports displayed the assigned accreditation levels and the achievements of the students that participated within the standardized testing program.

Data Analysis

To address the research questions surrounding the topic of teachers' expectations of students in a predominantly African American school district, a series of multiple regression tests were conducted. The researcher analyzed the participants' responses to the questionnaire to support or reject the hypotheses that a significant relationship existed between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity; relationship significance was analyzed for teacher expectations, advanced degree level, and grade levels, and between teacher expectations, certifications, and advance degree levels. All of the hypotheses related to exploring the relationships that may have impacted teacher expectations.

The following research questions were evaluated to investigate if a statistical significance requiring a *p* value of less than .05 was present while testing the multivariable for a potential relationship with teacher expectations. Research questions for this study included:

Research Question 1 asked, was there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity? This question was analyzed using a multiple regression test to see if the dependent variable, teacher expectations, was influenced by the independent variables (ethnicity and gender). The results of the multiple regression tests will either support or disprove the hypothesis that states (H_1)

there will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity.

Research Question 2 asked, was there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degree level, and grade level? This question was analyzed using a multiple regression test to see if the dependent variable, teacher expectations, was influenced by the independent variables (bachelor's degree, master's degree, specialist's degree, elementary level, secondary level-high school, and secondary level-junior high school). The results of the multiple regression tests will either support or disprove the hypothesis that states (H_2) there will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degree level, and grade level.

Research Question 3 asked was there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications, and advanced degree levels.

This question was analyzed using a multiple regression test to see if the dependent variable, teacher expectations, was influenced by the independent variables (bachelor's degree, master's degree, specialist's degree, traditional certification, and alternate route certification). The results of the multiple regression tests will either support or disprove the hypothesis that states (H_3) there will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications, and advanced degree levels.

SPSS 20.0 was the statistical software package used to analyze the data. All collected data was stored on a secure computer located at the home of the researcher. Administrators at the participating schools were informed of the opportunity to receive a copy of the findings if a request was made to the research via email or by phone. No requests were received from the administrators of the participating schools, but an

electronic version has been saved at the home of the researcher for individuals that may request a copy of the finding in the future.

Summary

This chapter pertained to a review of the study's methodology and included: 1) the instrument, 2) the reliability and validity of the instrument, 3) demographics, 4) the district profile, 5) school profiles, 6) participants, 7) data collection, and 8) data analysis. Chapter III sought to explain how the instrument was developed by means of modifying a part of the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study. Once the components of the instrument were chosen, the reliability and validity of the instrument were tested. Establishing reliability and validity required the input of panel experts and a pilot group. The panel experts and the pilot group examined each question on the instrument and made recommendations to remove any question from the questionnaire that did not address the research questions or the null hypotheses.

The profiles describing the schools and the school district were included in Chapter III. The data collection and the data analysis sections allowed the researcher an opportunity to produce a systematic explanation of how data were gathered and interpreted. The researcher used the statistical software program, SPSS, 20.0 to analyze data. A detailed explanation of the data analysis and testing of the hypotheses can be found in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This study was designed to observe the teachers' expectations of students in a predominantly African American school district. An analysis of the data gathered during this study will be discussed in this chapter. Chapter IV makes available a descriptive summary of each school for the designated school term and analysis of data for the three questions being addressed by this research.

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity?
2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advance degree level, and grade level?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and degree level?

Survey Results

Table 4 outlines descriptive data from the questionnaires returned. Seventy-three potential participants received questionnaires. Of these, 46 teachers chose to participate in the survey. This produced a 63% participation rate among the three schools where the greatest response came from the elementary and junior high schools.

With respect to gender, females made up 71.7% of the respondents. African Americans comprised the largest portion of the participants, representing 54.3% of the returned questionnaires. Fifty percent of the participants possessed a bachelor's degree, 41% possessed a master's degree, and 6.5% possessed a specialist degree. In addition,

regular teaching certification accounted for 78.3% of the certifications while alternate-route certifications accounted for 15.2% of the participants. The remaining 7% of respondents chose not to reveal the type of certification obtained. The frequencies and percentages of the demographic data are located in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	13	28.3%
Female	33	71.7%
Race		
American Indian	1	2.2%
Asian	2	4.3%
Black/African American	25	54.3%
Caucasian	17	37.0%
Native Hawaiian	1	2.2%
Licensure		
Bachelors	23	50%
Masters	19	41.3%
Specialist	3	6.5%
Ph.D	0	0.0%
Missing	1	2.2%

Table 4 (continued).

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Years teaching experience		
1-5 years	20	43.5%
6-10 years	11	23.9%
11-15 years	4	8.7%
15-20 years	2	4.3%
20+ years	9	19.6%
Employed as a teacher in 2011-12 school year		
Yes	20	43.5%
No	13	28.3%
Missing	13	28.3%
Grade Level Taught		
Elementary	16	34.8%
Secondary Level-HS	13	28.3%
Secondary Level-Jr. HS	16	34.8%
Missing	1	2.2%
Employed by the same school during 2011-2012 school year		
Same	38	82.6%
Not The Same	7	15.2%
Missing	1	2.2%

Table 4 (continued).

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Certifications		
Regular	36	78.3%
Alternate Route	7	15.2%
None	2	4.3%
Grades qualified to teach (K-6th = 1, 7-8th = 2, 9-12th = 3)		
K-6th	9	19.6%
K-6th, 7-8th	2	4.3%
K-6th, 7-8th, 9-12th	13	28.3%
K-6th, 9-12th	1	2.2%
7-8th	1	2.2%
7-8th, 9-12th	13	28.3%
9-12th	5	10.9%
Missing	2	4.3%

Beliefs about Teaching and School

The teachers addressed *beliefs towards teaching and school* from question #10 through question #16, utilizing a Likert Scale. The findings revealed that the vast majority of the respondents held high expectations for all students and did not assert that they gave up on any of their students. The majority of the respondents felt that socio-economic status did not correlate to the higher or lower scores nor did they imply that student's genetic make-up dictated the intelligences of the student. The majority of the

respondents felt that it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure all students learn but the majority could not agree nor deny that the teacher is responsible if the student fails. Table 5 displays the mean and standard deviation for *beliefs about teaching and school*.

Table 5

Beliefs about Teaching and School (N=46)

Question	Responding Characteristic	Mean	SD
Q10	Have high expectations for all students.	4.67	.79
Q11	Have given up on some students.	2.07	1.10
Q12	Expect very little from some students.	2.07	1.19
Q13	Believe that students' that have low socio-economic status receive lower marks than students with high socio-economic status.	2.61	1.29
Q14	Believe that a student's genetic make-up plays a part in the student's intelligence.	2.72	1.31
Q15	Feel responsible that all students learn.	4.33	.80
Q16	Feel responsible when any student in my class fails.	3.41	1.20
Expectations		3.85	.63

Likert Scale 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree

Teacher Beliefs on Preparation and Expectations

The teachers' *beliefs towards gender and achievement* were measured by Question #17 through Question #21 in Table 6. The findings revealed the majority of the teachers stated their students were performing lower in their class than the rest of the students in the school, but they stated that their students were performing academically low across all subjects. The respondents could not agree on whether or not their students knew what their teachers expected of them. The majority of the respondents asserted achievement was low for their students even though they stated they had high expectations. The vast majority of the teachers claimed their students were not prepared before entering their classes.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Beliefs on Preparation and Expectations

Question	Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Q17. Which of the following best describes the achievement level of students in your class compared with the average student in your school?	higher	6	13.3
	average	7	15.6
	lower	20	44.4
	vastly different	12	26.7
Q18. What do you think is your student's perception of your expectations?	higher	1	2.2
	average	1	2.2
	lower	8	17.4
	vastly different	36	78.3

Table 6 (continued).

Question	Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Q19. How would you describe your student's overall academic performance?	higher	4	8.7
	average	8	17.4
	lower	20	43.5
	vastly different	12	26.1
Q20. What would academic achievement look like for your student?	higher	3	6.5
	average	7	15.2
	lower	15	32.6
	vastly different	19	41.3
Q21. About what percentage of the students in class are not adequately prepared to tackle the material you cover?	25%	11	23.9
	26-50%	21	45.7
	51-75%	7	15.2
	More than 75%	5	10.9

Teacher Beliefs Towards Limitations On How They Teach

The teachers' *beliefs towards limitations* on how teachers instruct students were measured by Question #22 through Question #30 utilizing a Likert Scale. The findings revealed that most respondents stated that students placed some limitations on their ability to teach. This may have influenced the quality of instruction the students receive. The respondents implied a little of the limitations is related to the socio-economic but not the majority of the limitations. The majority of the participants asserted the contributing factor that limits their ability to teach was students with different academic abilities. They

did not feel all children were prepared to take their course. Most respondents felt the expectations of teachers placed some limitations on their ability to teach. This could possibly dictate the successes and failures of the students. The overwhelming majority implied that class size could affect their ability to teach a lesson. Table 7 provides the result for these items.

Table 7

Limitations on How You Teach (N=46)

Question	Responding Characteristic	Mean	SD
Q22.	Students with different academic abilities in the same class	3.75	1.12
Q23.	Students who come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds	3.12	1.16
Q24.	Students who come from a different ethnic background	2.66	.96
Q25.	Uninterested students	3.79	1.04
Q26.	Low morale among students	3.77	1.02
Q27.	Disruptive students	3.98	1.02
Q28.	How do you think your expectations affect your student's academic success?	4.48	.76

Table 7 (continued).

Question	Responding Characteristic	Mean	SD
Q29.	What do you expect from your students, academically?	4.70	.70
Q30.	In what way do you think class size has an effect on your students' academic achievement?	4.30	.80

Likert Scale 1 = Not Applicable, 2 = Not At All, 3 = A Little, 4 = Some, and 5 = A Lot

Statements That Apply To Instruction

The teachers' *beliefs towards instruction* were measured from Question #31 through Question #36 utilizing a Likert Scale in Table 8. The findings revealed that respondents did not imply the home environment influenced the students' aptitude. Most of the respondents felt they had good classroom management skills. The vast majority of the teachers felt you can make a connection with the most difficult student, but it takes an effort. The majority of respondents felt that neither genetics nor family background influenced determines the aptitude of the students, but they did not confirm nor deny that the teachers knew of ways to remediate students that have forgotten materials that had been taught earlier. This may be something that is connected to the skill set of the teachers and not the level of expectations of the teacher. Table 8 displayed the following results:

Table 8

Statements As They Apply To Instruction (n=46)

Question	Responding Characteristic	Mean	SD
Q31.	You are very limited in what you can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on their achievement	2.93	1.14
Q32.	If a student in your class becomes disruptive and noisy, you feel assured that you know some techniques to redirect them quickly	4.25	.72
Q33.	If you really try hard, you can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students	4.14	.80
Q34.	When it comes right down to it, you really cannot do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on their genetics	1.93	.95
Q35.	The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background	2.11	1.04
Q36.	If a student did not remember information you gave in a previous lesson, you would know how to increase their retention in the next lesson	3.66	.89

Likert Scale 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree

Gender and Achievement

To determine whether the successes or failures of students are determined by teachers' expectations and achievement, the variables of gender and achievement had to be addressed. The teachers' beliefs towards gender and how each gender performed in specific subject areas (English or Language Arts, Mathematics, and Sciences) were addressed from question #37 through question #39 utilizing a Likert Scale. The findings revealed that the vast majority of the teachers implied females were better at English and Language Arts than male students were while the vast majority implied that males and females were equal when it came to math and science. Earlier the respondents stated that they held high expectations for all students, but the same group of participants claimed that females were better in English than males. Table 9 presents the results.

Table 9

Frequency and Percentages for Teacher Beliefs on Gender and Achievement

Questions	Subjects	Frequency	Percentages
	English or Language Arts		
37. Females are much better		6	13.0
Females are somewhat better		19	41.3
Genders are the same		18	39.1
Males are somewhat better		0	0
Males are much better		0	0
Missing Items		3	6.5

Table 9 (continued).

Questions	Subjects	Frequency	Percentages
	Mathematics		
38.	Females are much better	2	4.3
	Females are somewhat better	9	19.6
	Genders are the same	18	39.1
	Males are somewhat better	11	23.9
	Males are much better	2	4.3
	Missing Items	4	8.7
	Science		
39.	Females are much better	0	0
	Females are somewhat better	5	10.9
	Genders are the same	25	54.3
	Males are somewhat better	10	21.7
	Males are much better	2	4.3
	Missing Items	4	8.7

Analysis of Data

The three research questions addressed in this section were as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, teacher gender, and teacher ethnicity?

2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degrees level, and grade level?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and advanced degree level?

The researcher utilized SPSS 20.0 to determine if there was a significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. The researcher input the data into SPSS 20.0 to determine if the hypothesis should be rejected.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity was tested utilizing multiple regressions. The results of the test yielded no statistically significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. [F (2, 39) =.893, p = .418, $R2$ = .044]. The hypothesis for this research question stated:

H_1 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. The hypothesis was accepted.

Demographic variables, gender, and ethnicity appeared to have no significant relationship to teacher expectations when researched in conjunction to one another. Neither gender nor ethnicity had a significant relationship with teacher expectations when presented in isolation. Gender has a value of p = .989 and ethnicity has a value of p =.192. Neither of the variables was less than .05. Regression coefficients are outlined in Table 10.

Table 10

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Gender and Ethnicity on Teacher Expectations

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	*SE*	*B*	*t*	*Sig.*
(Constant)	3.970	.374		10.602	.000
Gender	.003	.209	.002	.013	.989
Ethnicity	-.255	.192	-.210	-1.328	.192

a. Dependent Variable: expectations, $p<.05$

Research Question 2: *Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advanced degrees, and grade level,* was tested utilizing multiple regression tests. The findings, F (4, 39) = 6.06, p = .001, $R2$= .383, established there is a relationship between the expectations of teachers and advanced degrees. The hypothesis stated

H_2 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, advance degrees, and grade level. This hypothesis was rejected.

Teachers who held an advanced degree showed a relationship with teacher expectations while grade levels had no impact on teacher expectations. Teachers who possessed a Specialist degree displayed significance of p = .001. Teachers that possessed a Master's degree displayed significance of p = .007. Both of these were negative effects. Teachers with Master's and Specialist degrees were lower in their expectations of students than teachers with Bachelor's degrees. The results confirmed there was the significance between advanced degrees and teacher expectations. The significance

associated with grade levels could not be confirmed; therefore, there was not a relationship between teacher expectations and grade levels.

Table 11 outlined the unstandardized and standardized coefficients for the impact of advanced degrees and grade levels on teacher expectations.

Table 11

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Degree Level and Grade Level on Teacher Expectations

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*Sig.*
(Constant)	4.162	.156		26.747	.000
Master's Degree	-.478	.170	-.379	-2.821	.007**
Specialist Degree	-1.181	.327	-.476	-3.612	.001**
High School	.275	.202	.196	1.362	.181
Junior High School	-.323	.192	-.248	-1.685	.100

Dependent Variable: expectations, ***p*<.05

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and degree level, was tested utilizing multiple regressions. The findings, F (4, 40) = 3.746, p = .011, *R2* =.273, established there is a relationship between expectations of teachers and degree level, but there was not a significant relationship between the expectations of teachers and teaching certificates. The research question along with the null hypothesis was tested for significance.

H_3 There will not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications and degree levels. This hypothesis was rejected.

The results revealed the relationship was present only with the teachers that possess a Specialist degree. The significance for the Specialist degree was determined to be $p = .001$, but the Master's degree was determined to possess a non-significant value of $p = .067$. Table 12 outlines the results.

Table 12

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Equations for the Impact of Certification Level and Degree Level on Teacher Expectation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*Sig.*
(Constant)	4.086	.129		31.581	.000
Certificate 2	-.129	.239	-.074	-.539	.593
Certificate 3	.271	.425	.088	.638	.527
Master Degree	-.343	.182	-.268	-1.884	.067
Specialist Degree	-1.229	.355	-.485	-3.466	.001**

Dependent Variable: expectations, **p<.05

These findings reveal that no significant relationship existed among teacher expectations, gender, ethnicity, certification, or grade level. However, there was a relationship present only for the teachers who possessed a Specialist degree. Teachers with Specialist degrees had lower expectations of students than those with a Bachelor's degree. This indicates that teachers' expectations had an impact on their relationships with the students based on the teachers' degree level.

Summary

Chapter IV provided quantitative findings from the research. Surveys were distributed to obtain information pertaining to the significance of gender, ethnicity, grade levels, certifications, and teacher expectations. Demographics and beliefs toward student achievement were tabulated. The teachers' responses were categorized to determine the respondents' beliefs about instruction, gender, teachers' belief systems, teacher perceptions towards students, and instructional techniques. At the conclusion of the survey, data were analyzed and collated in order to examine the responses of the participants. The sample consisted of 46 out of 73 possible respondents. A multiple-regression test was conducted to observe significance. Gender and ethnicity did not produce substantial results in terms of teacher expectations. Advanced degrees were associated with grade levels and certifications. The respondents with Specialist degrees were determined to have a significant relationship with teacher expectations when associated with certifications. Chapter V contains the conclusion, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter V provides a discussion of the results of the research presented in Chapter IV. The quantitative data was compiled from the responses to the questionnaires with the intent to address the three essential research questions. Recommendations for future studies, the implication of practice, the allegations of research, the implications of this research, and areas of concerns are included in this discussion.

Restatement of the Problem

This research was conducted to discern the expectations of teachers that work within a predominantly African American school district. The research was intended to observe the qualifications and beliefs held by individuals who teach in a sample of public schools. This study observed educational levels, work experience, and teaching qualifications as a caliber of the quality of instruction, as well as views as related to gender and ethnicity. It is helpful to discover the traits and perceptions of the teachers that have the task of teaching students that comprise the public education system (Stigler & Hiebert, 2009). An inequitable measurement of the caliber of the teacher serves as evidence as to the quality of instruction (Darling-Hammond & Green, 1990). Identifying these significant components, various demographics, and various educational initiatives provides data that can be utilized to decrease the educational achievement gaps that exist, as well as developing true reform for public schools. Thus, the fundamental goal of the research was to observe the teacher's expectations of students in a predominantly African American school district.

Conclusion and Summary of the Findings

This research studied the characteristics and expectations of teachers who work in a school district that is predominantly African American. This study focused on three schools within that district with where the majority of students were African American and where African American students consistently scored below Caucasian students on standardized tests. The academic disparities between African Americans and Caucasians continue to exist even though legislation such as *Brown vs. Board of Education* and *No Child Left Behind* were designed to level the educational field for all children (Meier & Wood, 2004). This study sought to discover if teachers had high expectations for all children even though the *No Child Left Behind* was created to ensure students were held to the same rigorous educational standards. Part of the problem with identifying the differences in student achievement is that contributing factors such as teacher perceptions and expectations were not always easy to detect (Ferguson, 1998).

Furthermore, the research included a review of literature that described legislation and historical events, which may have contributed to the achievement gap that persists between African Americans and Caucasian students. Based on the information in the review of literature and the data gathered from this research, three research questions were tested and several conclusions were implied. The three research questions were utilized to outline the purpose of this study. The findings from the analysis of the data for each of the three research questions are discussed in this section.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity?

The results of the multiple regression tests did not yield a significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. The null hypothesis stated there would be no significant relationship between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity. This hypothesis was accepted based on the finding. Seventy-one percent of the participants were female teachers and 29% of the participants were male teachers. The majority of the participants were African American. The feedback from the participants did not produce any statistically significance; the data revealed that 93.1% of respondents believe that females performed better than, or equal to, male students in English. Sixty-three percent of the respondents believed that males are better than, or equal to, females in Mathematics, while an overwhelming 80.3% of participants believed that males are better than, or equal to, females in science. More participants felt males were better than females in the areas of math and science, than females are better than males.

The lack of significance is supported by the information found in the review of literature. Ferguson (2008) implied there is a relationship between teacher expectations and ethnicity but that relationship would be difficult to measure. The results display varying expectation levels for genders but no statistical significance. This information implies some teachers do expect more of some students than other students but that may not be enough data to produce conclusive evidence that teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity are variables that need to be addressed to close the academic disparities that exist within the American Educational System.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between teacher expectations, advance degree levels, and grade level?

The null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant relationship between teacher expectations, advance degree levels, and grade level, but the findings of the multiple regression tests led to the rejection of that hypothesis. The results of the research indicated that there was a significant relationship between teacher expectations and advance degree levels. Participants possessing a Specialist degree displayed a statistically significant relationship that asserted those teachers held lower expectations for their students than teachers with a Bachelor's degree. Participants who possessed a Master's degree held lower expectations of the students than teachers that possessed a Specialist or a Bachelor's degree. Earlier, Sanders (2001) stated the perceptions the teachers held for their students could play a pivotal role in the education of those students. Clark (1983) stated those students were expected to adhere to the teachers even though the teachers may have based students' ability levels off skin color, ethnicity, and other variables.

There were 46 participants that consisted of three that possessed a Specialist degree, and the remaining 43 participants were comprised of 19 individuals with a Master's degree and 23 individuals with a Bachelor degree. The teachers at the elementary level comprised 34.8% the participants in this study, and on the secondary level, 63% of teachers reported. The data stated teacher expectations of students varied according to the degree level held by the teachers. This implies that a school or grade level that possesses a majority of teachers with Master's degrees that held low expectations for students would probably not do as well as the students taught by teachers with Bachelor's degrees that held high expectations.

Wasik and Slavin (1993) clarified that once a child begins to fall behind, interventions become less effective. As a result, you may expect to see a relationship

between teacher expectations and grade level, but you would not expect it to be the same at both the elementary and the secondary levels. The instructional needs differ from elementary school to secondary school causing more interventions to be in place at the elementary levels. Wasik and Slavin (1993) asserted the failure of intervention strategies to keep students from dropping out of school is more common at the secondary level. The findings concluded teachers at the secondary grade levels had similar levels of expectations but many factors may contribute to the successes or failures of the students. This would imply that within this particular sample, secondary teachers' expectations of students were similar without regard to grade level, but other factors not discussed in this research may have an impact on the students.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and degree level?

The null hypothesis stated there would not be a significant relationship between teacher expectations, certifications, and degree level. The findings of the multiple regression test yielded results that caused the hypothesis to be rejected. The findings revealed that there was no relationship between certification and teacher expectations that were inconsistent with Goldhaber and Brewer (1999) who asserted that the category of certification does have an influence on the students. The review of literature stated Goldhaber and Brewer's (1999) assertion ties in with the assertion of Feistritzer and Chester (2001). Feistritzer and Chester (2001) stated individuals who participate in alternate route certification programs tend to have an undergraduate degree in the area or content area that they desire to teach (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001). This research implied

that the teachers with an undergraduate degree held higher expectations than teachers with graduate level degrees. This information correlates with the expectations held by teachers with graduate level degrees being low for the students in a predominantly African American school district. This research further implied the relationship between teacher expectations, certification, and degree level may indirectly impact the students but not enough significant data was produced to assert the relationship was a statistically significant relationship.

In conclusion, the findings revealed there was a relationship between teacher expectations and degree, but only among teachers who possessed a Specialist degree. The findings inferred the higher educational levels correlated with lower expectations of students when observing the participants of this study. No statistical significance existed between teachers possessing a Master's degree and teacher expectations of students, so the research does not imply the relationship exists. The certifications appeared to have no bearing on teacher expectations. No other relationships tested during this study were found to be statistically significant. The lack of statistically significant data conveys that other factors are contributing to the achievement gap besides the variables tested in this study.

Other Findings

Even though no significant relationship was found to exist between teacher expectations, gender, and ethnicity, the review of literature supports the existence of differing levels of teacher expectations in math, language arts, and science as it relates to gender. Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2009) revealed that minority students and Caucasian males were assessed less favorably than the same

responses implied to have been produced by Caucasian females. This research implied that instructors tend to have lower expectations for minority students and Caucasian males than of Caucasian females. Instructors of various ethnicities exhibited such low expectations, but African American and Hispanic instructors appeared to display this behavior more than other ethnicities. In 2008, African American and Hispanic students scored an average of 25 points lower in reading and 23 points lower in math than their Caucasian peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The results from the research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education are similar to the disparities found in this research. The disparities depict educational gaps but not a relationship between ethnicity and gender. Wehmeyer (2001) asserted that boys do not possess the ability to conform to school expectations, which results in boys being placed in special education in larger numbers than girls. In the 1970s, researchers found that teachers would refer boys to special education at a greater rate than girls, even though they exhibited the same behavior (Gregory, 1977).

Implications for Practice

The review of literature in this study explored the topic of a pervasive achievement gap in the United States. *Brown v. Board of Education* and other initiatives were envisioned to level the educational field for all children, regardless of their ethnicity. Educational reform movements such as Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *No Child Left Behind,* and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) have sought to ensure that all children were afforded the opportunity to a quality education (Meier & Wood, 2004). Yet the persistence of the achievement gap exists between

African American students and Caucasian students and continues to be a cause for concern.

Superintendents, instructional leaders, and teachers should focus on closing the achievement gap. Instructional leaders need to examine their practices regarding the placement of students into special education classes. The instructional leaders' ability to create a climate where success is expected for all children can be tied to the "nine instructional strategies for effective teaching and learning." The instructional leader has the responsibility of ensuring that the nine principal components, namely Identifying Similarities and Differences, Summarizing and Note Taking, Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition, Homework and Practice, Nonlinguistic Representations, Cooperative Learning, Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback, Generating and Testing Hypotheses, Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers, are being addressed and utilized effectively within their buildings (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

The results of this research can aid school districts, superintendents, directors, principals, and teachers to ensure all teachers possess high expectations for all students. This research produced data that showed teachers have high expectations for all students and the teachers felt responsible that all students learn; however, Caucasian students in the schools in this sample consistently scored higher than African American students did in every subject. The results displayed an achievement gap in the area of science that almost mirrored findings of research conducted by Darling-Hammond (2004) whose research stated Caucasian students scored nearly twice as high in the area of science than African American students. This research had Caucasian students producing almost twice as many proficient scores as African American students in the area of science for all

grade levels tested. Consequently, the primary focus of this research was not to focus on the achievement gap between African American students and Caucasian students, but its focus was the expectations that teachers have of students that attend a predominantly African American school district. The evidence of an achievement gap is a byproduct of the information gathered from the investigation of this study.

Limitations

The limitations of this research began with the small sample size of the teachers located within a single school district. The research was limited to one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school. The study was limited by a small sample size. A total of 46 out of 73 teachers participated in the research; a larger sample size could have produced more generalizable results. The findings of this study should not be generalized to other schools or school districts. This research was not intended to be a representative of all school district that possess a large African American population.

The study was further limited by the use of self-reported data. Ronald Ferguson (1998) posited that low teacher expectations could contribute to the educational gap, but it was not always detectable. The difficulty in measuring teacher expectations, especially through survey methodology, limits any conclusions that can be drawn from these findings. Self-reported data may not be the most reliable method of measuring teacher expectations due to biases of the participants or the participants' unwillingness to share their true feelings and views dealing with the expectations of students of different races. Finally, though the researcher took precautions to maintain anonymity, participants may have been concerned about how the results may have been used; the honesty and accuracy of the participants must be questioned.

The research was limited to a focus on instructors who prepared students who participated in two statewide testing programs, the SATP2 and the MCT2. The research did not include schools that had achievement gaps as measured by other standardized and non-standardized measures. The research could have included results from national norm examinations to eliminate the possibility of cultural biases that are found in some exams geared towards a targeted audience.

The research was further limited by reliance on secondary student achievement data and the assumption that the achievement gap in the sample school district resulted from valid measures of student achievement. Moore and Rowley (2002) asserted that African American students who were thought to act like Caucasian students were isolating themselves from the rest of their culture while African American students who chose to embrace their heritage would have to sacrifice academic achievement to be truly accepted. If the large African American population believed as Moore and Rowley (2002) suggested, then African American students that cared about being accepted socially may not attempt to perform well. This would give the impression that the African American students were not achieving academically even though the performance of those students was not an accurate portrayal of the student's abilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations of this research dealt with the small sample size of the teachers located within a single school district, which consisted of one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school. Because this research was conducted in a small school district located within the southeast region, additional research on a larger scale with diverse populations would be helpful when examining teacher expectations.

Conducting research of students within larger school districts could provide powerful feedback about their beliefs of their teachers' expectations. This research could provide insight on why African American male students are recommended for special education classes more than Caucasians males (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

The study was limited by the use of self-reported data. Ferguson (1998) posited that low teacher expectations could contribute to the educational gap, but it was not always detectable. Teachers' biases or teachers' willingness to hide their true feelings could render the instrument utilized for this study as being unreliable. Finally, though the researcher took precautions to maintain anonymity, participants may have been concerned about how the results may have been used. The honesty and accuracy of the participants must be questioned.

The research was further limited by reliance on secondary student achievement data and the assumption that the achievement gap in the sample school district resulted from valid measures of student achievement. Moore and Rowley (2002) asserted that African American students who were thought to act like Caucasian students were isolating themselves from the rest of their culture while African American students who chose to embrace their heritage would have to sacrifice academic achievement to be truly accepted. If the large African American population believed as Moore and Rowley (2002) suggested, then African American students that cared about being accepted socially may not attempt to perform well. This would give the impression that the African American students were not achieving academically even though the performance of those students was not an accurate portrayal of the student's abilities. There was no attempt to survey a school district with similar demographics where there was no

evidence of an achievement gap; therefore, such comparisons cannot be made. The study did not include a comparison group. This would be a good topic for future research.

Consequently, research needs to compare and contrast the success rates of African American students who attend predominantly African American School Districts against African Americans who attend school districts where African Americans are in the minority of enrolled students. Studying whether or not the students feel connected to their environment, as opposed to studying their achievement levels in isolation, could shed some light on why success rates vary.

Future research may want to consider the impact of an advanced degree on teacher expectations. The results of this study indicated that teachers with advanced degrees had lower expectations of their students than teachers with an undergraduate degree. This topic could be researched in conjunction to the topic of does the length of time employed within a school district change the teacher's level of expectation of the students within that school district. The teachers that possess advanced degrees tend to have more time in the educational field than teachers with undergraduate degrees (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The length of time the teachers have been teaching within their schools or this particular school district could have an influence on teacher expectations. With an inherent relationship between higher degree levels and years of experience, a case could be made that the longer the teachers stay in this district the lower their perceptions become of the students. Present data from this study tends to support this possibility limitation, but it would require further analysis.

Summary

The *No Child Left Behind Act* was designed to ensure all children receive a quality education. It is important that the students have teachers in the classroom that believe all children can and will learn regardless of their ethnic, gender, and religious backgrounds or their families' social and educational pedigrees (Tileston, 2010). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the teachers' expectations of students in a predominately African American school district. The results of the research conveyed inconclusive findings about the expectations of the participants. The majority of the participants responded as having high expectations for all students, but the responses on the questionnaire implied the participants held personal biases towards some students, which, inadvertently, help shape the core beliefs (Ross & Jackson, 1991). Several teachers' responses implied male students were stronger in math and science than females. Some teachers' stated that females were stronger than males in English. The inappropriate labels placed on students can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, if teachers can create an environment that holds high expectations for all students, the high standards may benefit all students, not solely the high achieving students.

The researcher conducted an analysis of the response to the variables that addressed the three essential research questions. There was a correlation between teacher expectations and advanced degree levels but none of the other demographical information. Even though the remaining independent variables such as certification, grade level, ethnicity, and gender did not display a significant relationship with teacher expectation, data supports the assertion by Ferguson, Tileston, and Haycock that relationships may exist but remain difficult to detect. The demographic variables that

were studied were related to a teacher's advanced degree level, grade levels taught, gender, certification, ethnicity, and years of experience. This was accomplished by performing an analysis of a 39-item questionnaire developed from the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study. The questionnaire was developed to investigate the expectations of teachers in a predominately African American school district and what were those teachers' expectations. The findings of this study shed light on the relationship between teacher expectations and advanced degrees. The rejection of the hypotheses that tried to connect teacher expectations to certification, grade level, ethnicity, and gender says there are other factors that may be affecting the educational gap that exists between African American students and Caucasian students.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Durand Payton, Co-Principal
LaJeuna Payton, Co-Principal
6601 Orange Grove Road
Moss Point, MS 39563
Phone 228-475-1429 Fax 228-475-2684

March 22, 2012

Greetings Dr. Ladner,

My name is Durand Payton. I am a graduate student at the University of Southern Mississippi, and I am conducting research for my Doctorate of Philosophy. The purpose of this study is to observe **Teacher's Expectations in a Predominantly African American School District**.

I am asking you to grant me permission to conduct this research utilizing the information your curriculum department will provide me with upon your approval. Your acceptance does not mean that your information will be publicized. This letter is simply designed to obtain the permission of potential participants. If your information is utilized, then a copy of the results will be provided at the commencement of this research upon request.

The confidentiality of individual results will be maintained for the sake of all parties involved. In order to protect confidentiality I will not be able to provide individual results to any school that was not chosen to participate in the study. I included my contact information in case you would like to see the overall results of my findings. Due to confidentiality, individual results will not be available.

Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to researcher **Durand Payton**. My email address is desmon73@hotmail.com. My daytime phone number is 228-238-8036. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

Please consider allowing your school district to participate in this research project. I feel this research will be a great contribution to the advancement of our students as a whole. If you consent to allowing Durand Payton to conduct this study by utilizing your district's information, then please sign below and on the corresponding consent form. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email or cell phone. My email address is desmon73@hotmail.com. My daytime phone number is 228-238-8036. Please return the response card in the enclosed envelope.

I, John G. Ladner, Ed.D., consent to allowing Mr. Durand Payton to conduct his research with information gathered from my district.

Signature of the Superintendent John G. Ladner Date 3/22/12

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Durand D. Payton

Durand D. Payton, Ed.S.
Desmon73@hotmail.com
Cell# (228)238-8036

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

APPENDIX B

APPROVAL LETTER FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **12071701**
PROJECT TITLE: **Teachers' Expectations in a Predominantly African American School Distric t**
PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**
RESEARCHER/S: **Durand D. Payton**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & School Counseling**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: **10/03/2012 to 10/02/2013**

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH COVER LETTER

Durand D. Payton, Ed. S. 16

June 12, 2012

Greetings Potential Participant,

My name is Durand Payton. I am a graduate student at the University of Southern Mississippi, and I am conducting research for my Doctorate of Philosophy. The purpose of this study is to observe **Teachers' Expectations in a Pre-dominantly African American School District.** The objective is to conduct research in a pre-dominantly African American School District and document the performance of the students versus the expectations of the staff. It would be beneficial to my research if you became a voluntary participant. Your participation does not mean that your information will be publicized. This letter is simply designed to provide the purpose and objective of my research. If your school's information is utilized, then a copy of the results will be provided at the commencement of this research upon request.

The confidentiality of individual results will be maintained for the sake of all parties involved. In order to protect confidentiality I will not be able to provide individual results for teachers, administrators, or schools that were not chosen to participate in the study. I included my contact information in case you would like to see the overall results of my findings. Due to confidentiality, individual results will not be available.

Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to **Durand Payton**. My email address is desmon73@hotmail.com. My daytime phone number is 228-238-8036.

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Durand D. Payton

Desmon73@hotmail.com

Cell # (228)238-8036

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

SECTION A: Teacher Background

~~~~~~

1. Are you male or female?
   - Male
   - Female

~~~~~~

2. Which of the following choices **BEST** describes your race?
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Asian
   - Black/African American
   - Caucasian
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

~~~~~~

3. What is the highest degree you have earned?
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - Educational Specialist diploma
   - Ph.D., M.D., law degree, or other high level professional degree

~~~~~~

4. How long have you been teaching?
   - 1-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 15-20 years
   - 20+ years

~~~~~~

5. Were you employed in the teaching profession during the 2011-2012 school years?
   - Yes
   - No

~~~~~~

6. If you were employed in the teaching profession during the 2011-2012 school years, then at what level did you teach?
   - Elementary Level
   - Secondary Level –High School
   - Secondary Level-Junior High School

~~~~~~

7. Were you employed by the same school district during the 2011-2012 school years?
   - Yes
   - No

~~~~~~

8. Which of the following best describes the Mississippi Teaching Certificate you held during 2011-2012 school year?
   - o Regular or standard state certificate
   - o Alternate Route Certificate issued after satisfying all required college course-work
   - o You do not hold any of these certifications in this state

~~~~~~

9. In which grades does this certificate allow you to teach in Mississippi? (Check all that apply.)
   - o Kindergarten through sixth grade (any or all grades)
   - o seventh through eighth grade (any or all grades)
   - o 9th through 12th grade (any or all grades)

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SECTION B: Beliefs About Teaching and School (2011-2012)

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Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. I...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Have high expectations for all students.	○	○	○	○	○
11. Have given up on some students.	○	○	○	○	○
12. Expect very little from some students.	○	○	○	○	○
13. Believe that students' that have low socio-economic status receive lower marks than students with high socio-economic status.	○	○	○	○	○
14. Believe that a student's genetic make-up plays a part in the student's intelligence.	○	○	○	○	○
15. Feel responsible that all students learn.	○	○	○	○	○
16. Feel responsible when any student in my class fails.	○	○	○	○	○

17. Which of the following best describes the achievement level of students in your class compared with the average student in your school?
   - o Higher achievement levels
   - o Average achievement levels
   - o Lower achievement levels
   - o Vastly different achievement levels

18. What do you think is your student's perception of your expectations?
   - o Higher achievement levels
   - o Average achievement levels
   - o Lower achievement levels
   - o Vastly different achievement levels
~~~~~~

19. How would you describe your student's overall academic performance?
- ○ Higher achievement levels
- ○ Average achievement levels
- ○ Lower achievement levels
- ○ Vastly different achievement levels

20. What would academic achievement look like for your student?
- ○ Higher achievement levels
- ○ Average achievement levels
- ○ Lower achievement levels
- ○ Vastly different achievement levels

21. About what percentage of the students in class are not adequately prepared to tackle the material you cover?
- ○ 25% or less
- ○ 26% to 50%
- ○ 51% to 75%
- ○ More than 75%

~~~~~~

In your view, to what extent do the following limit how you teach?

	Not applicable	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
22. Students with different academic abilities in the same class	○	○	○	○	○
23. Students who come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds	○	○	○	○	○
24. Students who come from a different ethnic background	○	○	○	○	○
25. Uninterested students	○	○	○	○	○
26. Low morale among students	○	○	○	○	○
27. Disruptive students	○	○	○	○	○
28. How do you think your expectations affect your student's academic success?	○	○	○	○	○
29. What do you expect from your student academically?			○	○	○
30. In what way do you think class size has an effect on your students' academic achievement?	○	○	○	○	○
~~~~~~

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as it applies to your instruction?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31. You are very limited in what you can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on their achievement	○	○	○	○	○
32. If a student in your class becomes disruptive and noisy, you feel assured that you know some techniques to redirect them quickly	○	○	○	○	○
33. If you really try hard, you can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students	○	○	○	○	○
34. When it comes right down to it, you really cannot do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on their genetics	○	○	○	○	○
35. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background	○	○	○	○	○
36. If a student did not remember information you gave in a previous lesson, you would know how to increase their retention in the next lesson	○	○	○	○	○

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SECTION C: Beliefs About Teaching and Gender In School (2011-2012)

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In general, how would you compare males and females in each of the following subjects?

	Females are much better	Females are somewhat better	Females and males are the same	Males are somewhat better	Males are much better
37. English or Language Arts	○	○	○	○	○
38. Math	○	○	○	○	○
39. Science	○	○	○	○	○

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