

NARRATIVES OF BLACK MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
CONTEXTUALIZING TEACHER RETENTION AND TEACHING TRAJECTORIES
WITH MOREHOUSE COLLEGE ALUMNI

William Nathaniel Thomas, IV

A DISSERTATION

Education and Organizational Leadership

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Education

2021

Supervisor of Dissertation:

Sharon M. Ravitch, Professor of Practice of Education

Dean, Graduate School of Education:

Pamela L. Grossman, Dean and Professor

Dissertation Committee:

Sharon M. Ravitch, Professor of Practice of Education

Manuel González Canché, Associate Professor

Nina L. Gilbert, Director, Center for Excellence in Education, Morehouse College

NARRATIVES OF BLACK MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
CONTEXTUALIZING TEACHER RETENTION AND TEACHING TRAJECTORIES
WITH MOREHOUSE COLLEGE ALUMNI

COPYRIGHT

2021

William Nathaniel Thomas, IV

This work is licensed under the
Creative Commons Attribution-
NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0
License

To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Men and Women of Morehouse College. These pages honor their scholarship and visionary work that set a rich legacy into motion; preparing teachers for shaping and guiding young people who are being educated in public-school systems across our nation.

I also dedicate this to my father, who was my first and most important Black male teacher; my Aunt Nydia who found a way to get me to and through Morehouse and my grandmother who never had an opportunity to complete her doctorate and who planted the seed of being a teacher in me through her over 50 years of service in the small town of Cleveland, Texas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I cannot begin to express my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Sharon Ravitch who supported this study from its inception to its completion. Her recognition of positionality and social constructs in my study and in my overall research journey has added a transformation layer to my academic identity as a research methodologist. I am grateful to her unfiltered, unadulterated, intersectional perspectives on race, gender and class.

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to those students, staff and faculty at the University Of Pennsylvania Graduate School Of Education who exposed me to a community that I felt only existed in fictional accounts of higher education. I am indebted to my professors, Dr. Gerald Campano, Dr. Adrienne Flack, Dr. Leslie Nabors Olah, Dr. Will Jordan, Dr. Annie McKee, Dr. Andrew Babson, Dr. Kate Windsor, Dr. Rand Quinn, Dr. Jessica Whitelaw and Dr. Howard Stevenson who allowed me and my classmates to bring our full literacies to each discussion and who pushed us to think beyond our contextual understanding of the education field. I was also able to complete this dissertation with the direct moral and logistical support of Martha Williams, Kathy Rho and Mike Johaneck who always made the time to check-in and be available for one-on-one conversations.

Particularly helpful to me during this time were all my fellow Cohort 17 members including Heather, Brian, Christina, Angela, LeBaron, Laura, Courtney, Shanta, and especially my D.E.E.P.17 study group Melissa, Pat, Tim and Molly.

I also had great pleasure collaborating with staff at Morehouse College who acted as a catalyst in sharing my study with the greater community. I would in particular like

to thank Dr. Nina Gilbert, who has acted as a beacon of light to the opportunities and possibilities of the Morehouse Center for Excellence in Education for future Black Male Educators. I would also like to thank Bria Toussaint for ensuring all of my messages were responded to and Joe Carlos, who introduced me to Dr. Gilbert and has been supporting my journey since I was a writer with the Maroon Tiger and Spelman Spotlight. In addition, I also would like to give a special thanks to all those who shared and affirmed my study on social media as well as the Morehouse alumni who participated in my survey and interviews who once again prove to always know “For Whom The Bell Tolls.”

I would also like to acknowledge Ashley Baldwin and the STEM-Academic team at Mastery Charter School who were supportive and flexible with me during my Friday classes and midweek meetings with professors.

And finally, I am eternally grateful for my family nucleus of Zoma, EthiopiAset & William Ethan V who day after day give my life substance and purpose. In particular my wife, who has been my guardian angel during my rollercoaster ride as a teacher, principal and program director. I would not have graduated from Morehouse and be set on my current path without her intuition, genuine love and support for my personal goals. Thank you for being that radiant light of consistency that brings meaning, clarity and perspective to this confusing world of abstraction.

ABSTRACT

NARRATIVES OF BLACK MALE TEACHER RETENTION IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS: CONTEXTUALIZING MOREHOUSE COLLEGE ALUMNI'S TEACHING TRAJECTORIES

William N. Thomas IV

Sharon M. Ravitch

The continued shortage of Black Male Teachers (BMTs) in the United States presents an opportunity to reexamine the factors that impact teacher retention among Black males in US public schools. One predominantly Black, all-male higher education institution—commonly referred to as an HBCU, which stands for Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Morehouse College, is poised to play a key role in developing a pipeline of quality BMTs for high-need public schools with the recent launch of the Morehouse Center for Excellence in Education. This mixed-methods study analyzed and explicated the complex experiences of Morehouse alumni who became K-12 public school teachers and will inform the direction of this new education program, helping to support the conditions to help it become the prototype for preparing young men of color for the layered social and economic politics they encounter as minorities in the education profession. I as the researcher used the theoretical frameworks of self-determination theory, sociocultural theory, and human capital theory to explore the narratives of Black male Morehouse College alumni who have taught in the US public school system for at least one full year. This relational inquiry engaged stories from major decision points in the men's life journeys, including their decision to: (a) attend Morehouse College,

(b) become a teacher, (c) pursue professional development or teacher certification, and (d) continue as a teacher. Through the analysis of interviews and survey data, I explored how teacher retention among Morehouse alumni is influenced by the intersections of self-motivation, professional development, and prior experience as a young male of color, including formative educational experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem and Research Questions	3
Research Questions	3
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	4
Background and Context of the Study	10
Early History of Preparing Teachers at Morehouse College	10
The Morehouse Matrons: The Architects for Preparing Morehouse Educators.....	12
Teacher Paths Absent of a Formal Program	15
Morehouse College Births an Independent Education Program.....	16
Rationale and Significance of the Study	19
 CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE	 24
Self-Determination Theory and Self-Motivation.....	25
Autonomous Motivation	26
Regulations in autonomous motivation	27
Controlled Motivation.....	28
Human Capital Theory and Professional Development.....	29
Techniques for Meaningful Professional Development for Black Teachers	29
The Value of Teachers in a Human Capital Context	31
Perception and Acquisition of Human Capital Value.....	33
Human Capital Intersections with the Education System.....	35
Sociocultural Theory and Young Males of Color.....	36
Popular and Problematic Notions of Black Male Teachers	36
Identity Intersections with Young Males of Color	38
Life Milestones as Windows to Identity Development and Motivation....	40
 CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY	 42
Background and Context.....	42
Intentionality of Research Goals.....	44
Researcher-Participant Positionality.....	45
Humanizing Method Design	46
Relational Inquiry Approach to Data Collection and Analysis	47
Relational Inquiry Mixed Methodology	50
Concurrent Mixed-Methods Data Collection Design	53
Participant Selection Criteria	55
Rationale for Criteria	55
Criteria and Tools for Quantitative Data Collection.....	56
Criteria and Tools for Qualitative Data Collection.....	56
Qualitative Data Collection.....	57
Semi-Structured Interviews	57

Chapter 3 (continued)	
Pilot Study of Interview Protocols	58
Qualitative Data Analysis	59
Quantitative Data Collection.....	62
Tools for Quantitative Data Collection.....	62
Alumni Demographic Survey	63
Variables in Quantitative Analysis	64
Autoethnographic Self-Study.....	64
Autoethnographic Data Analysis	66
Mixed-Methods Analysis.....	67
Intersectional Design	67
The commitments of intersectional analysis.....	69
Design dimensions for rigorous mixed-methods analysis	71
Five purposes of mixed-methods design.....	71
Sankofa Framing: Fetching Life History to Understand the Narrative Inquiry	73
Sankofian Analysis: Memory Paths.....	77
Semiotics and Adinkra Symbols.....	84
Sankofian Analysis: Cross-cutting Power Dynamics	89
Social Justice Implications.....	94
Issues of Validity	95
Positionality Memos	95
Participant Validation	96
 CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	 98
Phase 1 Findings (Quant + Qual).....	98
Survey Pivots	101
Undergraduate major	104
Hometowns	105
Grade band teaching experience	105
Content focus as a teacher.....	105
Location of alumni teaching experience	106
Interview Pivots	106
Phase 2 Findings: Sankofian Reflection Analysis (Qual → quan → ← Qual).....	107
Life Circumstance Variable Findings: Human Capital vs. Self-	
Determination	108
Hometown trends	110
College major trends.....	111
College graduation year trends	113
Teacher Retention Variable Findings: Human Capital vs. Self-	
Determination	114
Teacher status trends.....	115
Years teaching trends.....	116
Location of teaching trends.....	118
Subject and grade level of teaching trends	119

Chapter 4 (continued)

Contextual Refraction Grid Interpretations: Memory Map Focal Length	121
Focal Length Analysis Based on Life Circumstance Variables.....	122
Hometown analysis.....	122
College major analysis.....	125
College graduation decade analysis	125
Focal Length Analysis Based on Teacher Retention Variables.....	127
Teacher status findings	127
Years teaching findings.....	135
Location of teaching findings	136
Subject and grade level of teaching findings	137
Phase 3 Findings: Sankofian Power Analysis (Quan → qual → quan → ← Qual).....	139
Life Circumstance Variable Power Analysis.....	141
Hometown themes: “Mapping the options in the K-12 education system”	144
Perception of system: Parents as educators	145
Perception of system: Public school vs. private school	152
Interaction with system: Busing experience and crossing borders.....	156
Hometown themes: “Interacting with school culture in the K-12 education system”	160
System privileges and benefits: Embracing teachers.....	163
System privileges and benefits: Black mirror teachers.....	167
System privileges and benefits: Gifted and Talented positioning.....	169
System challenges and perseverance: Traumatizing teachers	173
System challenges and perseverance: Transferring schools and commutes	176
Hometown Themes: “Navigating to Morehouse from the K-12 education system”	184
Guardian recommendations for the system: Parent Influence and teacher influence	186
Guardian recommendations for the system: College prep programs influence	189
Identity reflections in the system: College tours influence.....	192
Identity reflections in the system: Television influence	195
College major themes: “Official and unofficial training to be a teacher”.....	199
Volunteering with students as a student and preservice teacher training at Spelman College	201

Chapter 4 (continued)

International travel exposure and religion exposure	206
College major themes: “Discouragement and encouragement at Morehouse”	210
The power of empowering professors who pushed and pulled.....	211
Dr. Melvin Rahming and Dean Alvin Darden	219
Graduation decade themes: “Choice or chance: Teacher pathways”	226
Graduates from the ‘90s: More chance than choice with a TFA path	228
Graduates from the 2000s: More chance than choice	232
Graduates from the 2000s: Convenience dominates.....	236
Graduates from the 2010s: The choice and chance: KIPP, TFA, and other neoliberal organizations.....	240
Teacher Retention Variable Power Analysis	244
Teaching status themes: “Autonomous and controlled motivators”	249
Autonomous motivated current teachers: Goal-oriented	250
Autonomous motivated current teachers: Spiritual calling.....	254
Controlled motivated current teachers: Young males of color	256
Controlled motivated current teachers: Financial stability.....	258
Teaching status themes: “Controlled motivations of former teachers”	260
Administrative school leadership: Opportunities for former teachers.....	267
Administrative school leadership for former teachers: Adult challenges.....	265
Graduate school for former teachers.....	267
Working with youth outside the classroom for former teachers	269
Years teaching themes: “Varying professional development mindsets”	272
Meaningful PD experiences for novices, mid-career, and veteran teachers	273
Discouraging PD experiences for novices, mid-career, and veteran teachers	276
Culturally relevant PD and relationship building: mid-career and veteran teachers.....	270
Passion for teaching content for mid-career and veteran teachers.....	283

Chapter 4 (continued)	
Teaching location themes: “Convenience, condition, and choice”	286
Convenience: Location of graduate school.....	287
Convenience: Hometown familiarity.....	287
Condition and choice: Teacher pathway assignments	288
Teaching subject and grade level: “Access and alternate Routes”.....	290
Phase 4: Autoethnographic Analysis (Qual → Quan → Qual → quan →← qual).....	294
Peer Interview Interpretation	295
Social Media Archival Data Interpretation	296
Leadership Self-Study Interpretation	299
Phase 5: Relational Dynamics Analysis (Quan →← Qual)	301
CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	307
Phase 6: Intersectional Analysis: Conclusions on Advancing Social Justice	307
Implications for Recruitment, Development, and Retention of Black Male Teachers	309
Conclusion and Implications for Morehouse College	313
The Position of Education in a Washington-Du Bois Context	314
Revaluing Women in the Narrative of Black Male Teachers	320
Positionality Reflection.....	323
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	325

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1	Dimensions Used in the Design of the Analysis.....	72
2	Analytical Points of Integration	77
3	Theoretical Refraction Average by Hometown Region of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	109
4	Theoretical Refraction Average by Division of Majors of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	112
5	Theoretical Refraction Average by Graduation Decade of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	114
6	Theoretical Refraction Average by Teacher Status of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	116
7	Theoretical Refraction Average by Teacher Experience of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	117
8	Theoretical Refraction Average by Location of Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	118
9	Theoretical Refraction Average by School Grade Level Taught of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	119
10	Theoretical Refraction Average by Subjects Taught as a Teacher of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants	120
11	Summary of Total Number of Adinkra Memories from Interview Participants.....	124
12	Hometown Region of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	141
13	Division of Major of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	142
14	Graduation Decade of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants.....	143
15	Teaching Status of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	245
16	Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	245
17	Location of Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants ...	246
18	School Grade Level of Taught Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants.....	248
19	Subjects Taught as a Teacher of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	248
20	Theoretical Refraction Average by Relational Proximity of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants	301

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1	Conceptual Framework.....	5
2	Theoretical Framework.....	8
3	Participant Positionality.....	49
4	Methodological Design.....	51
5	Data Collection Design.....	54
6	Positionality Key of Alumni Participants.....	60
7	Positionality of Alumni Participants to Researcher-Participant.....	61
8	Sankofian Color-Codes for Analysis.....	76
9	Data Analysis Framework.....	80
10	Morehouse College Official Seal.....	81
11	Contextual Refraction Grid (CRG).....	82
12	Refraction Key for Human Capital Adinkra Memories.....	86
13	Refraction Key for Self-Determination Adinkra Memories.....	87
14	Convex Life Lens Refraction Key.....	88
15	Major and Teaching Location Refraction Key.....	89
16	Sankofian Power Inquiry Logic Model.....	9
17	Quantitative Social Media Data from Pilot Study.....	100
18	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants with Hometowns in the West and Southwest Regions.....	122
19	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants with Division Majors in Social Science/Cultural Studies, Creative/Performing Arts, and Math/Computer Science.....	125
20	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Graduated from Morehouse during the Time Span of 2000 to 2009.....	126
21	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Were Former Full-time Public School Teachers.....	128
22	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Graduated Who Indicated That They Were Former Full-time Public School Teachers Who Had a 50% Human Capital Adinkra Depth.....	128
23	Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus A9.....	129
24	Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus B9.....	130
25	Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus S14.....	131
26	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Were Full-time Public School Teachers.....	132
27	Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus J10.....	133
28	Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus E20.....	134
29	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught 10 or More Years as a Public School Teacher.....	135
30	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught in the NE Region of the United States.....	136

Figure

31	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught Middle School	137
32	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught Middle School	139
33	Screenshots of Examples of Data Sources That Were Reviewed during the Data Analysis Portion of the Study: Memo, Zoom Interviews, Coding Guide, and Dedoose Coding Analysis	140
34	Screenshots of Examples of Graphic Organizer Summary for Interview Participant Responses That Was Used during the Data Analysis Portion of the Study	140
35	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to Parents Being Educators.....	145
36	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to Public versus Private School Searches by Parents	152
37	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Community Ties and Crossing Borders and Busing”	157
38	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Privileges and Benefits of the System”	162
39	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Perseverance through Challenges in the System”	163
40	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Navigating to Morehouse from the K-12 Education System”	185
41	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Official and Unofficial Training to Be a Teacher”	201
42	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Discouragement and Encouragement by Morehouse Faculty and Staff”	212
43	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Choice of Chance: Teacher Pathways”	227
44	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus K6 Data Related to the Theme “Goal-Oriented”	251
45	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus S5 Data Related to the Theme “Goal-Oriented”	253
46	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus D10 Data Related to the Theme “Autonomous Motivated Current Teachers: young Males of Color”	256
47	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Controlled Motivations of Former Teachers”	261
48	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Varying Professional Development Mindsets”	273
49	Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Convenience, Condition, and Choice”	286
50	Decision Point Summary for Researcher-Participant from Peer Interview on September 11, 2020	296

Figure

51	Facebook Post from Researcher-Participant on September 25, 2009.....	299
52	Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated Who Had a Relational Proximity of Level 1 or Level 2	305
53	Visual Interpretation of the Intersectional Teacher Retention Decision for Alumni of Morehouse College.....	308
54	Visual Interpretation of Intersectional Teacher Findings for the Role of Women in the Development of Black Male Teachers	322

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, an overwhelming number of K-12 teachers—82% to be precise—are White, middle-class, and female (Wallace & Gagen, 2019). This statistic has not changed significantly over five decades and sits in striking contrast to student demographics: 47% of school-aged children identified as students of color. Importantly, Wilson’s (2015) research showed that only 1.9% of the entire public school educator population are Black males. One way to make sense of this significant gap in representation of Black Male Teachers (BMTs) is through the lens of critical race theory (Davis, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Critical race theory focuses on the “centrality of race in various aspects of life, including education and law” (Goings, 2015, p. 94) and does so in relation to the ways that social identities intersect with structural racism and systemic discrimination practices. Using a critical race theory perspective for this empirical study created the conditions to understand the role of racial identity in and to give voice to the teaching experiences and trajectories of BMTs. Further, the study positioned their stories as “counter-narratives” to the current grand deficit narrative of men of color (Palmer, 2019).

One significant factor that contributes to the disproportionately low number of Black males remaining in the K-12 teaching profession is the negative experience of many young males of color in the K-12 public school system (Harper & Davis, 2012; Pabon et al., 2011). Studies have suggested that negative school climates, a carceral approach to urban education and urban students, and other contextual factors that reflect and perpetuate deficit orientations towards Black people broadly, and Black men

specifically, “stifle the academic performance of African-American male youth,” creating tremendous opportunity costs, including significant challenges in accessing quality educational experiences necessary to be successful in higher education (Wallace & Gagen, 2019, p. 4). This is particularly true in urban schooling contexts that require significant pedagogical and emotional labor (Brockenbrough, 2018).

Low expectations and negative experiences for young males of color have pernicious implications for their overrepresentation in documented disciplinary infractions and in special education cases (Wallace & Gagen, 2019), as well as their underrepresentation in the pipeline for quality teachers who teach in high-need schools. This negatively reinforcing set of experiences and the opportunity costs they foment and uphold are the result of, as they perpetuate, a constrained pathway through K-12 education for Black men (Gist, 2018). This broader aperture on the teaching profession and the broader field of higher education helps to explain why the United States currently has so few Black males who become full-time teachers. We must understand this from Black male teachers’ emic, or insider, perspectives (Maxwell, 2013), so that we can tell their stories in ways that complicate the picture and help the field do a better job of attracting and retaining BMTs (American Federation of Teachers, 2020).

Statement of Problem and Research Questions

Research has shown that the United States was shaped by and built on a foundation of structural racism, genocide, and the intentional dehumanization and marginalization of Black and Brown people and communities; moreover, none are more negatively projected upon and vilified than Black men (Howard, 2014). Further, research has shown that public schooling in the United States has intergenerationally weaponized

its deficit orientations and pathologization of Black men into a carceral approach to their education, often using a remedial approach that is not appropriate or built on a belief that all students can and should learn (Fine, 1991; Howard, 2014; Love, 2019; Stevenson, 2014). This carceral state models itself around hateful disciplinary policies that extend from dehumanizing slave-master mindsets and the underlying deficit orientation and mistrust of Black males and their families and communities that these both stem from and perpetuate (Valencia, 2010). As Brockenbrough (2018) averred, “surveillance and distrust of Black male bodies within American urban schools and across American cultural landscape” (p. 3) have demanded that education as a field reassess how we approach young males of color as well as BMTs who have a significant positive impact on this population of students.

Research Questions

To explore and make sense of the varying life experiences of BMTs working in these realities and walking these career pathways, this mixed-methods dissertation study examined the educational and broader developmental contexts that shape their teaching experiences, professional choices, and career trajectories, and that shape and impact teacher retention in the field as a whole. Through a relational inquiry approach, the study explored the following research questions as they relate to Morehouse alumni.

From the perspectives of Black Male Teachers who are alumni of Morehouse College:

1. How do current and former K-12 public school teachers who are alumni of Morehouse College understand the influence of professional development,

contextualized job experience, self-motivation, and their roles and relationships with young males of color on their decision to remain a teacher?

2. How do the contexts of, and experiences in, their teaching careers and overall life journey influence their decision to remain in the profession?

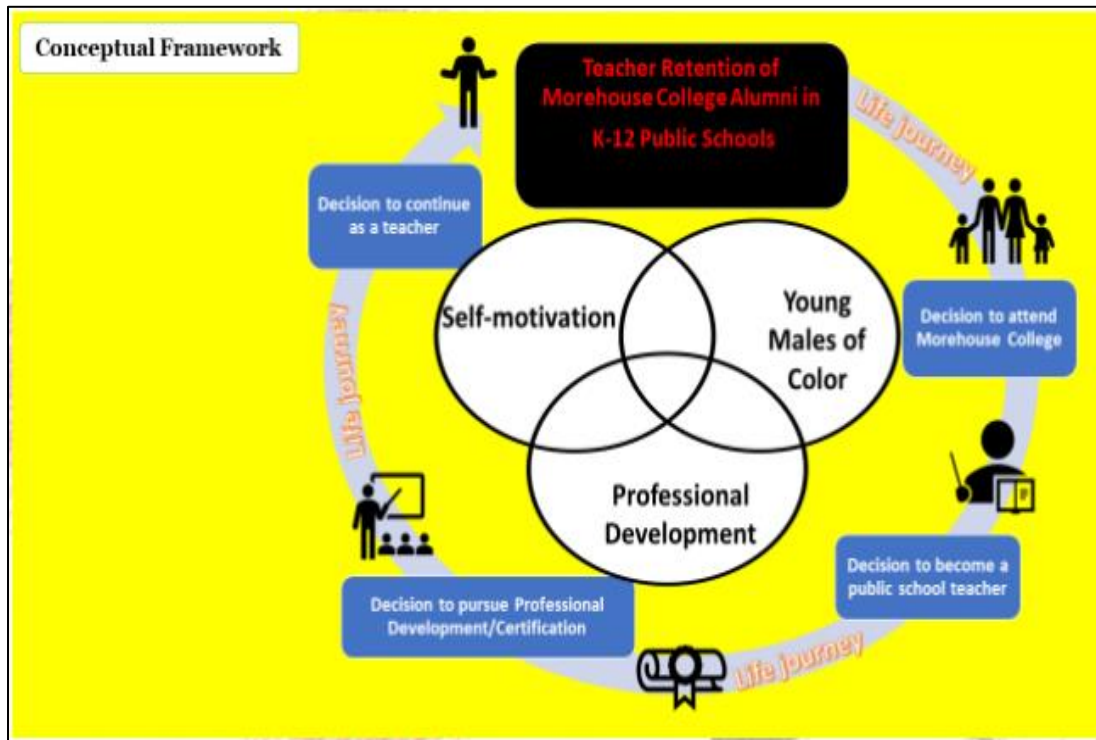
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Imenda (2014) made a distinction between how conceptual frameworks and theoretical frameworks function in research studies in relation to inductive and deductive approaches to the literature. According to Imenda, “a deductive approach to literature review typically makes use of theories and theoretical frameworks, the inductive approach tends to lead to the development of a conceptual framework” (p. 185). This study took an inductive approach toward the literature and a deductive and inductive approach toward the data analysis. The literature review was guided by the teacher retention and life circumstance variables highlighted in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

These concepts that interrogate the possible problems and solutions to BMT retention were analyzed to show intersectional correlations between gender, race, and class power dynamics with the motivation to remain a teacher each year. This conceptual framework contextualizes the sense-making of these themes along a life journey continuum that includes various decision points leading to the decision to remain a teacher within a condition of structural racism broadly, and in schools specifically. The three overlapping circles in Figure 1 represent various factors that may impact the decision of a Morehouse alumnus to remain a teacher. The intersectional magnitude of

influence of these factors is determined based on an individual’s life journey, which the framework shows at distinct decision points where the factors may be applied.

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*



The culmination of these decisions and the factors that influenced them could directly impact the ultimate decision to remain a teacher, which is represented at the end of this teacher life cycle for Morehouse alumni. This study fills the spaces in-between the decision points to see if there are patterns in the experiences of various alumni from Morehouse when navigating the education profession as a teacher. La Tefy Schoen described conceptual and methodical issues with Sociocultural Research (McInerney et al., 2011, pp. 11-40) and suggested it may offer a lens to understanding how a person’s interactions in society impact their cognitive learning and sense of identity. Schoen

defined socioculturalism as “a philosophical approach to understanding the way individuals behave and learn in social contexts” (McInerney et al., 2011, p. 11).

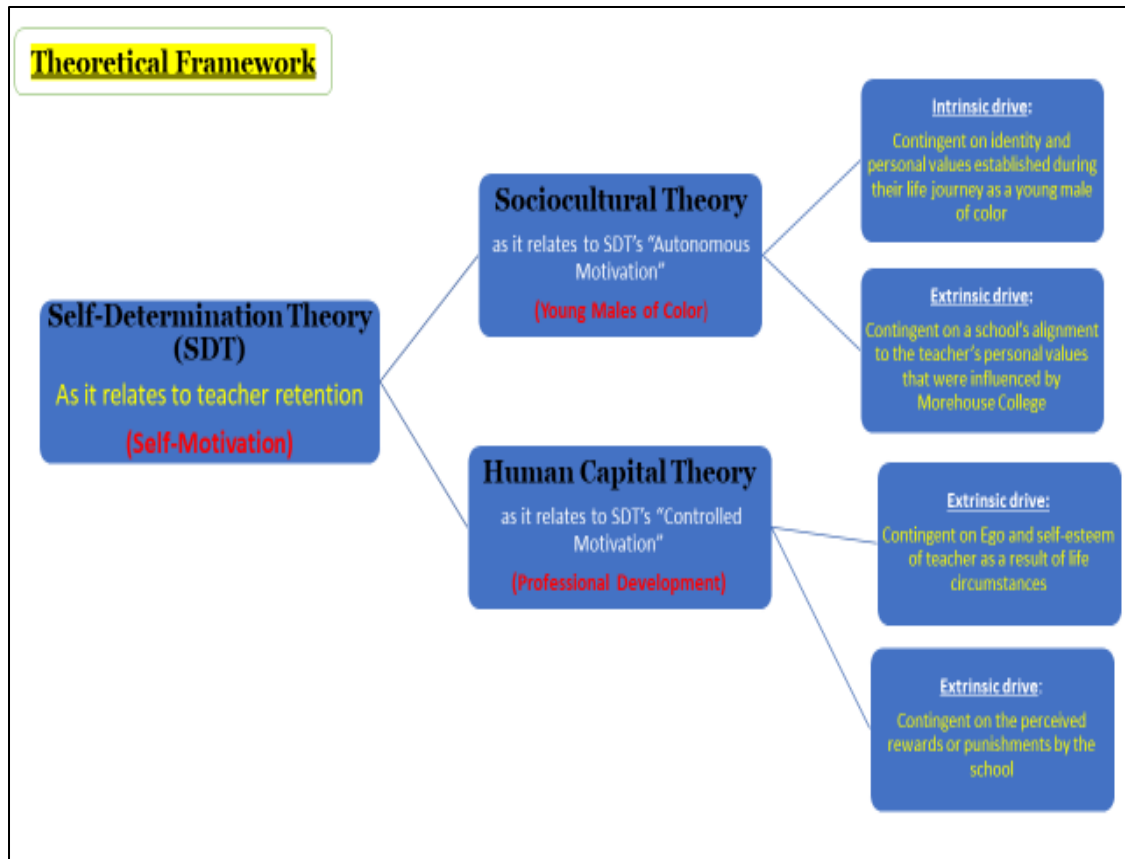
In focusing the conceptual framework using a sociocultural lens, it was important to clearly indicate specific moments of explicit interrogation of life events, particularly when it came to milestone decisions that could possibly be interpreted as altering one’s trajectory as a teacher. This milestone design relates to McAdams and McLean’s (2013) work on narrative identity theory, which describes a narrative research approach using selective reconstruction of an autobiographical past to gain an accurate and meaningful understanding of the participants’ life journey. However, it was not enough to simply present the variables to specify the problem to be solved in a conceptual framework. The framework also needed a theoretical lens to offer a more rigorous blueprint for a methodology that is both humanizing to the participants but thorough in the collection and analysis of the data. In the construction of my theoretical framework, I chose to combine different theories that matched the concepts that I wanted to explore.

My critical race inquiry, as it related to the complex experience of teacher professional development, seemed to resonate with Becker’s (1994) research of human capital theory, particularly its power dynamics when intersected with a person’s self-motivation, which, in a sociocultural context, is influenced through life experiences. Human capital opens up conversation related to power negotiations that BMTs may respond to in ways that are based on their self-perception as a teacher as well as laborer, in addition to the professional training they have access to and the certification credentials they have acquired. This led to the question, “Do Black Male Teachers

prioritize their human capital over their own self-motivation to want to support the growth of students?”

It was important to define what self-motivation meant in this sociocultural context. Ryan and Deci (2008) proposed the self-determination theory that divides motivation into two primary strands: Autonomous motivation, referring to intrinsic drives that may be motivated by contextual convenience, autonomy, or identified interest; and Controlled motivation, characterized by both external regulations of punishment and reward as well as introjected regulations that pressure an individual to take on an identity that does not align with personal beliefs or values. This theory stamped the final element of my theoretical framework that would create a proven rationale for the variables under investigation. The original sociocultural lens would also be adopted in the theoretical framework (see Figure 2) to offer alignment with the life narrative investigation, particularly during the period when the participants were young males of color.

Figure 2. *Theoretical Framework*



Creating a theoretical framework that aligns with the conceptual framework allowed me to both have a map for discovery as well as an infrastructure for analysis that would explicitly align with the qualitative variables under consideration. This ensured that the codes I used to identify themes were grounded in the language of the theory as well as unpacked the mysteries of the conceptual framework. Aligned theoretical frameworks push research to be focused on the variables of the problem with theoretical artillery as reinforcement for both coding and analysis. They protect the validity of how and why one is investigating the topic and push a more structured intersectional analysis (Edwards & Esposito, 2020), where the rigor of the methods yields authenticity and rich qualitative conclusions as well as social justice implications for further study.

The following literature review draws connections to macro theories of human motivation using Deci and Ryan's (2008) research on self-determination theory. Self-determination theory supports this inquiry into the sources of self-motivation to remain teachers for alumni of Morehouse College. In addition, sources of motivation are analyzed within the context of human capital theory, as it relates to teacher professional development, and sociocultural theory, as it relates to a teacher's identity and the experience of young males of color. Human capital theory refers to the valuation of knowledge, attitudes, and skills for productive potential (Baptiste, 2001). The current study connected this idea with how alumni from Morehouse College perceived the value and quality of their professional development based on their personal needs and the demands from their institution.

It was critical to examine the impact of identity, particularly during formative years, for these current and former teachers as young males of color, as it can provide lived insights into alumni perceptions of education and schooling as well as of teaching and learning. The sociocultural theory approach allows these formative experiences to be brought to prominence because it examines the role of social and cultural processes as the key mediating influence of human activity and thought (Nasir & Hand, 2006). In addition, this sociocultural analysis highlights how the decision to remain a teacher is influenced by "systems of meaning that are transmitted across generational experiences," while at the same time showing evidence of the creation and recreation of teacher knowledge within local contexts (Nasir & Hand, 2006).

Background and Context of the Study

Early History of Preparing Teachers at Morehouse College

The earliest accounts of Morehouse are captured in Benjamin G. Brawley's (1917) *History of Morehouse College*, where he framed the humble beginnings of this school designed for former enslaved people in the South. The integrity, perseverance, and vigor of the Morehouse educator starts with one of its catalytic founders, R. C. Coulter from Augusta, Georgia. He fled enslavement from his owner, who was a soldier in the Confederate Army, and walked from Virginia to Washington, DC, to secure his freedom.

Coulter's self-determination to be educated led him to become a student at the National Theological Institute in Washington, DC, after the Civil War. Having a vision to expand educational opportunities for his community in Augusta he requested permission, support, and resources to start an institution of learning to support his community in the South. This was granted to him; however, Coulter did not have a strategic plan to implement a full-fledged academic curriculum for the newly freed Black people in his community. He was inspired by his own endurance to survive his journey toward enlightenment, and he wanted to create the space for others to gain meaningful skills that would allow them to access their freedom. Even though he did not have the network of or knowledge of how to start a school, it was clear that Coulter was the college's first example of a life-long learner and how one's passion and drive to expand learning opportunities can change the world.

It is important to note that founder W. J. White, who assisted Coulter in establishing the school in Augustus, Georgia, was forced, based on circumstance and resources, to be a teacher at the school in order to satisfy the high demand for education

during the early period following the end of the Civil War. This unplanned route to the classroom proves to be a trend for many Morehouse men, particularly when it comes to the public education system in America. After organizing and securing students for the school, White requested from Revered Edmund Turney, who approved the school for Coulter, to send the necessary teachers to educate the newly enrolled students, as it was agreed if he were to enroll them, then the institute would send qualified teachers to instruct them. However, Turney failed to provide teachers for the new school, forcing White (who was offered a salary to teach at the school) to look at rival religious organizations for teachers along with himself, who agreed to teach classes at night.

These three founders of Morehouse played an important role in foreshadowing the eventual experience of the Morehouse alumni who decided to teach in the K-12 public school system. Turney represented this ever-present gatekeeper who existed for Black people in America and how patience, negotiation, and compromise may have to be endured in order to springboard complex social tasks like education. Coulter exemplified the drive and tenacity to learn and expand learning for others. This same intrinsic drive has followed current educators who graduated from Morehouse and can be seen in how they facilitate their classrooms and their teaching philosophy with students. White's savvy ability to bring various sides together and adapt to the challenging circumstances also seems to be a characteristic of the Morehouse public school educator. His ability to pivot after promises fell through and to utilize his community networks to see a vision for education of his people to come into fruition, modeled the persistence that would be needed to be a BMT in America. He also represents how Morehouse men have been willing to be teachers, even if it is not their chosen profession. It is clear from its

foundations that Morehouse has planted a seed of commitment to educate underserved communities by any means necessary, even if it means sacrificing their personal aspirations for the educational aspirations of the community.

The Morehouse Matrons: The Architects for Preparing Morehouse Educators

Even though Morehouse has the reputation for developing Black men to be leaders in the community, it is important to mention the role women have played in educating these Black men. Brawley's (1917) history, which was written in commemoration of the school's 50th anniversary, highlighted that from the beginning of the school's founding, women have been strategically integrated into the educational experience of Black men at Morehouse, which was known at the time as "The Augusta Institute":

The students who had been enrolled were eager to begin work, however, and he was in a dilemma. Thinking the matter over he remembered that Capt. Charles H. Prince, who was at the time general in charge of the schools in Augusta, supported by the American Missionary Association, was a Baptist, and that some of his teachers were Baptists. Capt. Prince readily agreed to lend all the aid he could, and while the school could have no technical connection with the A.M.A. schools, Miss Sherman, a Baptist lady from Spurgeon's church in London; Miss Welch, whose home was in the West, and Miss Burt of Binghamton, Mass., a Congregationalist, agreed with pleasure to teach the school. (p. 15)

This early history also showed that the school did not have any official graduates of the college until 1884. The school was arranged to give the formerly enslaved an opportunity to receive the foundational skills needed to participate in the college course load. There were many students who completed the "Normal Course," which was essentially equivalent to the basic skills that students receive today in elementary and middle school as well as classes in the Theological Department. However, both Brawley's (1917) and Edward A. Jones' (1967) history of Morehouse College, entitled

A Candle in the Dark, begins the history of organized teacher preparation with Miss Carrie E. Bemus. While the majority of both books give extensive recognition to the many men from Morehouse who went into the ministry, both give less than adequate acknowledgment of how many Morehouse men decided to become teachers and principals in the public school system.

Jones (1967) indicated that the “first graduates of the Atlanta Baptist College, Henry A. Bleach, John W. Hubert and Major W. Reddick (of the Class of 1884), made significant contributions to the education of Negroes in Georgia” (p. 230). However, what is skipped over in both books is a true narrative and description of how these graduates were prepared to be educators. The course that prepared Morehouse students during the turn of the 20th century was known as the “Teachers’ Professional Course” (Brawley, 1917, p. 72), which was directed by Miss Bemus at Spelman Seminary (now Spelman College). Brawley explained that

Under the directions of Miss Bemus moreover, provision for those who wished to emphasize strictly Normal work was made in the Teachers’ Professional Course, which required one or more years of study according to previous preparation, which was generally conducted in connection with similar work at Spelman Seminary, and which in course of time graduated seven men. (pp. 75-76)

Bemus, who was a graduate of the State Normal School at West Chester, Pennsylvania, and the Boston School of Expression, came to Morehouse when it was named “Atlanta Baptist Seminary” in 1892 and headed the department for 11 years. Brawley described Bemus’s reputation at the school as someone who, “by her fine and ardent nature and the general force of her personality, impressed all who met her, and she became the personal friend of scores of students” (p. 72).

Another early mention of this course was in Jones's (1967) gathering of historical records, which included a perusal of the then-Atlanta Baptist College catalogue for the academic year 1895-96, which showed a distinction between the traditional "College Course" and the "Teachers' Professional" course which "was structured differently" (p. 67), with students taking English and American literature instead of Greek and Latin, in addition to liberal offerings in mathematics, geography, history (United States and British), civil government, rhetoric and composition, and natural sciences. Very little has been written about the experience of Bemus and other matrons who supported the teacher preparation program at the school. Jones briefly mentioned Bemus, stating that she served in 1903 "primarily as head of the Normal Practice School, later known as the English Preparatory department" (p. 59).

Jones (1967) also introduced Mrs. Trudie M. Houser and Ms. Maggie M. Rogers, who graduated from the Teachers' Professional Courses and were brought in to support Bemus during the 1899-1900 school year. After Bemus resigned, Rogers "assumed the principalship of the English Preparatory Department, holding the post until that department was discontinued in the 1920" (p. 75). Why was this department that prepared students for teaching in the K-12 school system eliminated? Before that question can be answered, it is also important to emphasize that Morehouse students have never taken education courses in homogeneous settings. In fact, Jones highlighted the many women who benefited from this mutually facilitated course for both the men at Morehouse and the women at Spelman. Jones explained:

What may come as a surprise to many is that there are more than a score of women who did all their college work at Morehouse and awarded the B.A. degree by the College. These alumnae all took their degrees between 1929 and 1936. In the late 1920's Morehouse instituted evening extension classes for public school teachers in order to upgrade public-school instruction. (p. 296)

Teacher Paths Absent of a Formal Program

Although there is no mention of the “Teachers’ Professional Course” or the “English Preparatory Department” after Hope’s administration, both Brawley (1917) and Jones (1967) offered extensive alumni information that suggested that working in the public school system was still a destination for many graduates of the institution. In addition, as public schools started to expand in the United States, Morehouse had one of the first public schools in Atlanta called the “The Academy”:

When there were no public high schools for Negroes in the South, as was the case as late as 1924, Morehouse operated its own prep school, The Academy, which for years enrolled more students than the College but was dropped in 1930 as the need for it declined. (Jones, 1967, p. 305)

Brawley (1917) gave an extensive list of alumni and their documented occupation along with their location. With this one document, it was discovered that of those who graduated after 1884, a little more than two-thirds were known to be teachers (p. 152). Of the 57 alumni who identified with a profession in the public school system, Brawley was able to document 25 teachers and 32 principals during a span of 32 years. Jones (1967) offered a limited view of Morehouse alumni in public education within the time following Brawley’s publication of the school’s history. Jones’s text highlighted a variety of public school positions (pp. 237, 259, 263), as seen in the chart below, which includes principals, District Administrator, Assistant Superintendent, Time Coordinators, and national education positions. It was puzzling that Jones and the institution did not

acknowledge the presence of Morehouse alumni in the role of a public school teacher. One might be led to believe that the role of a K-12 public school teacher did not match the image of a Morehouse Man and thus was omitted from any mention in Jones's (1967) extensive history of the school. There were 12 principals from Atlanta, Georgia, along with seven other alumni who held prominent leadership positions in public education. A close analysis of the historical records of Morehouse College of both Brawley (1917) and Jones (1967) revealed that the school's political vision for Black men has highly influenced their attention and investment in preparing students to be public school teachers.

Morehouse College Births an Independent Education Program

In 2014, President Barack Obama announced a movement to support males of color in the United States, called the My Brother's Keeper Initiative (Koenig, 2021). The goal of this national initiative was to address the opportunity gaps experienced by Black and Latino boys, particularly when it comes to systems of racial discrimination that punish, diminish, and push out. The initiative focused on enlisting the combined resources of federal, state, and local governments as well as human services, philanthropy, and business sectors to help with the risks that young boys of color face in education, health, and financial well-being (Boys of Color Research Collaborative et al., 2016). This relentless and unmistakable vulnerability of boys of color to poor health, unemployment, incarceration, and academic deficits was the clear motivation for President Obama's urgency for implementing the initiative. This urgency has only intensified in nature and scope since.

In addition to the development of strategic mentoring programs, wraparound services, and college preparation experiences for young males of color, influential African Americans have also chosen to contribute to the futures of young Black men through philanthropic contributions to higher education. As a profound example, in May of 2019, the Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners Inc., Robert Smith, during his commencement address at Morehouse College, pledged a \$34 million-dollar gift toward clearing the student loan debt for all 2019 graduates of the institution (Friedman, 2019). The billionaire is not the only Black philanthropist to donate a significant amount of financial support to Morehouse. In October 2019, media mogul Oprah Winfrey donated \$13 million dollars to Morehouse after celebrating the 30th anniversary of her scholarship program that has funded over 500 Morehouse students (Friedman, 2019). The overwhelming support for Morehouse shows the level of trust that these leaders have in Morehouse's approach to developing men of color who can impact communities across the United States. Since Morehouse was founded in 1867, it has produced more African American male doctors, lawyers, scientists, politicians, engineers, theologians, and educators than any other college in the United States (Eaves, 2009).

An ongoing, vital national and community need is supporting young males of color during their matriculation through K-12 schools (Whiting, 2006). One of Morehouse College's original missions was to prepare Black men for careers not only in ministry but also in education (Eaves, 2009). Although the school has not offered an education major for students, it has continued to produce teachers and educational leaders in K-12 public schools. Acknowledging the need for increased representation of Black men in education, Morehouse has taken the initiative to launch the Morehouse Center for

Excellence in Education (MCEE) for students interested in pursuing careers in education. According to the Center's brochure, the aim is "to develop a talented pipeline of world class practitioners, innovators, policymakers, leaders and researchers who are equipped to transform and improve educational outcomes in urban and underserved communities" (Morehouse College, 2021).

The Morehouse Program is designed with a unique interdisciplinary model where students select the courses, programs, and activities that are aligned with their career interests. While there is still much to learn about BMTs and their preparation and support needs for the myriad challenges they face, Morehouse students are uniquely positioned to become quality public school teachers who are both skilled and motivated to remain in the classroom. Their experiences at this historic institution can be linked to the value placed on identity development and self-esteem, which may be seen in their pedagogical approach toward students in public schools. Emphasizing the importance of self-determination, developing habits through rituals, helping those who come after, along with personal accountability and high academic standards in the classroom could be linked to Morehouse's freshman orientation week known as "New Student Orientation (NSO)."

This program is known to push incoming students to think about who they are and what sacrifices were made for them to be there. In addition, the program is organized and facilitated by members of the Student Government Association, and many alumni return for the final night when incoming freshmen participate in a rites of passage ceremony known as "Spirit Night." Here, students learn the sacred songs and hymns of the college, which directly relate to what it means to be a "Man of Morehouse." This speaks to the

deep relational experience that is embedded in their academic development of Morehouse alumni and could show to impact their perceived social obligation to remain a teacher.

Morehouse's central focus of offering a rich educational experience designed specifically for Black men positions the Morehouse Center for Excellence in Education as a possible incubator for teacher preparation, where they can directly address the challenges that are faced by BMTs in public school systems as well as build upon Morehouse alumni successes as teachers. This mixed-methods study was conceptualized and designed to generate in-depth data that, when analyzed through a bespoke theoretical framework for Black male learning and professional development, can offer contextualized and specific insight to leaders at Morehouse College on the challenges and successes of various teaching trajectories of the college's alumni. There have been no significant studies on the number of alumni from Morehouse who have become teachers. This study begins the process of gathering and analyzing contextual data so that the school can make informed decisions about the development of MCEE.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Self-motivation varies among BMTs and educators, as it does with every demographic. But what is unique to BMTs is that many are driven by their empathetic emotions and ethic of care toward young males of color who may experience similar tribulations as they have experienced due to structural racism (Brown, 2011). These BMTs are regularly with students and, therefore, can play an important role in the lives of these young males of color, both in and beyond academic content instruction. While research has shown how much Black students, especially Black males, benefit from seeing themselves represented at the front of the room (Bryan & Williams, 2017), this

can become a heavy burden on the men themselves. Importantly, Brockenbrough (2018) posed the poignant and generative question: “What exactly does it mean for Black male teachers to serve as father figures and role models for Black children?” (p. 3). What Brockenbrough meant by this is there are many risks in positioning BMTs in this way. Some may not be aware of this expectation, while others may be staunchly opposed to being a student’s father away from home.

This question itself speaks to how the US education system writ large and across local contexts minoritizes, oppresses, and ultimately pushes out Black boys and young men (Love, 2019), and, in so doing, creates a significantly expanded workload and considerable ongoing emotional labor for Black teachers (Pabon, 2016). This added layer of expectation put on BMTs is often detrimental to their well-being and sustainability in the profession. This is especially true if they do not have the professional and emotional support needed to carry such a heavy extra set of roles and responsibilities (Brockenbrough, 2018).

In addition, researchers, as critics, have cautioned the field about the drawbacks of using BMTs as role models, particularly for young males of color (Brockenbrough, 2018; Pabon, 2016). Using an additive approach can have the potential of misplacing and mismanaging BMTs, particularly in settings with a high population of Black students. Assuming that all BMTs have the same motivation to remain a teacher is misleading and detrimental to their retention. Teacher burnout has shown to be a phenomenon regardless of race; however, for BMTs, this can be accelerated due to their marginalized position within the education system.

This approach assumes that all Black teachers perceive themselves as role models and want to function in that way for the schools they serve. Another reason why this approach is problematic is because it assumes that all students who are young males of color will naturally embrace their BMTs as role models, while making connections between their teacher's modeled behavior and their personal goals or aspirations (Maylor, 2009). There is a dearth of empirical research in this area and, thus, additional contextualized research is needed on successful approaches and processes for retaining BMTs in US public schools.

Morehouse College has a unique opportunity to utilize its rich legacy of success with Black men to develop 21st century leaders who can overcome the challenges that plague Black male educators in their decision to remain public school teachers. Identifying common experiences through the shared narratives of this special group of BMTs can inform practices in teacher preparation programs at Morehouse and other HBCUs, who are training and motivating Black males to be quality educators who are committed to teaching. According to Eaves (2009), Morehouse is a "repository" of proven successful strategies for developing African American males into responsible, creative, and productive men. The school's distinct culture is known to empower and inspire students to aspire to greatness through seven components of what is frequently called the "Morehouse Mystique" (p. 95): a rich legacy of leadership, an air of expectancy and accountability, self-esteem building through messaging, mentoring by faculty and staff, the cultivation of a bond of brotherhood, modeling of the Morehouse Man, and a climate of celebration.

The modeling of the Morehouse Man involves a series of rituals and mentoring opportunities for students to expose themselves to exemplar contributors to society through intimate focus group sessions, international travel, and local internships. The school also considers the social and emotional acknowledgment that is needed for young Black men and, thus, create multiple moments to celebrate student success. Whether it is through photos and videos on their website or a small luncheon in their honor, the school strives to create an authentic environment where the accomplishments of the students are celebrated. This rich foundation, matched with the MCEE's framework of Teach, Explore, Innovate, and Lead, has the potential to prepare students to become master classroom teachers, policymakers, researchers, innovators, and leaders who are equipped to revolutionize education.

This review of literature contextualizes the intersectional experience of BMTs who graduated from Morehouse within the concepts of professional development, self-motivation, and young males of color. It particularly interrogates power negotiations that have proven to be factors in how BMTs perceive their role and value in the education profession. The variable of professional development is analyzed within the prism of the human capital theory to make sense of how BMTs perceive the value of the professional development they receive as it relates to their motivation to remain a teacher. Self-motivation is a central theme in the literature review, particularly how researchers have implemented approaches that focus on intrinsic and external motivations based on the frameworks of self-determination theory. The life journey continuum that was shown in the conceptual framework for this study connects the macro understandings of sociocultural theory, particularly how interactions in unique social settings influence how

teachers understand the role and value of being a teacher. Their experiences as young males of color are intersected with their experiences of teaching young males of color in order to draw connections between the importance of teacher educational experience and its influences on motivation in the education profession. The literature review drew explicit connections between life circumstance and teacher retention variables with proven theories to make sense of the unique power dynamics that impact their decisions to remain a teacher.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Significant educational and social science research has documented that the experiences of Black Male Teachers (BMTs) are unique and varying in a range of ways, and that these men are not monolithic (Brockenbrough, 2018; Foster, 1997; Lynn, 2002). In tension with this acknowledgment are common themes across empirical research that include BMTs' reflections on being men of color who were students of color and who now serve young males of color in schools, as well as their understanding of their own identities and their (often) limited professional learning experiences that do not adequately prepare them for teaching in the US public school system.

This mixed-methods study built on the extensive work of Bristol and Goings (2018) and their findings about BMTs and the factors that are at play in this important decision of remaining teachers. Against the backdrop of this decision are the many assumptions that are placed on BMTs in the education field. This study engaged Brockenbrough's (2018) extensive research on the perception of BMTs as disciplinarians and father-figures using his "saviorist Black Masculinity politics" (p. 176) in urban schools and Pabon's (2016) and Brown's (2011) research on BMTs as role models. Eaves' (2009) research on Morehouse College at the turn of the 20th century represents the most recent study to date on the College's history, traditions, and implications for alumni, and it is used to offer insight into the unique experience students have while attending this historical Black college.

This literature review explores the connection between Ryan and Deci's (2008) work with self-determination theory and BMTs' motivation, and it frames a discussion

around extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to remain a teacher based on the work of Guy Roth (2014). The extrinsic motivations of teachers are analyzed through the lens of Baptiste's (2001) work on human capital theory, looking at how BMTs might possibly conceptualize their professional development needs. Becker (1994) and his book *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special References to Education* established the historical context of this theory and how it has followed us, particularly within the context of education. In addition, Harris (2016) offered a compelling argument for how this concept of human capital has been sewn into the fabric of the thinking and culture of the millennial generation.

The intrinsic motivations of BMTs pull from John-Steiner and Mahn's (1996) work on sociocultural approaches to learning and Nasir and Hand's work on sociocultural perspectives on race and culture. In research from McInerney et al. (2011), we find explicit application of the sociocultural theory in education and how understanding it can show connections to concepts of motivation. This sociocultural approach towards the literature highlights the importance of specific life experiences in the identity development of BMTs and their empathetic view toward young males of color. This literature review positions human capital theory, self-determination theory, and sociocultural theory as proven approaches to understanding motivation generally in order to interrogate the power dynamics of race, gender, and class within the context of BMTs' experience teaching young males of color and their experience as a young male of color.

Self-Determination Theory and Self-Motivation

The concept of self-motivation is central to understanding the multiple factors that impact the retention of BMTs. Bishay's (1996) research revealed that using incentives

related to pay have not been successful in increasing teacher motivation. Most literature has drawn connections between professional development and BMTs' direct support of male students of color in the decision-making process to remain a teacher. Han and Yin (2016) defined teacher motivation as "energy or drive that moves people to do something by nature" (p. 3). This definition of teacher motivation is consistent with the use of the term *self-motivation* in relation to BMTs in this study and is framed by the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) that deconstructs the understanding of motivation into "autonomous motivation" and "controlled motivation."

Autonomous Motivation

Autonomous motivation refers to both intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation that is "integrated within their sense of self" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182). This type of motivation makes an individual feel a sense of "volition or self-endorsement" (p. 182). Common themes that can be drawn from this type of motivation include factors of autonomy, convenience, competence, passion, and relatedness. In contrast, controlled motivation refers to motivation that is based on an individual's interpretation of reward and shame within an institutional context. Ryan and Deci (2008) explained that individuals who experience controlled motivation "experience pressure to think, feel, or behave in particular ways" (p. 182), while autonomous motivation results in "healthier" behavior (p. 182).

In addition, both forms of motivation were used in this study to analyze responses from participants related to why these BMTs remained in the teaching profession. Connections between autonomous behaviors, where teachers perceive themselves as the origins of their own actions, and sociocultural influences on identity were compared in

this study to understand whether these notions were based on unique personal experiences from formative moments in their lives as graduates of Morehouse College or on life circumstances that forced them to prioritize professional survival over personal interest or passion.

Regulations in autonomous motivation. Autonomous motivation attempts to understand the specific aspects of teachers' life experience to explain the motives behind their choice to remain a teacher. According to Roth (2014), autonomous motivation is understood within three behaviors that include identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic regulation. Identified regulation refers to behaviors based on the identified importance of an activity that stands at the most surface level of autonomous motivation to feed the teachers' sense of self instead of a specific interest. This can also be put within the context of what teachers desire as related to professional development, particularly the identified competence they wish to acquire. Integrated regulation is a more autonomous and deeply internalized activity because it "has been reciprocally assimilated with other aspects of the person's self" (Roth, 2014, p. 37). This form of regulation can specifically support the understanding of why teachers value autonomy and convenience as related to the negotiation of one's identity within a professional setting.

The final regulation studied is intrinsic regulation which, unlike the previous two, needs no internalizing because the person is genuinely and inherently interested. This could manifest itself in reflections on the vocational nature of teaching and how it is due to a calling beyond understanding. Interrogating the intersection of these three internal regulations can generate insight into what factors are placed at high value when deciding

to remain a teacher. Life circumstances along with formative life experience push BMTs to process complex feelings as related to self-motivation. Experiencing the K-12 school system from a youth of color to a young man of color plants a variety of seeds that grow into motivations to leave or stay in the classroom as a teacher.

Controlled Motivation

The idea of controlled motivation helps make sense of how the need for professional development for BMTs manifests itself as a result of life circumstances and misguided extrinsic motivations. Roth's (2014) framing of controlled motivation could possibly position BMTs where they are poorly internalizing forms of extrinsic motivations. Those could include benefits such as increased salary, additional job titles, or even public praise and recognition. This could lead to BMTs having to use "introjected regulation" (Roth, 2014), which refers to a superficial type of internalization when a person takes on the externally expected actions and values but does not accept them as their own. This could manifest itself in a variety of ways, including pressure from a parent who has a strong opinion about career choices or the influence of a strong college culture that might promote certain ideals to which the person feels obligated.

However, this tricky world of making difficult compromises, sometimes in the realm of personal ethics, weighs heavily in a BMT's decision to remain in the profession. Superficial types of motivation are sometimes valued as a result of various life circumstances which alter the professional trajectory of BMTs. While autonomous motivation is related to feelings of "vitality and energy" (Deci & Ryan, 2008), controlled motivation is accompanied by a sense of exhaustion or burnout (Roth, 2014), which could be a factor in a BMT's decision to remain in the field of education. It is important

to note that motivations are not linear or binary in the sense that a BMT's motivation is either controlled or autonomous but could be a mix of both.

The recognition of intersectional identities and contexts (Edwards & Esposito, 2020, pp. 1-3) is influenced by an array of sociocultural influences that navigate power negotiations through the social expectations of race, gender, and class. Researchers have explained that “While it is tempting to locate an analysis in the domain of a single identity category (such as race or class or gender alone), researchers using intersectional analysis maintain that structures of power are simultaneously positioned through multiple categories” (pp. 44-43). Therefore, it would be misleading to assume that the origins of a teacher's motivation come from a singular identity, whether it is the type of education they received or the values their family stressed. An intersectional analysis to motivation yields a better integrated understanding of the decision to remain a teacher for Black men. Hobson and Maxwell (2016) found that satisfying the varying levels of motivation and tending to the unique contextual influence of each are necessary but not sufficient to support their well-being. Their research suggested that the well-being of teachers is a critical factor in teacher effectiveness and retention (p. 168).

The following section frames this idea of controlled motivation within the context of human capital theory and how it manifests itself in BMTs' need for quality professional development opportunities and experiences. While human capital theory can be applied to myriad contexts, the theory resonates with educators in particular because of its direct connection with how schools navigate teacher recruitment, evaluation, and retention. The vulnerable state that human capital brings to decision making calls for a

deeper look at how professional development is framed to BMTs and their actual value in the profession.

Human Capital Theory and Professional Development

Techniques for Meaningful Professional Development for Black Teachers

The role that professional development plays in the retention of BMTs is prevalent in literature on Black teachers. Research in this area has highlighted the lack of quality and strategic professional learning opportunities for BMTs (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Pabon, 2016; Wallace & Gagen, 2019). Numerous education scholars have studied the narratives of Black teachers and found trends in ways to best develop their skills for effective teaching (e.g., Gist, 2018; Noonan, 2018). The teachers in Mosely's (2018) research, for example, discussed the impact racial affinity-based professional development had in decreasing their feelings of isolation at school. One necessary support the study confirmed was that school leaders have to address the Black teachers' experiences with systemic racism by "drawing upon culture and community as strength" (p. 270). This means that giving Black teachers support spaces, where they can connect with other teachers, explore common problems, acknowledge their multifaceted roles in schools, and share solutions that have been discovered over years of educational commitment.

Mosely's (2018) study in particular examined the role of drop-in "Rejuvenation Spaces," which have resulted in less teacher isolation and an increase in teacher retention (p. 267). Other strategies found to be effective in the professional development of these Black teachers were the use of inquiry to drive conversations, an emphasis on holistic health, and book studies. Framing professional development for BMTs through the

integration of problems of practice that relate to their racial experience could be a strategy used to retain “culturally relevant” BMTs (Bryan & Williams, 2017). As well, the design of the workshops in Mosely’s (2018) study reflected this problem of practice integration, as facilitators used “dialogical experiences” to encourage participants to engage in deep listening for understanding.

Ultimately, the research of Mosely (2018), Bryan and Williams (2017), and Pabon (2016) showed developing Black teachers’ means of incorporating racial identity within various professional learning environments. Thomas and Warren’s (2017) research focused on how one Black male teacher sustained professional relationships through culturally responsive discourse and indicated the importance of supporting the BMTs’ voicing of their racialized experience as a form of professional development and a pathway for developing an intrinsic desire to remain in the teaching profession. Similar to Mosely’s study, Bryan and Williams (2017) found that the participant expressed that he felt a greater sense of self-efficacy as a result of the professional development and shared his experience in workshops at national teacher conferences (Thomas & Warren, 2017).

The Value of Teachers in a Human Capital Context

One possible lens through which to analyze the role professional development may play in a BMT’s decision is through human capital theory. According to Baptiste (2001), human capital theory refers to “knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are developed and valued primarily for their economically productive potential” (p. 185). This perspective emphasizes the idea that investing in people makes them more productive because they gain the skills and knowledge to do their role more efficiently. The present study of Morehouse alumni who have taught in public schools explored

whether their positive outcomes as a teacher impacted their decision to remain a teacher. This concept of productivity may prove to be a key factor among the alumni interviewed. It is important to position human capital theory—which focuses on humans as capital, driven by their ability to be productive—in relationship to sociocultural theory—which focuses on identity development through social relationships relative to formative moments in a person’s life history—as the interactions from various points of BMTs’ lives that could have a strong influence on how they manage extrinsic motivational situations that impact their decision to return as teachers.

Human capital theory in particular takes a stance that investing in teachers (the human capital) through development of their skills can render positive outcomes (student success as defined by the school) and encourage retention of BMTs. Baptiste (2001) concluded, however, that the human capital theorist would view teachers as “creatures of habit,” not creatures of intention who are “lone wolves” (p. 197) motivated by extrinsic factors such as pay raises, promotions, or public recognition. This perspective of viewing BMTs has both positive and negative implications for their retention. On one hand, human capital theory sheds light on the importance of investing in human resources that the BMTs want to retain through the development of their skills. This benefits BMTs because some have not had opportunities or access to professional development. On the other hand, this theory dehumanizes BMTs as simply one small mechanism for a bigger machine that may not have students at the center of their decision making. This juxtaposition offers varying possibilities for reasons why alumni from Morehouse College might choose to remain K-12 teachers.

Perception and Acquisition of Human Capital Value

Another significant factor to consider is a teacher's perception of their value in the public school system. While some efforts have been made to increase salaries for teachers, it has still remained a topic of concern for teacher unions and school systems around the country (Winters, 2010). The work of Becker (1994) has given the field of education a clear bridge to understanding how existence and work translate into economic human value. He claimed that "education and training are the most important investments in human capital" (p. 17), and his books have shown that high school and college education in the United States raises a person's income. According to Becker, the earnings of more educated people the majority of the time are well above average and can be seen when looking at earnings difference between college and high school graduates.

This same lens can be taken when teachers consider leaving the field of education. The cost of paying for classes toward credentials and mandatory certification tests (especially if the teacher has to retake a test to meet a minimum score) can be daunting and, in some cases, is not practical if there are employment opportunities that offer higher wages and low work stress. Morehouse College, in particular, has been credited for producing the most Black men in graduate schools in the country (Brawley, 1917; Eaves, 2009; Jones, 1967), and this culture of building value through education may stem from ideals learned during their undergraduate matriculation.

However, a more important factor to consider as it relates to human capital theory and BMTs is the negotiation of power related to having the ability to act on intrinsic motivations within a system that has a historical record of disenfranchising people of color, especially Black men. Intersecting human capital with sociocultural theories

revealed that there are several moments in a person's life where their human capital value compromises their self-determination to fulfill their passions. There is also a notion of introjected regulation that can possibly take place when Black males are making sense of whether they are genuinely passionate about being a teacher or simply accepting the role because it provides necessities and luxuries for immediate or extended family.

When BMTs are positioned as fathers in their own home, the discussion is forced to extend to a teacher's perception of financial stability and family security. The added pressure of being a father and teacher brings to light the value that human capital will play in decisions that not only involve the teacher but also the members of his family. Becker (1994) highlighted this variable of parent influence on a child's eventual human capital value and suggested that even though the earnings of parents and children are "positively related," the relation is not strong (p. 21). However, he noted that this may be different when power dynamics of class and economics are considered:

It is easy to see why children's and parents' earnings may be closer in poorer families. Richer families can pay for the training of their children, including the earnings forgone when children spend time in training rather than at work. Many poorer parents would be willing to lend their children money to help them obtain further training if the parents could expect to get paid back later when they are old. But children may not carry out their part of the bargain, especially in highly mobile societies where children often live far from their parents. (p. 22)

This generated the need for an examination of the role of external punishments and rewards for BMTs. It is important to question if the stakes are higher for BMTs when they become teachers, particularly when they are also fathers. The pressure to be one of the 2% of BMTs, along with fighting the stereotype of absent fathers in the Black community, intersect and reveal the complexity of the decision to remain a teacher.

Human Capital Intersections with the Education System

Harris (2016) modernized this theory within the context of analyzing how human capital has been written into the cultural DNA of the millennial generation, which refers to those born between the years of 1980 to 2000 (p. 4). He made a compelling argument that this particular population of our country is directly influenced and designed to make decisions based on human capital value. This has implications not only for the motivation of teachers to remain in the profession, but also for how they depict the purpose of education to the next generation.

Harris (2016) highlighted the role that the “pedagogical mask” plays in how students understand the purpose of education and how teachers frame education during their instruction. This mask refers to the unspoken understanding that child labor is not connected to academic achievement. Harris explained how our current education system portrays education as the answer to reaching one’s full potential and accomplishing personal success. However, it simultaneously frames education through assembly-line rhetoric that equates grades to wages and human capital value to scores on a standardized test. Harris emphasized that “removing the pedagogical mask is central to understanding the American economy because even if we don’t see children’s labor, the whole system rests on its unsteady foundation” (p. 16). If BMTs, particularly those who are a part of this millennial population, continue to promote a human capital rationale for education to students, it could have the potential to decrease the pool of future teachers. It is common to find young college graduates who are more prone to choose positions that will recognize their value and potential through adequate compensation than to pursue a career, like teaching, that is personally fulfilling or supports the greater good of society.

Building on this intersection between identity, skills, and motivation was central to understanding the retention of those interviewed in this study. The following section connects how self-motivation and the need for professional development may be directly influenced by BMTs' experience as young males of color in K-12 schools. In addition, it explores the systematic assumptions by school leaders that are sometimes made about BMTs as a result of how young males of color are positioned in society, underserved in schools, and overrepresented in prisons in the United States.

Sociocultural Theory and Young Males of Color

Popular and Problematic Notions of Black Male Teachers

Much of the literature around BMTs centers on how society views them as “Black Supermen” who act as a “cohort of soldiers who will use their Blackness and maleness to lead Black male youth to academic success regardless of the structural and systemic challenges they face” (Pabon, 2016, p. 917). Pabon referred to a gender-dominant and racialized preconceived notion of Black men as saviors of Black youth by members of various school communities. Along with this notion that is attached to BMTs is the assumption that all Black youth need to be saved and can be saved by Black men. Bristol and Mentor's (2018) research findings showed that BMTs described their colleagues and administrators positioning them to be “disciplinarians first and teachers second” (p. 218). This refers to the idea that before BMTs' educational abilities are considered or valued, they are expected to display characteristics that enable them to bring order and discipline to underserved Black youth.

The projections and preconceived expectations that are routinely put on BMTs have been described by some education scholars as an “invisible tax” (El-Mekki, 2018)

that involves “getting less support and being typecast into nonacademic roles” (p. 57), pushing the limits of their motivation to remain a teacher. Like Pabon’s (2016) research, Brockenbrough’s (2018) findings on BMTs reflected “popular perceptions of Black male teachers as well-suited disciplinarians for predominantly Black urban schools” (p. 71). Some teachers described in detail how authoritative expectations contradicted their preferred classroom demeanors as well as their desired pedagogical and relational approaches.

Along with disciplinarian expectations for the teachers, Brockenbrough (2018) found that BMTs are also expected to act as father figures for their students. This phenomenon is linked to BMTs’ high levels of personal and emotional engagement with their students, which happened in ways that did not always relate well with their own understanding of their roles and responsibilities as teachers. Brown (2011) framed this as a “problematic” positioning within a historical context (Pabon, 2016). His historical analysis offered valuable perspective on how and why this conception of Black boys with absent fathers has become so pervasive among both scholars and historians. At the beginning of the 1930s in the United States, the preponderance of sociological literature positioned African American men as absent fathers. This was framed early on as a result of Black men traveling to northern states to find sufficient employment and leaving their sons to “fend for themselves”; this created and reinforced the damaging societal trope of the “troubled Black male youth centered on the absence of the father” (Brown, 2011, p. 298).

While some BMTs may embrace this coronation of fatherhood for their young male students of color, many are not adequately prepared with the social and emotional

intelligence frameworks or the professional training and development needed to navigate the psychological and emotional roller coaster of being a role model in loco parentis (Brockenbrough, 2018). Their willingness, deep level of care and concern, and identification with their Black male students can precipitate increased stress and decreased motivation to teach, as seen with the teachers in Pabon's (2016) study who expressed that they felt "frustrated to the extent that they were doubtful and feeling that continuing to work under the conditions they had experienced was unsustainable" and thus contributed to the "schooling out" process (p. 927). This process referred to the institutional decisions schools may make that push BMTs out of the classroom, whether through extreme accountability metrics or by using curricula that limit BMTs' ability to implement authentic learning experiences for students that are engaging and meaningful and honor their voices and experiences.

Identity Intersections with Young Males of Color

Making sense of these father and role model identities as related to their concerns about the well-being of their young male students of color within a sociocultural theoretical construct places a primacy on BMTs' K-12 experiences as well as their experiences at Morehouse College as undergraduate students. Sociocultural theory, as it relates to learning, originated from Lev Vygotsky's work with Russian collaborators in the 1920s and 1930s (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). This theory was anchored in the belief that social activities experienced by an individual are internalized and used to make sense of the world and their identity. Identity within this context is developed and defined through the interaction of personal knowledge and formative experiences, particularly in a school context.

The complex experiences many young males of color have in school create a series of interactional positioning where young Black males are forced to position themselves as particular persons based on their context to navigate, survive, and succeed within the confines of a limited educational system. This may come in the form of participating less in class activities due to a fear of ridicule from Black peers who may perceive them as “acting White.” Others may choose to extenuate their Black identity by altering their dress or dialect to be accepted among certain groups. This has pushed the research to interrogate more than just race or gender. An intersection of several factors including class, economics, and religious affiliation would also need to be interrogated in order to make sense of why young males of color feel they have to shape-shift and code-switch to navigate social spaces.

This “interdependence of social and individual processes” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192) is centrally analyzed in the interview responses in this study to honor the unique experience of being educated as a young male of color and attending Morehouse College. Sociocultural theory acknowledges both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive alumni from Morehouse College to remain working as public school teachers. The strategic identity and self-esteem development during the college’s New Student Orientation (NSO) attempt to plant these seeds of “pedagogical personalism” (Jensen, 2016), so that they can grow into skills and competencies necessary for leadership excellence (Eaves, 2009). Jensen (2016) explored this visionary philosophy that he related to Morehouse luminaries Benjamin Elijah Mays, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Howard Washington Thurman, and claimed that they personify this pedagogical personalism that focuses on the commitment to a philosophical or theological conception

of the person as a “sacred personality” (p. 151). This mindset that was taken toward their development could have implications on how they approach the teaching of their students.

Life Milestones as Windows to Identity Development and Motivation

Morehouse students are taught the values not only of brotherhood and legacy, but also of the role of self-esteem as it relates to their identity as Morehouse graduates. Former Morehouse College president Benjamin E. Mays, in his farewell address in 1967, described that the reason graduates from the school have done better than other graduates is due in part “to the philosophy drilled into them that the Morehouse Man can succeed in the world despite crippling circumstances under which he had to live” (Eaves, 2009, p. 97). This lens promotes an examination of how sense making and identity are influenced not only by these social interactions of an individual but also through language, symbols, and critical understanding of historical context. The link between their K-12 school experience as young males of color and the opportunity to attend Morehouse College was deconstructed to better understand how these experiences impacted their decision to remain teachers. Using a sociocultural theoretical framework rejects the dichotomy of internal and external, focusing more on the “transformation of socially shared activities into individualized processes” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192).

In research from McNerney et al. (2011, pp. 163-87), contributing authors have examined how sociocultural theory could be used to understand change in motivation. They highlighted how motivation has been analyzed using many different perspectives; however, a sociocultural lens offers an opportunity to understand how motivation

develops over time, particularly in a classroom context. McInerney et al. (2011) argued that identity development is also a central factor to consider when understanding how motivation intersects with sociocultural life events. They suggested that “learning and identity construction should be repositioned and researched as an integrated process, and that schools, the social institutions tasked with supporting learning, must also be explicitly tasked with contributing to an ontological process of identity construction” (p. 8). This memory mapping of identity development from K-12 to Morehouse to the classroom as a public school teacher was also central in the analysis of alumni narratives.

The relationship between self-motivation, professional development, and young males of color consistently intersects in the literature related to the retention of BMTs. The life circumstances that impact these variables after important decision points of their life journey can offer valuable insight into why these alumni of Morehouse College remained teachers in public schools, and how institutions preparing future teachers can design their education programs to support the challenges of BMTs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Background and Context

The COVID-19 health pandemic has changed the landscape of American education, in particular how it relates to facilitating healthy learning in person and integrating technology tools to accommodate virtual instruction. Like the simultaneous logistical juggling teachers and professors are experiencing in the education system, researchers are also developing and learning new ways to conduct research among a hypersensitive, racially tense health crisis. The sensitivity (and insensitivity) toward the humanity of people of color has swung the pendulum of social justice to extremes that remind us of our historic and systemic racist institutional intentions that have resulted in extreme educational inequities. The same considerations that educators must take in planning a culturally responsive lesson and executing an engaging student learning experience reveal similarities to the nuances researchers have to plan around strategically when designing research methodologies.

I came to realize that my pedagogical approach as a former K-12 public school teacher using culturally responsive teaching (Hammond, 2014) could also be applied to my role as a researcher who was framing an inquiry study in critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) emphasizes culturally relevant teaching values, characterized by framing learning within the context, culture, and perspective of ethnically diverse student populations. These same factors would be taken into consideration when framing a study to research participants and designing data-gathering tools. To develop a methodological approach to researching the life narratives

of Black Male Teachers (BMTs) that honors the knowledge and dignity of their racial experience in K-12 public education, I focused on three major phases of my research process to integrate humanizing strategies as a response to the current challenging predicament that forces us to value the humanity of all people: Inquiry Frameworks, Design Data Collection, and Data Analysis which includes the interpretation of the data and how it is communicated.

This empirical research study explored how life circumstances, including education, impacted retention decisions among BMTs who graduated from Morehouse College. This chapter describes the relational inquiry approach and humanizing method design used to understand the lived experiences of alumni from the college. In addition, it explains the participant selection process, including the strategic criteria for individuals interviewed and surveyed, along with digital tools used to gather and analyze data. The study positions the researcher and alumni participants as experts of their own stories by employing life history narratives, relational inquiry, and mixed-methods approaches to gather as well as interpret data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), while at the same time interrogating me as the researcher, who is in the focal demographic and who has varying degrees of relational proximity to the study participants. These varying levels of relational proximity called for the exploration of ethical responsibilities among researcher, participants as the unit of care, and Morehouse College.

Ellis (2007) posed the question, “What are our ethical responsibilities toward intimate others who are implicated in the stories we write about ourselves?” (p. 5) and, thus, pushed this study to deconstruct the motives and experiences of a researcher who is also a participant in the study in order to integrate self-reflective sense making in relation

to the stories of the selected participants who were positioned to share their trials and tribulations, strategies, and successes.

Intentionality of Research Goals

This study was informed by participatory action research (PAR), which has been defined as a combination of research, education, and action (Hall, 1985). This aspect of the research study was included to explicitly develop and acknowledge the intentionality of the research goals so that it may be considered valid for the development and progress of the Morehouse undergraduate education program. The following research goals were explained to each participant during the interview process to show full transparency of the study:

1. contextualize the decision to remain a teacher as it relates to life circumstances of Morehouse College alumni;
2. generate data that can be used to support the development of the college curriculum and professional development related to the unique experience of Black Male Teachers; and
3. honor and highlight the service and impact of Morehouse alumni as teachers in the public-school system.

Brydon-Miller's (2000) work on PAR underscored the disposition of critical theorists as related to the generating of purposeful knowledge who proposed "that knowledge generation is not limited to the boundaries established by positivism and suggest[ed] that both interpretive and critical approaches to the practice of knowledge generation are also legitimate ways of approaching the research process" (p. 78).

The aim of this study was to be both collaborative and rigorous in the analysis of Morehouse alumni narratives. The role of the researcher participant called for this study to both interrogate bias and leverage deeply formed relationships. This involved both the college and alumni associations' attempts to create a third space of collaborative research honoring all voices and challenging all singular identifiers to explain the self-motivation of those interviewed. This can only be achieved through intentionality, with drawing a line between relationship and research while recognizing that one allows the other to yield an authentic and transparent analysis.

Researcher-Participant Positionality

My choice to engage in this life history research stemmed directly from my role and positionality both as an alumnus of Morehouse College as well as a former teacher in the K-12 public school system. My perspective toward this topic was also situated within the context of an educator who had a negative K-12 public school experience, which resulted in a disdain and cynicism toward formal structures of education like the classroom. However, my experience at Morehouse College introduced a new perspective of education. Morehouse College profoundly influenced my interest in studying the development of the Black male educator. My awareness of the Black male experience became very clear during my undergraduate time as I found and interacted with so many different types of Black men. Stereotypes that were enforced through media and popular culture no longer penetrated my psyche, regardless of the number of Black men I was told were in jail.

At Morehouse College, we became the “counter-statistic” to all that was being portrayed in the news and media. This idea of being the “counter-statistic,” which means

to display in social actions a rarely highlighted experience and mindset of Black men, is extremely important regarding my motivation to give a voice to K-12 public school teachers who graduated from Morehouse College. Focusing on this elite group of educated Black men mirrors the respect and admiration that W. E. B. Du Bois (2017) had toward the men of his time whom he described as a “Revolutionary group of distinguished Negroes...persons of marked ability, leaders of a Talented Tenth, standing conspicuously among the best of their time” (p. 37).

Humanizing Method Design

This study sought to find explicit humanizing theories and research approaches that would support the unpacking of life narratives from Morehouse College alumni. Some of these research approaches included the work of Jason Irizzary (2011) with PAR, where representatives from a specific population participate as “co-researchers” utilizing qualitative and quantitative research. Another humanizing methodology explored was Feminist Research Methods (Tolman et al., 2000) and their belief that gender is a primary category of experience and is available for analysis. Jill Moorawski wrote that this approach to research “accommodates gender as a central analytic category” (Tolman et al., 2000, p. 57). However, the research approach that was chosen was designed to stretch and address the humanizing gender experience of BMTs as well as the participatory nature of my positionality as someone who meets the demographic requirements of the desired population under research.

Humanizing Methodologies assert the notion that historical methods of research are colonial in nature and approach (Smith, 2012). Considering the colonial experience

that Black men have faced historically and presently, I felt the need to incorporate explicit humanizing tools to combat this ingrained dehumanizing mindset of viewing research participants as subjects in a social experiment. Dr. Lindsay Pérez Huber, Associate Professor in Social and Cultural Analysis of Education at California State University in Long Beach, emphasized how humanizing methodologies go beyond ethical research expectations and extend to think about the sociohistorical contexts and oppression through institutional structures that facilitate the experiences of ostracized groups in research approaches and practices (Smith, 2012).

Relational Inquiry Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

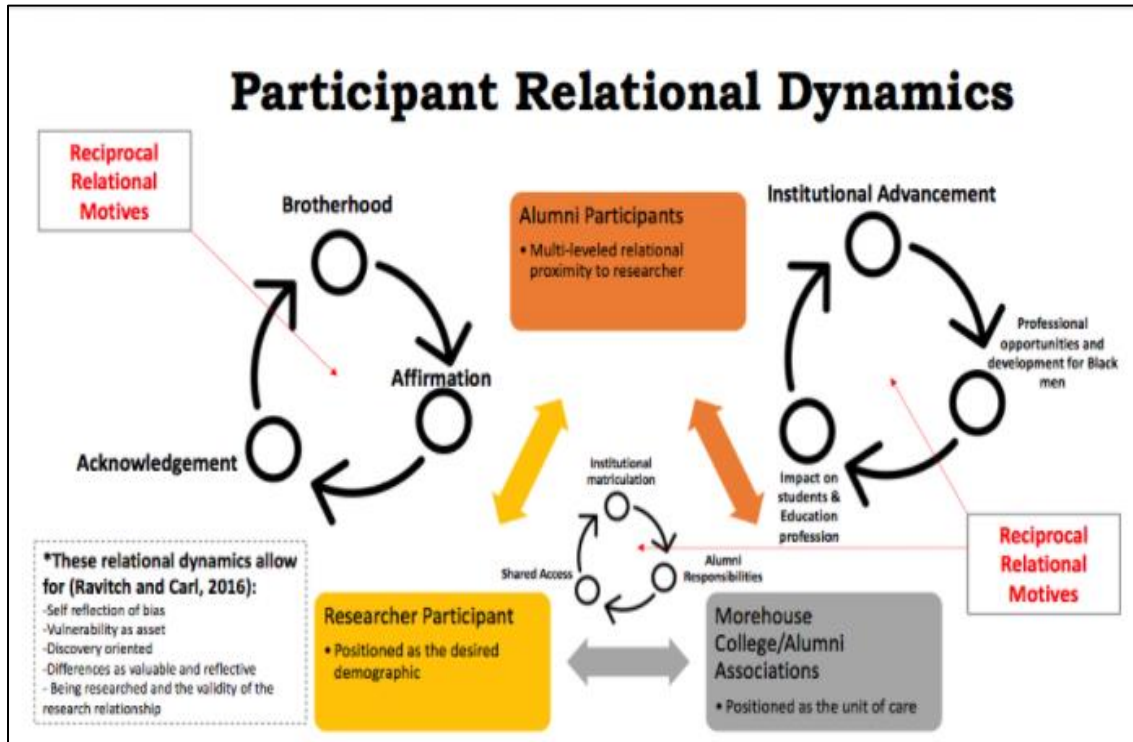
Similar to how nurses attempt to understand patients they treat in order to alleviate their pain through recognition and deep listening to their narratives and help patients unpack the decisions that led to a specific condition, this study employed relational inquiry to understand the teacher career trajectories for alumni of Morehouse College. While this study did not position BMTs who graduated from Morehouse College as sick patients—quite the contrary as it pointed to a system that tries to pathologize them—it did recognize that they have had to endure a uniquely complex journey to educate students in this country which can cause trauma, anxiety, and discouragement as related to continuing within the capacity of a classroom teacher (Madkins, 2011). Therefore, this study was anchored in a relational inquiry stance approach to research to bring depth to the data gathered by the researcher and from the researcher.

Relational inquiry refers to how practitioners “develop a deeper understanding of patient suffering through building a therapeutic and trustworthy relationship, active

listening, focusing on the details, and engaging in broad and situation specific inquiries to understand the patient's narrative of suffering" (Younas, 2020, p. 935). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016) and Brydon-Miller (2000), a relational approach to research, in particular "Participatory Action Research" (Brydon-Miller, 2000, p. 77), derives from feminist research methodologies. These methods seek to explore and explain how relational aspects of the research process relate to and address the issue of "power, identity and the need to contextualize interaction and data" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 344). The need to address power and/in identity and to leverage the relational dynamics of the interconnected participants called for a uniquely designed methodology that honors the voice and relationships between researcher and research. This research used a custom-designed framework of "Relational Inquiry Mixed Methodology" (RIMM) to understand the teaching trajectories of Morehouse alumni.

This approach set up the framework for the data collection to interrogate the relational dynamics of participants in order to understand this unresearched body of Black male educators. Figure 3 below describes the triangulation of the relational dynamics in this study as well as the reciprocal relational motives that are at play during the gathering of data. The circles represent possible motives that could be shared by multiple participants in the study. The colored arrows indicate the specific relationship being recognized, and the black arrows represent a constant acknowledgment of the influence of personal bias in the data collection process to use vulnerability as an asset and self-reflection as an embedded routine.

Figure 3. *Participant Positionality*



Participant Relational Dynamics in this study refers to the interrelated relationships between the researcher participant, Morehouse Alumni participants (who have multileveled relationships with the researcher-participant), and Morehouse College as an institution (and the affiliate alumni associations) positioned as the unit of care that acts as the intersection between relationships.

This relational research design highlighted the varying degrees of relationship and motives among the participants, allowing for a/n authenticity of relationships between the researcher as a participant and the alumni participants being researched, as well as a receptive sensibility and a critical approach to reciprocity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Reciprocity played a catalytic role in the research, particularly as it relates to the motives that permeate the participants of the study. This is expressed in Reciprocal Relational

Motives, which are motives that are shared by the research participants and initiate a relational space of vulnerability used for “reciprocal transformation” (Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 345) through discovery-oriented self-reflection of bias, identity, and disposition. These motives also allowed greater access to this under-researched population of teachers as well as the researcher participant, providing intimate insight into formative memories, rationalization of major decisions, impactful relationships, and deep personal opinions on the nature of being a BMT who graduated from a college designed to develop Black male leaders.

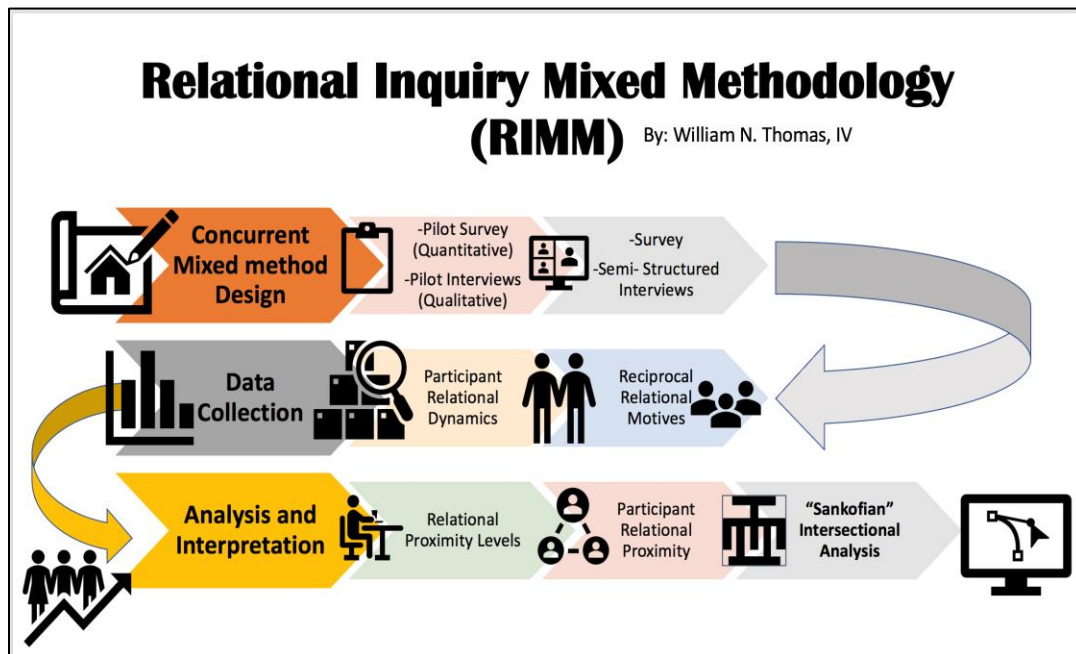
The participant relational dynamics model provided the ability to contextualize the data within interpersonal relationships between the research participant, alumni participants, alumni associations, and the college itself. While levels of relational motives vary, they reciprocate among the participants and are enacted, negotiated, and leveraged in the research process. For example, between the researcher participant and alumni participant, both confront feelings and emotions related to the acknowledgment of being an educator who graduated from Morehouse College as well as the affirmation that they chose a profession that contributes positively to society. In addition, the unbroken legacy of brotherhood that Morehouse has cultivated in its alumni was consistently being leveraged during the study for self-reflection and gathering authentic data through life history narratives. This is taken up further in the Validity section of this chapter.

Relational Inquiry Mixed Methodology

The Relational Inquiry Mixed Methodology, or RIMM for short, is an emergent design framework that allowed the researcher participant to emphasize and foreground the importance of relationships in the design of the research and in data collection as well

as how the data were analyzed and interpreted. RIMM allowed the study to integrate the different forms of data in ways that supported a critical understanding of the implications that came from analyzing demographic data, alongside first-hand narrative data. Figure 4 shows the design sequence of the methodology, which includes an emphasis on the Concurrent Mixed Method Design, Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation.

Figure 4. *Methodological Design*



The concurrent mixed-methods design was used to implement seamlessly a short pilot study of the research tools in order to refine protocols to increase validity and participation. The simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data allowed the study to be conducted within a 9-month timeline during a global pandemic. The data from the pilot study were also integrated into the final analysis, with specific mention of pivots made to the protocols following the short pilot study. Schoonenboom

and Johnson (2017) reinforced that the purpose of mixed-methods research is to strive for “heightened knowledge and validity” (p. 110). The timing was a key factor in the design as there was a greater need to gather a large number of participants for the survey because it was being positioned as both a sampling tool to identify study participants as well as a way to establish a quantitative baseline for a demographic of teachers who have never been studied to be used in future research. This was the central reason why the study used a “concurrent” approach to recognize the integration of a pilot study, not only to refine the data collection tools but to also initiate the process of identifying alumni who have taught at least one full year as a public school teacher. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) advised that when “designing mixed methods study, it is usually helpful to include the word ‘concurrent’ or ‘sequential’ in the title of the study design; a complex design can be partially concurrent and partially sequential” (p. 113). The study design followed this advice—data were gathered concurrently but were sequential as related to when volunteer participants were asked to participate in interviews, while the survey employed a different tool to gather the demographic data of the alumni population in addition to sequential data analysis phases.

The concurrent element of the data collection design allowed for the ability to pilot a survey as well as interview protocols simultaneously, in addition to the actual data collection through semi-structured interviews, ethnographic archival social media data, and demographic information from a comparison-focused survey. Once the pilot survey and interview protocols were facilitated, data were analyzed, and data collection and analysis tools were refined before the bulk of the data collection occurred. This allowed

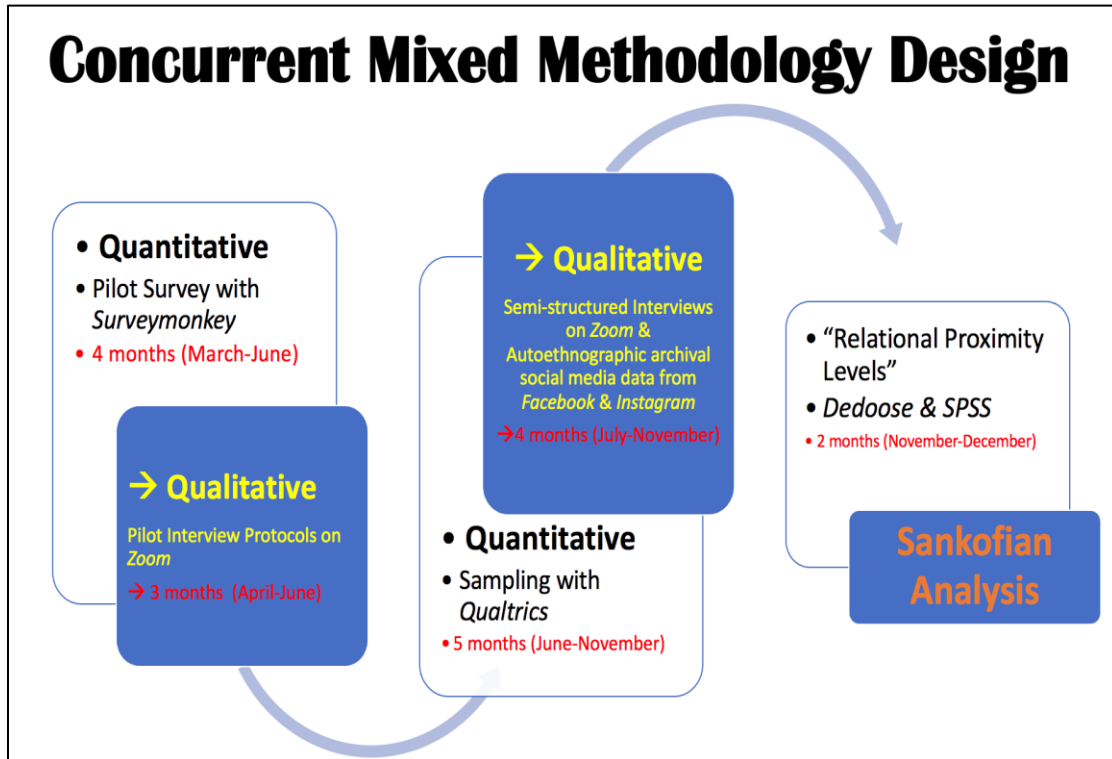
for a critical inquiry lens to anchor the discovery process, given the close familiarity that each participant had with Morehouse College and the education profession. RIMM utilizes the insights of both quantitative data and qualitative data, using a concurrent mixed-methods data collection design to minimize the limitations of using only one method, as well as to accommodate the unpredictable nature of conducting research during a global pandemic.

Concurrent Mixed-Methods Data Collection Design

The COVID-19 pandemic presented several challenges for doing this research that the concurrent mixed-methods supported. One major obstacle was the ability to schedule timely interviews with current and former educators who were adjusting to the new demands of a virtual teaching context and life in a pandemic. This seismic life shift caused many to adjust home and work routines, which prevented some from participating in the study. The concurrent design allowed adequate time to activate the relational networks that promoted, expanded, and increased participation in the study.

The inquiry nature of the research also influenced the design of the study as it contained built-in structures to facilitate both the exploration and refinement of research tools through the piloting of the protocols. This included a pilot survey that gathered initial data on the number of alumni who taught or were currently teaching, along with aforementioned demographic information and six pilot interviews with six alumni who had college or professional associations with the researcher participant. The duration of the pilot survey and interviews are indicated in Figure 5 and show both quantitative and qualitative data being gathered simultaneously.

Figure 5. *Data Collection Design*



The concurrent mixed-methods design was used to refine the data collection tools through a series of pilots of protocols. Figure 5 shows the design of the data collection starting in March of 2020 for a duration of 4 months to see the capacity of the tool to accommodate the study. While the survey was being shared, the researcher participant also conducted pilot interviews with six alumni whom he either knew from attending Morehouse or from working together at the same public school. The second section indicates the shift in the data collection tool used for the survey as well as when alumni from the survey were asked to volunteer to be interviewed. The last section shows the data interpretation that included multiple layers of data analysis, particularly as it relates to the negotiation of various power dynamics within each contextual narrative.

Participant Selection Criteria

Rationale for Criteria

This study was designed to gather in-depth, intimate data about the circumstances and contexts that impact K-12 teacher retention of Morehouse alumni. The research design used a mixed-methods approach to provide “a more complete understanding” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 17) of the research problem. Morehouse is one of three all-male liberal arts colleges in the United States, with Morehouse having the distinction of being the only one that is predominantly African American (Eaves, 2009). According to Eaves, “the international reputation and influence of Morehouse has grown immeasurably, and this reputation is largely due to its prominent alumni” (p. xvii), such as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., former US Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher, and famed theologian Howard Thurman.

These alumni, along with other alumni from Morehouse College, represent a small percent of the Black male population. However, being a K-12 public school teacher may not receive as much notoriety in the historical records of the school, although these alumni have been carrying on a long tradition of educating children in high-need areas. This was lifted up extensively in the introduction of this study, with the close historical analysis of Brawley (1917) and Jones (1967) and the limited recognition of public school teachers who graduated from the institution in their account of Morehouse’s history. The graduates of Morehouse College represent a small but powerful population of Black males who are trained through traditions, rituals, and norms to be leaders in whatever profession they choose (Eaves, 2009). This leadership training extends to those who choose to be K-12 teachers; however, their stories are rarely told. Because data have

never been data gathered around Morehouse alumni who become K-12 teachers, I as the researcher found it imperative to integrate quantitative implications to grasp the complexity of this exclusive demographic of Black male teachers.

Criteria and Tools for Quantitative Data Collection

All of the participants in this study were graduates of Morehouse College who have taught full-time in a K-12 public school or public charter school. Quantitative data were gathered using a digital survey that asked about general demographic and contact information of the alumni participants. The participants of this survey were all alumni of Morehouse College who have taught full-time at least one full year in a public or public charter school in the United States. This wide variation in teaching experience and status allowed for a wider range of alumni to be included in this study, which helped to create an inaugural baseline for the number of alumni who have taught and are currently teaching. The purpose of gathering the narratives of alumni who have left the profession and who are currently practicing teachers was to gain insight into the range and variation of factors that impact the decision to remain a teacher, particularly the circumstances that arise due to the intersection of human capital considerations and self-determination aspirations.

Criteria and Tools for Qualitative Data Collection

Along with these demographic data, the study engaged recorded narratives from semi-structured interviews with alumni who have had a minimum of 3 years of experience as a full-time teacher. The interview criteria of 3 years minimum of teaching were determined because this provided the opportunity to analyze a minimum of

two teacher retention decisions experienced by the alumni participant. These one-on-one semi-structured interviews with 22 alumni from Morehouse College were critical to provide deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized data that were analyzed in ways that help to produce individual and group counter-narratives to circulations of mythology and deficit that are foisted upon Black men generally and Black male teachers in particular.

Qualitative Data Collection

This study used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to gather life history narratives related to the teaching trajectories of Morehouse alumni. Interview questions were crafted to understand the context of their educational experiences as young men of color, their preparation for teaching in K-12 public or public charter schools, and their perceptions of self-motivation as graduates of Morehouse College. Maxwell (2013) stressed the importance of explicit comparison for identifying and assessing validity threats that guided the approach to the interviews so they can be strategically designed to compare specific times in each participant's life as he related them in his own emic terms (Maxwell, 2013) to his Morehouse experiences as well as to his experiences as a teacher.

Semi-Structured Interviews

These one-on-one, semi-structured interviews engaged alumni in narrating their experiences in ways that paid attention to multiple participant sensibilities. These interviews were designed to embody a holistic approach to each participant, which included four out of the six kinds of interview questions outlined by Ravitch and Carl (2016) to compare variations of the overlapping life experience. Examples of the kinds of

interview questions included: Experience and Behavior, Opinion and Values, Feelings and Knowledge. This was key in the design to elicit participants' memories of affective experiences as well as tacit knowledge and understandings of their experiences within broad macro-sociopolitical issues and trends. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually using the Zoom online platform, where they were recorded and digitally transcribed through the Otter.ai platform. All participants who completed the survey were invited to participate in the follow-up interviews if they fit the criterion of teaching a minimum of 3 years in the public school system. These in-depth relational inquiry interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, and each participant received the questions and consent form in advance to review in order to offer a space for deep reflection on their experience of being a teacher in a public school.

Pilot Study of Interview Protocols

For the pilot study, my researcher-participant's professional and social relationship with the six alumni participants was leveraged to secure immediate interviews, and the alumni either attended Morehouse at the same time or worked with me as a professional colleague. The interview questions, which were sent to each participant prior, were designed based on the conceptual framework that outlined the life continuum and milestone decisions made by alumni during their journey as K-12 public school teachers.

Although a predetermined list of questions was generated, the design of the semi-structured interviews elicited information from the alumni participant in a "conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are

important” (Longhurst, 2016, p. 103). The semi-structured design allowed for open responses in the alumni participants’ own words and avoided “yes or no” answers. Follow-up probing questions, along with my affirmations of similar experiences and agreement on issues related to being a Black male teacher who graduated from Morehouse College, were also facilitated in the interviews, which aligned with the relational nature of the research. The sequence of questions changed after the first pilot interview to gather focused data around immediate feelings of self-motivation prior to the participants’ reflections on their experience as a young male of color and a BMT.

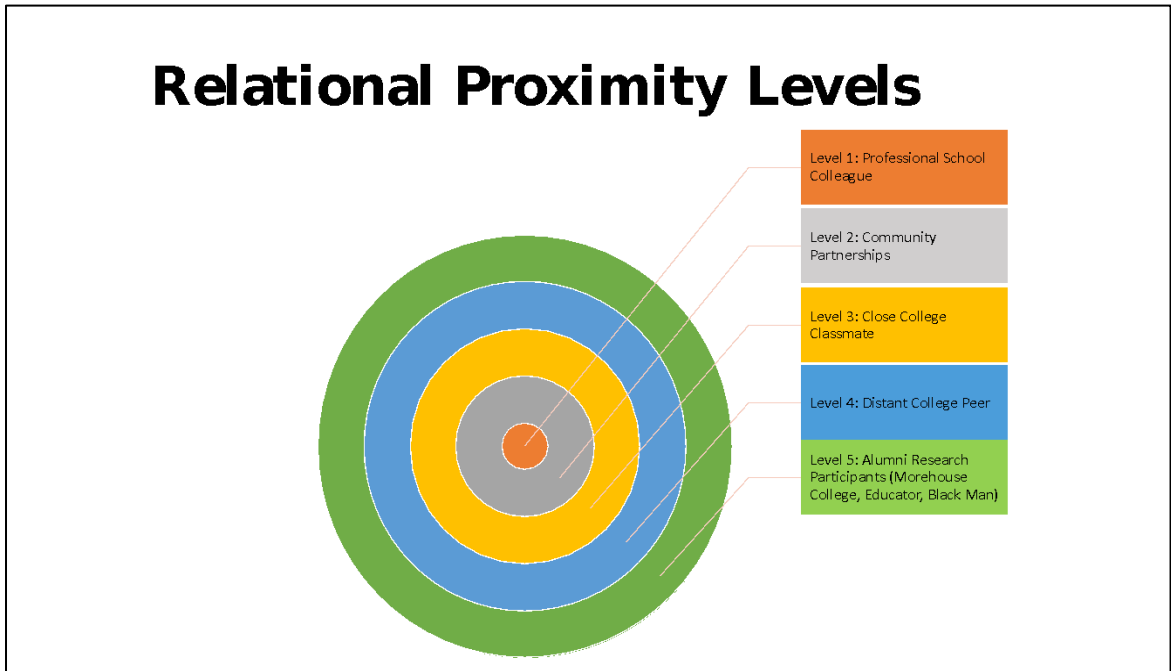
Qualitative Data Analysis

The analysis of the data followed—as it developed—a relational approach to the study by lifting up Participant Relational Proximity, a system of looking at the depth and familiarity of a relationship between the researcher-participant and the alumni participants. The Relational Proximity Level, found in Figure 6, is the unit of relational measurement based on a specific relational category which included:

1. professional school colleague,
2. community partner,
3. close college friend,
4. distant college peer, and
5. volunteer alumni participant.

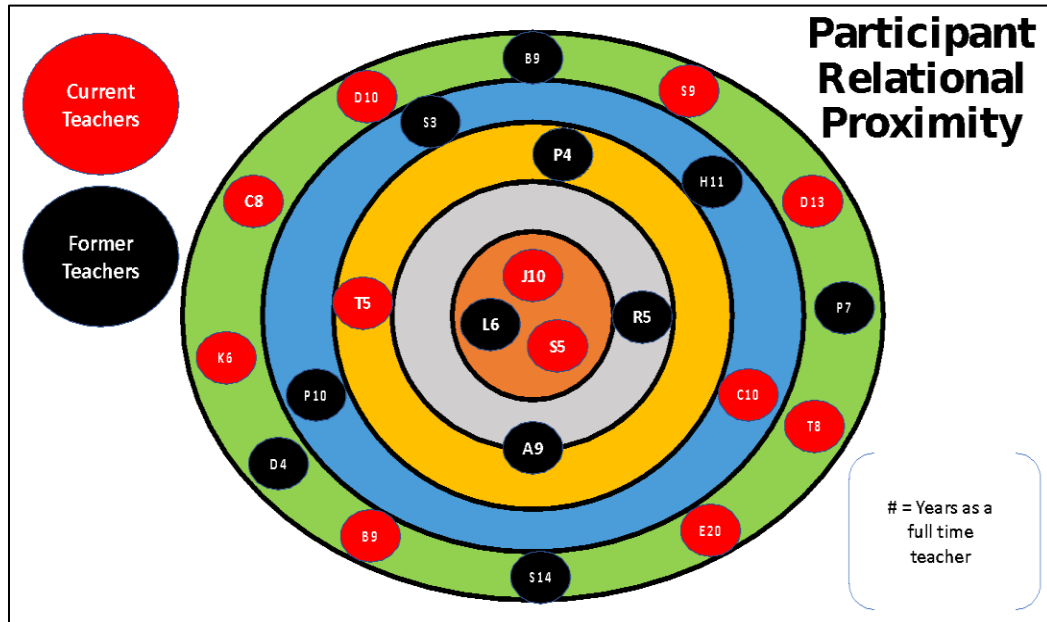
These various levels give keen insight into the contextual narrative of each participant in the semi-structured interview and survey. Survey and interview participants were coded to identify relational proximity to me and were analyzed for trends within each level.

Figure 6. *Positionality Key of Alumni Participants*



The alumni participants were distributed to each level and were coded based on the number of years they taught and their current teaching status. Figure 7 shows where the various alumni participants landed regarding Relational Proximity levels with the researcher-participant. The diagram also indicated that half of the alumni participants interviewed were volunteers who had no previous relationship with the researcher-participant. This acted as a visual approach for the researcher-participant to ensure validity and adequate scope of perspective in the data collected.

Figure 7. *Positionality of Alumni Participants to Researcher-Participant*



The qualitative data were analyzed using the online coding software Dedoose, with inductive and deductive codes to analyze the data. Codes were generated prior to the interviews based on themes and theories researched in the literature reviews that were centered on self-determination theory, human capital theory, and sociocultural theory. After the final interview was conducted, excerpts of the interviews were reviewed by a panel of doctoral students to give feedback and recommendations for additional codes. Reflective memos about initial reactions to the semi-structured interviews provided insight into the various relational proximities of the alumni participants. In addition, alpha-numeric codes were assigned to each alumni participant and used for direct references or quotes from volunteer alumni participants to protect the identities of the alumni who may share sensitive information about themselves for the young males of color they taught. These alpha-numeric codes are shown in Figure 7, and the digits for

each code represent the number of years each participant indicated he taught full-time as a public school teacher, which allowed for a focused teacher retention variable to be considered when analyzing the intersections of each narrative.

Quantitative Data Collection

This study used an electronic survey to sample 109 Morehouse alumni who have taught at least one full year as a K-12 public or public charter school teacher, which included the researcher-participant. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stressed the importance of “purposeful sampling” that provides a “context-rich and detailed account of specific populations and locations” (p. 128). The survey ensured that interview participants came from a variety of experiences and contexts. The survey asked participants to answer several questions related to their experience at Morehouse College, which allowed a compare-and-contrast approach to the demographic data related to their life history stories, which helped explain important similarities and differences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Purposeful sampling took place to engage a specific group of current and former BMTs who graduated from Morehouse College. Ravitch and Carl averred that this type of sampling “allows you to deliberately select individuals” (p. 128), helping researchers to answer research questions with fidelity to emic, or insider, language and concepts.

Tools for Quantitative Data Collection

Relational Inquiry was central from the beginning of the data-gathering process to the end of analysis and write-up. During the pilot study, a list of demographic information that could have implications on alumni teacher retention in K-12 schools was generated and input in a preliminary survey using the online platform Survey Monkey. This free platform also gave summative reports on the data but was limited in its ability

to convert to an Excel spreadsheet. The survey was shared on the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Relational inquiry methods were also applied to the strategic sampling of Morehouse alumni who would represent the population of current and former K-12 public school teachers. This particular sampling process used a “nonprobability method” that supported the inquiry stance design of the data collection (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Nonprobability methods of sampling supported the relational inquiry design of the study by involving participants who were available to me and/or selected by me (Naderifar et al., 2017, p. 2). This study specifically applied convenience sampling, which refers to the inclusion of the population available to the researcher.

Alumni Demographic Survey

In addition to sharing the survey link on social media, several emails were sent to Morehouse Alumni Chapter presidents in different cities. This type of sampling can also be described as a form of “snowball sampling,” which is applied when it is “difficult to access subjects with the target characteristics” (Naderifar et al., 2017, p. 2). Because no research has been done on this population of teachers, it was important to maximize the highest-leverage data collection strategies. The snowball method provided the researcher with “the opportunity to communicate better with the samples, as they are acquaintances of the first sample, and the first sample is linked to the researcher” (p. 2). Looking for trends in the participants’ common decisions as well as the unique contexts and circumstances alumni have experienced was a key aim when integrating quantitative data with qualitative data. This helped frame the contextual experiences of alumni, particularly when it came to their K-12 experiences as important while attending

Morehouse, because it forced the researcher-participant to use the quantitative data sources of inquiry to interrogate the qualitative data with a higher level of rigor while also staying consistent with mixed-methods approaches to research. Information gathered in the survey included: Name, Email, Graduation Year, Hometown, Number of Years as a full-time teacher, Location where alumni have taught, Status as a teacher, and Whether or not they have shared their teaching experience or opinions on social media.

Variables in Quantitative Analysis

The inquiry question for the quantitative data was, “What life factors (as it relates to being a K-12 student, Morehouse graduate and teacher) impact the length Morehouse alumni teach as well as their current status as a teacher?” Selected factors related to specific moments in their life history narratives included: Major, Region of hometown, Location of teaching experience, Subject taught, Grade level taught, and Teaching status. These factors were determined based on the conceptual framework, which identified milestone decisions along the life teaching trajectory of Morehouse alumni related to their time as young males of color in K-12 schools, their matriculation through Morehouse College, and their navigation within the education profession as a teacher. The survey data were analyzed using SPSS to produce descriptive statistics for different variables. The analysis engaged personal memos which I wrote that summarized data gathered at various points of the study as well as reflected on the global pandemic context and relational inquiry process of data gathering.

Autoethnographic Self-Study

As I, the researcher-participant, was positioned within the desired demographic of the study, I conducted an ethnographic self-study to give a more intimate look at the

day-to-day experience of BMTs through the lens of social media. This self-study was also designed so that I could improve the practice of supporting BMTs in public schools by looking at various situations that expressed levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. LaBoskey (2004) described the method of self-study as improvement-aimed, employing multiple qualitative methods.

The self-study data collection consisted of an interview of me, as researcher-participant, being interviewed by a peer and engaging in reflective writing using identical questions given to the alumni participants and social media posts generated during the time the researcher-participant was a teacher. The use of social media as a means of understanding values, motivations, and variables that impact decisions helped promote ideologies and learning about issues related to education (White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). This study gathered, from the researcher-participant, social media posts from Facebook and Instagram during the years of teaching (2006-2019) that reflected the various factors impacting BMT retention. Mapping the social media posts proved to be useful for collecting contextual and baseline data that could be used in a variety of ways, including to “help create a foundation for community engagement and ownership” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 176), particularly as related to reflecting on one’s teaching experience and sharing best practices. The generative process of reviewing existing, relevant, and contextual documents is an essential component of data collection, particularly when it comes to qualitative research that has phenomenological leanings and a narrative lens on the ways people tell their stories (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). These deep, personal reflections of teaching and being a teacher that were captured on social media act as a crucial resource of context and history in understanding the expressed moments

that could have influenced my own teacher retention. The sequence of data collection for the social media archival data was:

1. screenshot all Facebook and Instagram posts during teaching years when the social media platform was used (2007-2012 and 2017-2019);
2. place data in both Dedoose for coding and Google Slides in case Dedoose is unavailable;
3. use posts with the same codes being used for the semi-structured interviews;
4. choose posts that involved a self-reflection of the context of the posts and the connections it had to self-motivation;
5. write a short memo after analyzing each year to summarize major themes revealed; and
6. write a final memo analyzing the intersection of self-motivation, professional development, and young males of color integrating findings from researcher-participant interview and leadership study analysis.

Autoethnographic Data Analysis

The social media posts were then categorized based on the conceptual framework and codes developed during the data analysis portion of the study. The analysis of archival data strove to emphasize the importance of context and history, which can help in understanding the complexities of themes that are found in the research. Therefore, it acted as a window to the researcher-participant's individual thought process broadly and specifically in relation to teacher retention of Morehouse alumni. The one interview conducted with me, as a researcher-participant conducting the study, was used to elaborate and understand the context of the various social media posts. The interview

was coded based on themes that emerged from sorting the social media posts. These themes were then compared to alumni participants to verify any common experiences as a teacher that may impact the decision to remain a teacher. I also wrote memos that reflected on the focus themes related to the human capital and sociocultural decisions that were being made at the time of each post. These memos were designed to capture any change in motivation and frame them within the context of that school year.

Mixed-Methods Analysis

Intersectional Design

A sociocultural lens to develop both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks was used to organize the sense making of the critical race inquiry related to BMTs as well as to honor the life experiences of the participants who were sharing their stories. These sociocultural contexts influence an individual's complex identities which intersect in multiple social settings where oppressive power dynamics influence the motivation of critical life-altering decisions. The design of this study's data interpretation was anchored in Edwards and Esposito's (2020) intersectional approach to understanding popular culture. More particularly, this study adopted their approach to dominating forces that influence the decision and identities of oppressed people. Their research framed intersectional theory as "one of many paradigms offering the ability to name, displace, and re-write domination" (p. 26).

In reflection of this approach, I realized how dominating popular culture had influenced my perception of education and impacted the decisions I made, particularly as it related to my human capital value. My decision to attend Morehouse was due to the images that were placed in my psyche from the popular NBC sitcom *A Different World*,

which depicted an HBCU culture entrenched with school spirit, caring adults, and a diverse intersection of people from various sociocultural backgrounds. While this excited me and motivated me to attend college while in middle school, there was a movie entitled *Higher Learning* that depicted what university life could be like at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) that also had a profound impact on my perception of college culture. One scene, in which a student went to the top of a building and started shooting innocent students, still traumatizes me today. This caused me to pause in my consideration of attending a PWI and even develop a sense of paranoia when I visited these schools while living in Texas.

This led me to explore more how identities intersect in the research, particularly within social contexts that have explicit power structures that dominate how individuals interact. Popular culture is one dominating power structure that was analyzed in this study, along with dominating structures within educational contexts, family contexts, religious contexts, community contexts, and career contexts. Analyzing various contextual moments in the participants' lives gives a window on the multiple experiences that have influenced their identity and motivation as related to being a teacher. The intersectionality of context, identity, and power framed the perspective and subjectivities that would be used to design a method for analysis that is humanizing, rigorous, and culturally relevant to all participants in the study. Edwards and Esposito (2020) emphasized:

Given that domination is rooted in multiple forms of oppression, it is important to use a theoretical framework that is attendant to complexity when attempting to interpret it.... In one dimension of reality, intersectional analysis addresses the emergence or absence of Self. (p. 13)

To explicitly interrogate the oppressive power structures that influence the teacher retention decision, this study adopted Edwards and Esposito's (2020) three commitments, as outlined in their book *Intersectional Analysis as a Method to Analyze Popular Culture: Clarity in the Matrix* when taking an intersectional approach to research. These include rejecting additive approaches and addressing multiple categories of difference to power and to advance social justice. These three commitments form the cornerstone for an intentional and comprehensive data analysis design, which yielded a unique visual interpretation of both quantitative data and qualitative data. The central text used in this study opened the door for multilayered research experiences that integrate and intersect relationships and data analysis in a way that magnifies the negotiation of power to authenticate and validate the narratives and memories of participants.

The commitments of intersectional analysis. The first commitment that Edwards and Esposito (2020) advised when taking an intersectional approach to research is “rejecting additive approaches” (p. 44). They adamantly explained how approaching research analysis with a singular categorical lens dismisses that important intersections could be discovered when recognizing complex identities. It would be misleading to only analyze teacher motivation within a limited context of just race or gender. The researchers explained that “single-axis analysis is reductive and additive. It makes the incorrect assumption that we can understand oppression by reducing our analysis to a single category and then add each successive category until we create a picture of the social world” (p. 45). In essence, this approach allows the analysis to focus on how multiple memory markers of identity can help make sense of how they interact to form multiple and shifting experiences.

The second commitment is “addressing multiple categories of difference to power” (Edwards & Esposito, 2020, p. 45). This central focus on power in this study’s analysis derived from this commitment that looks beyond the politics of identity and interrogates the dominating power structures that mold identity and thus self-motivation. Edwards and Esposito suggested, “Naming a particular form of domination focuses your analysis in ways that offer a clear conceptualization of the complexities associated with intersectional realities” (p. 46). Although all the participants shared the common variables of being Morehouse graduates and current or former public school teachers, alumni participants were raised in different geographical locations, attended Morehouse at different points in U.S. history, and became teachers under very different life circumstances.

The third commitment with which this study aligned was the “advancing of social justice” (Edwards & Esposito, 2020, p. 47). The intrinsic drive that initiated this study was to improve the experience of future and current BMTs. I strove to find possible insight into how to recruit, retain, and develop BMTs so that more students, regardless of race or gender, have an opportunity to interact with a positive and intelligent Black man in a context where they can grow and learn. The data analysis examined funds of knowledge that point to ways to extend the discussion of BMTs in public school beyond reporting how they feel:

Because intersectionality is acutely in tune with the workings of power and privilege, it is uniquely positioned to move beyond how erasure makes one feel to what it actually does. Such an act clarifies constitutes social justice in a particular circumstance. (p. 48)

These three commitments began the process of a rigorous data analysis that encompassed both primary and secondary design dimensions (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017) for constructing mixed-methods research studies. However, data analysis was also influenced by culturally relevant data semiotics (Atkin, 2010) to map contextual memories of participants as well as by techniques in typology to develop a logic model that would narrowly emphasize the presence of the power dynamics in decisions expressed in the qualitative interviews.

Design Dimensions for Rigorous Mixed-Methods Analysis

To align the data analysis with clearly mixed methods that would authentically integrate the multiple layers of data, this study incorporated both primary and secondary design dimensions when developing the protocols for the data analysis (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017, p. 109). The primary dimensions included the purpose of the study, theoretical drive, timing, point of integration, typological vs. interactive design approach, planned vs. emergent design, and complexity. The secondary dimensions included phenomenon, social scientific theory, ideological drive, combination of sampling methods, degree of similarity or difference, type of implementation setting and validity criteria strategies. How these various dimensions were described in Schoonenboom and Johnson's research influenced the analysis design and can be seen in Table 1.

Five purposes of mixed-methods design. The research design was purposefully crafted to seek triangulation through convergence and corroboration of results from different methods of data collection, such as the survey, semi-structured interviews, and archival social media data. The design was complementarity in that it attempted to elaborate, illustrate, and clarify results from one method with the results from another

Table 1. *Dimensions Used in the Design of the Analysis*

Primary Dimensions	Description of Dimension (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017)	How It Was Integrated into the Study
Purpose	Rationale of mixing data; “multiple validities legitimation”	<u>Rationale:</u> Creation of baseline research data; Achieving multiple participation, social justice, and action; Determining what works for whom and the relevance/importance of context. <u>Strategies:</u> Triangulation (Survey-Interviews-Self-study); Complementarity (5 phases of data integration); Development, Initiation; Expansion (Power Dynamics Logic Model) (p. 111)
Theoretical drive	Data emphasis or data priority/lead	<u>Shorthand symbol:</u> QUAL →←quan
Timing	Concurrent data collection Sequential data analysis	Conversion design Dependence: qualitative analysis dependent on quantitative summaries (p. 114)
Point of Integration (POI)	Any point in a study where two or more research components are mixed or connected in some way	First analytical point of integration follows the completion of qualitative coding and memos; five total phases
Design Approach	Design typology	Typologies include convergent parallel design, embedded design, transformative design, fully integrated mixed designs Interactive: RIMM & Sankofian Analysis Emergent
Complexity	Layers of data integration	6 Phases of integration
Secondary Dimensions	Description of Dimension (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017)	Design Dimension Integration
Phenomenon	Problem or topic the study will be addressing and investigating	Disproportionate number of BMTs in public schools
Social scientific theory	Testing an existing theory or creating a new one	Adopt theories to frame focus of study (sociocultural, self-determination, human capital)
Ideological drive	Ideology influencing analysis design	Intersectionality
Degree of difference between participants	Demographic comparison of participants	Varying relational proximities; life circumstance variables and teacher retention variables
Implementation setting	Implementation of data collection	Virtual (online) semi-structured interviews
Degree of difference between methods	Sampling methods and tools	Varying tools; all interview participants completed the survey; creation of logic models to analyze power and motivation; creation of data visualization displays
Validity criteria strategies	Criteria and strategies will be used to address the defensibility of the study	Member checks; Positionality memos; Self-study

method; the design development used the results from one method to help inform the other, as seen in how the memory mapping continuum informed the design of the power dynamics logic model that would be used to draw connections between context, power structures, and self-motivation. The design focused on initiation with regard to embracing the search and discovery of paradox and contradiction as an opportunity to learn new

perspectives can be seen in the recasting of inquiry questions based on the summative quantitative data to report the results of the qualitative interviews. Finally, the design of this study's analysis looked to expand the range of inquiry by using different inquiry components, such as the patterns seen in memory paths to interrogate data further and gain deeper understanding of the motivational origins for remaining a teacher in a public school.

Sankofa Framing: Fetching Life History to Understand the Narrative Identity

The choice to utilize narrative stories as forms of data in this study was rooted in the researcher-participant's attempt to create a humanizing methodology that would honor and value the experience of this ostracized demographic of teachers. During the time when I was a middle school teacher, I used my assignment of narrative writing to learn the stories of the students I was teaching, and it acted as a meaningful ritual at the beginning of each school. It was assumed at the time that this was mainly to engage the students in stories that were both familiar and meaningful to them. However, it was later learned that this exercise was also an implicit process of data collection as a teacher, where the qualitative data that the students were sharing would be used to develop meaningful culturally responsive learning activities that would engage them in authentic tasks that would act as both windows to other worlds and mirrors of their own potential. I attempted to create these windows and mirrors for myself and for those sharing their life narratives with me as contributors to the new body of knowledge. This approach was taken in the development of the analysis framework, which was anchored by viewing the conceptual framework (Figure 1) as the mirror and theoretical framework as the window.

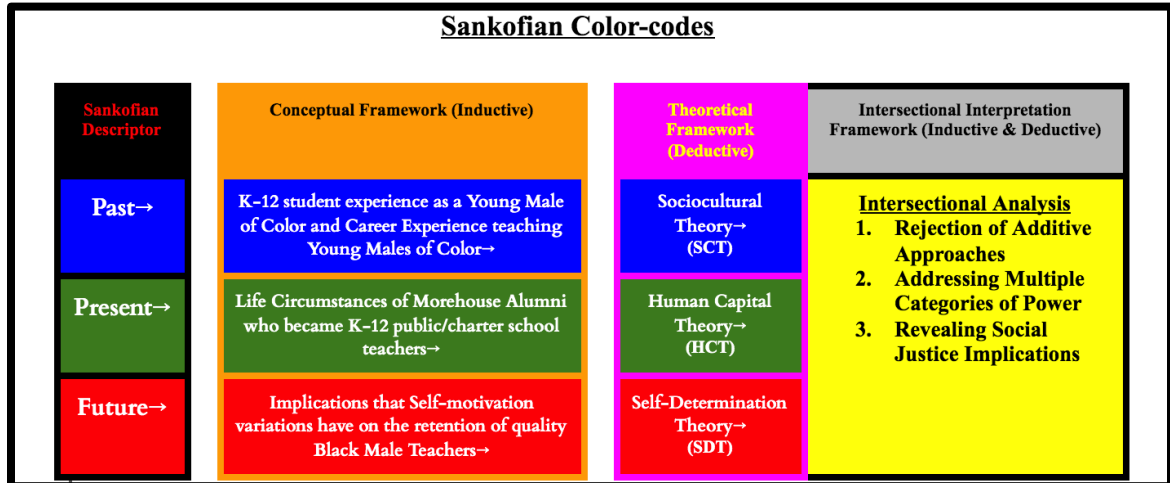
Looking both inward and outward on how to best process the narrative histories of alumni from Morehouse College, I looked to activate culturally relevant symbols and values that could assist in making sense of the data interpretation and lend a framework to communicate the new learning to others. When researching various approaches to analyze data, I discovered the narrative identity approach that McAdams and McLean (2013) defined as “a person’s internalized and evolving life story, integrating the constructed past and imaged future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose” (p. 233). This approach intrigued me because it allowed a researcher to value the subjective contextual funds of knowledge that each participant shared. One particular interest in this approach was how it interrogated the relationship between life stories and adaptations. These adaptations were a focus for this study as it investigated whether motive adaptations related to becoming and remaining a teacher as well as being driven by autonomous and/or controlled motivational variables. McAdams and McLean suggested that “narrators who find redemptive meanings in suffering and adversity, and who construct life stories that feature themes of personal agency and exploration, tend to enjoy higher levels of mental health, well-being and maturity” (p. 232). How these alumni made sense of these memories and explicitly or implicitly connected them to the motivation to remain a teacher was the main focus of this study.

While this study highlighted, utilized, and embraced the subjectivity of the methodology and the overall goals of the study, it was also important to create a clear contextually consistent lens as it related to the time periods of an individual’s unique memory. The design of the analysis adopted a version of life history research (Hagemaster,1992) that attempts to explore a person’s microhistorical experiences with

the intersection of human capital and self-determination within a macrohistorical framework that interrogates the overall approach the education system takes to professional development, self-motivation, and the experience of and with young males of color. Having a thorough sense of history and the origins of school tradition was a value that was emphasized while I attended Morehouse. In addition, it was taught that learning from one's rich history of success and defeat would springboard to understanding the trajectory of one's future and thus how to act in the present. This idea of past, present, and future resonated with me throughout the data collection process and I soon connected it to the African concept of Sankofa (sang-ko-fah).

According to W. Bruce Willis (1998) who wrote the book *The Adinkra Dictionary: A Visual Primer on the Language of Adinkra*, the Sankofa was a "symbol of the wisdom of learning from the past to build for the future" (p. 188). Willis explained that the literal translation into English is "go back to fetch it." The ancient West African symbol represented the spiritual mindset and cultural awakening of African people following their independence from European control, according to Willis (p. 189). More importantly, the symbol represented a culturally relevant concept that would allow the me as researcher-participant to push back against any possibilities of using a colonizing lens to make sense of participant memories. Figure 8 shows how the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used this "Sankofian" approach to color-coding the intersectional perspectives of a participant's past, present, and future using theories to frame the inductive and deductive findings related to the narratives.

Figure 8. *Sankofian Color-Codes for Analysis*



Those events indicated in blue emphasize a focus on their life history narrative, which could have implicit implications on their eventual decision to remain a teacher. The green section indicates life events that relate to the present life circumstances that involve negotiation of human capital value and financial stability. The final section which is indicated in red consists of moments in the narrative that indicate a significant credit was given for that memory toward their self-motivation.

These specific subjective memories were used to analyze trends in future decisions that BMTs might make based on specific life circumstances. The following section describes how these significant memories from the participants were visually mapped using West African adinkra symbols to represent this subjective contextualized wisdom from their path as a BMT who graduated from Morehouse College. Once these memories were mapped for each participant, including the researcher-participant, an analytical point of integration (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017, p. 115) took place

where the qualitative memories were quantified to interrogate the narratives within the intersectional contexts of human capital and self-determination theory.

Sankofian Analysis: Memory Paths

This study employed various analytical points of integration (POI) where the qualitative data were integrated into the quantitative data or vice versa. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) defined the analytical POI as “any point in a study where two or more research components are mixed or connected in some way” (p. 116). This POI in this study particularly referred to when data were processed and outputs were created that were used to build more data sets to integrate into the analysis phases. Details related to the phase, design, actions taken in the study, and data output can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. *Analytical Points of Integration*

POI Phase	Shorthand Label	Timing	Actions Taken in Study	Data Output
<u>Phase 1</u> (Pilot & Data Collection)	Quan + Qual	Concurrent (Mar. 2020- Nov. 2020)	*Demographic Survey conducted (included pilot) *Semi-Structured Interviews conducted (included pilot)	*Qualitative data of protocol pivots *Quantitative demographic baseline *Available sample size for the number of interviews
<u>Phase 2</u> (Data Processing, Sankofian Data visualization)	Qual→quan→←Qual	Sequential (Dec. 2020- Feb. 2021)	*Qualitative data are coded with deductive themes *Qualitative positionality memos are written *Qualitative data are mapped on Contextual Refraction Grid (CRG) using identifiers with quantitative value (%) *Quantitative summary of code frequency using Dedoose tool *Quantitative data of interview participants are mapped on CRG *Quantitative summary of memory paths based on qualitative data	*Common themes based on code frequency *Memos to be used for data validation *Graphic Organizer summaries *Memory Paths of each participant * Human Capital and Self-Determination % for each participant, including a total focal length % *Quantitative summary of trends in Memory Paths and lens depths

Table 2 (continued)

POI Phase	Shorthand Label	Timing	Actions Taken in Study	Data Output
Phase 3 (Data Processing, Sankofian Power Analysis)	Quan→qual→quan→←Qual	Sequential (Feb. 2021- Mar. 2021)	*Quantitative data are summarized with frequency tables using SPSS tool *Qualitative inquiry questions are developed based on quantitative summaries *Quantitative-based inquiry questions are answered in the findings portion of the study, based on CRGs, Refraction Depths, Power-Motivation Logic Model, and Memory Paths	*Quantitative descriptive summaries and frequency tables *Questions to be applied to Findings section of study *Qualitative summary of findings integrating quantitative and qualitative data
Phase 4 (Data Processing, Positionality Reflection)	Qual→Quan→Qual→quan→←Qual	Sequential (Mar. 2021- Apr. 2021)	*Qualitative social media archival data are coded with deductive themes *Quantitative summary of code frequency using Dedoose tool *Qualitative reflective memos were written to summarize posts based on year and theme frequency in quantitative summary	*Quantitative summary of common themes seen using Dedoose *Qualitative summary memos integrating quantitative summaries
Phase 5 (Relational Dynamics Analysis, Self-study integration)	Quan→←Qual	Sequential (Mar. 2021- Apr. 2021)	*Quantitative categorization is done with participants based on relational proximity *Qualitative summary is written based on power-motivation trends within each relational proximity level and findings from self-study interview and archival data	*Quantitative summary of interview and survey participant relational proximity level (%) *Qualitative reflection of positionality and trends within each proximity level
Phase 6 (Implications of Intersectional Analysis)	quan → ←QUAL	Sequential (Apr. 2021)	*Quantitative categorization of power-motivation data, based on explicit areas to advance social justice (recruitment, development, retention) *Qualitative summary is written based on power-motivation trends within each social justice category	*Quantitative summary of power-motivation patterns *Intersectional implications integrating quantitative and qualitative data from study

Table 2 shows six phases of mixed-methods integration where qualitative and quantitative data are processed and translated to be used in the analysis phases as well as to make adjustments to the data collection protocols, as seen in Phase 1. In these different phases, the qualitative and quantitative have different levels of emphasis. “Mixed methods notations provide shorthand labels and symbols that convey important aspects of mixed method research” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 235), and these shorthand symbols can be seen in the “shorthand label” column in Table 2, which indicates emphasis or priority on the quantitative or qualitative during the data processing or summary process.

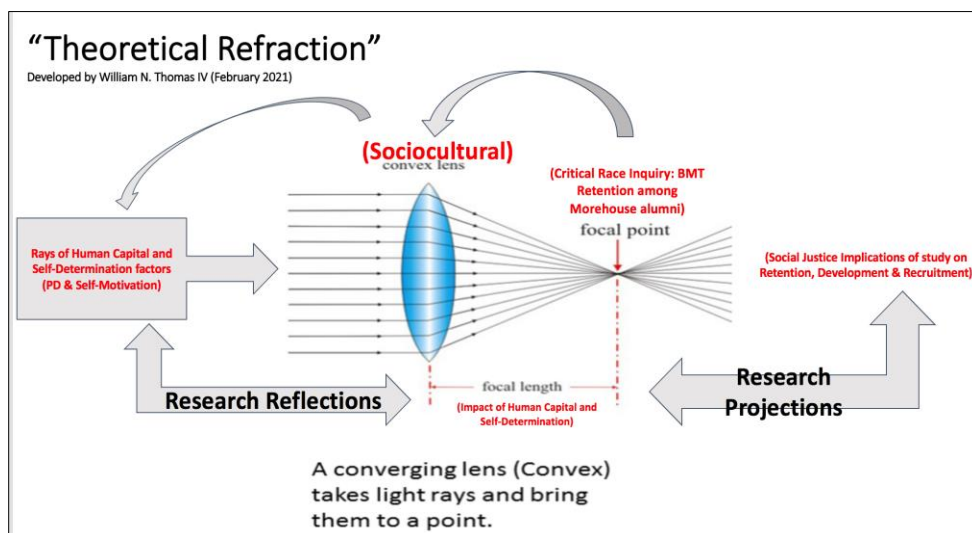
According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), Morse (1991) was the first to develop the notation that was used in this study to describe the data priority, order of operation, and complexity of design. The capitalization of the letters denotes which data set was prioritized or emphasized in the POI. The plus sign (+) indicates that the data were collected or processed concurrently. The arrow (→) indicates that there was a strategic sequence in either the processing, gathering, or summarizing of the data. Finally, parentheses () are used to indicate the division of different phases for each POI.

This particular section focuses on Phase 2, which is the coding, processing, and summarizing of the qualitative data. To better analyze patterns in the qualitative data, I decided to create a sociocultural contextual grid to organize the various trends in memories as related to specific parts of the participants’ lives. However, there was also a need to show the integration of theoretical frameworks as well as the ever-present variable of power as related specifically to race, gender, and class. Figure 9 outlines the Data Analysis Framework I used to better visualize an intersectional analysis of life

narratives. The framework drew parallels to how light refracts through a lens similar to how this study sought to shine “the light of human capital theory and self-determination theory” through a sociocultural lens to make sense of the participants’ self-motivation to remain a teacher.

This common lens served as a mechanism to integrate the intersections of human capital theory and self-determination theory, similar to convex lenses used in microscopes or magnifying glasses. Like a microscope or magnifying glass, this study strove to investigate the narratives in a way that was humanizing, relational, and rigorous. Another goal of the data analysis design was to ensure that the data were consistently aligned with the variables identified in the conceptual framework (Figure 1). To do this, the refraction metaphor was extended to include the focal length and focal point as a way to understand how the “theoretical light” of human capital theory and self-determination theory impact the decision to remain a teacher, which is represented in Figure 9 as the focal point.

Figure 9. *Data Analysis Framework*

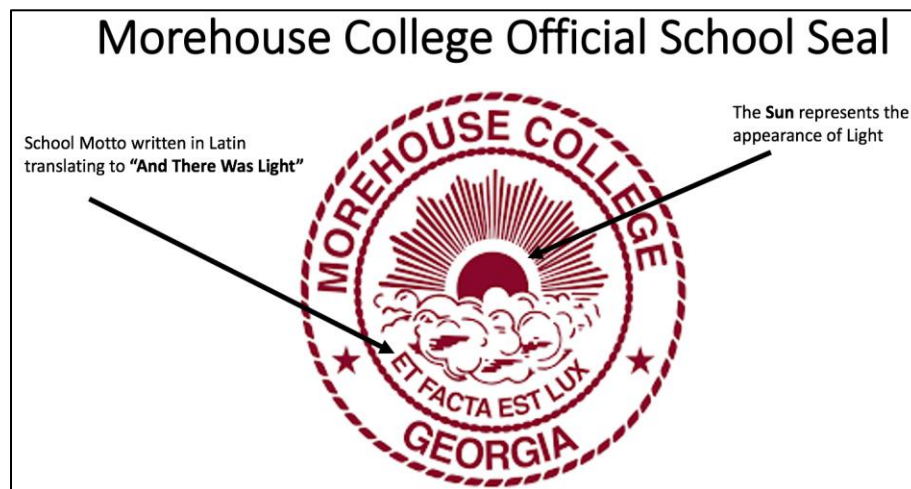


The metaphor of “light” within this Data Analysis Framework was also integrated due to its cultural relevance to the institution of Morehouse College. According to Jones (1967):

A perusal of the Atlanta Baptist College catalogue for the academic year 1895-96, with attention to faculty personnel, plant, and curriculum, reveals the degree of development which the College had reached on the eve of its thirtieth year of operation. It will be noted that here, the College motto “And There Was Light” appears for the first time. (p. 63)

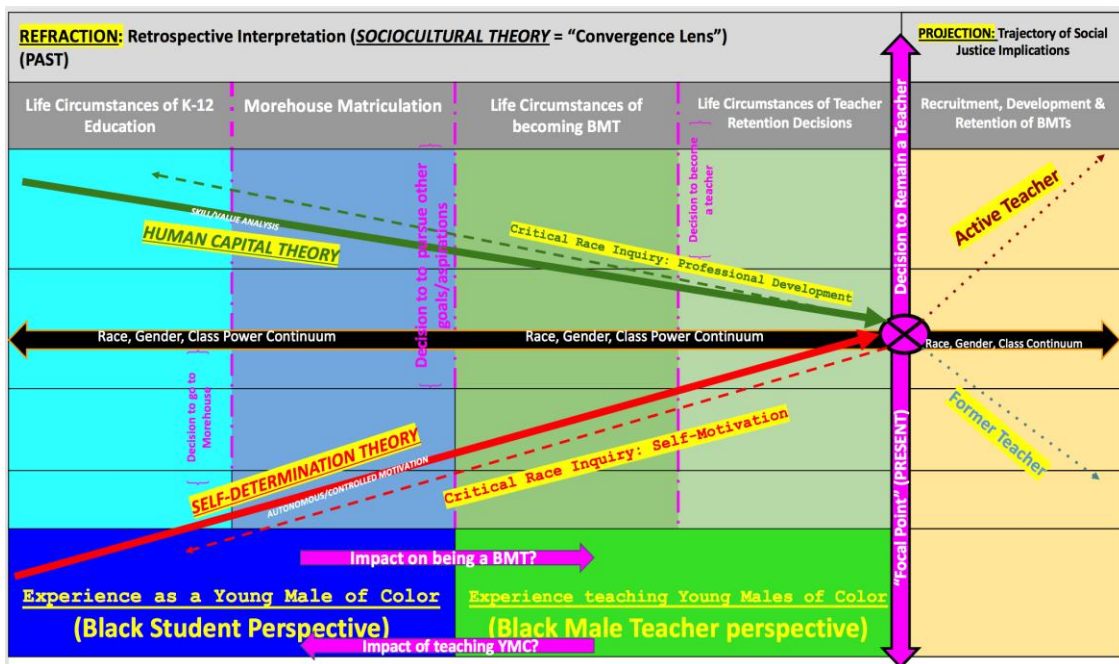
The image of the school logo in Figure 10 shows the Latin phrase “Et Facta Est Lux,” which translates into “And There Was Light.” There is also an image of a sun that represents this appearance of light from the individuals who light the way. Jones (1967) extended this light metaphor to the title of the book *A Candle in the Dark: A History of Morehouse College*. The institution also holds an annual gala where they recognize Morehouse alumni and other members of the community who have lit the way for those who are less fortunate or underserved.

Figure 10. *Morehouse College Official Seal*



The process of going back into the history of Morehouse College to find culturally relevant symbols was aligned with early notions of Sankofa. The tracking of memories correlated with the symbolic meaning of rediscovering one’s past as a “quest for knowledge” (Willis, 1998, p. 189) and thus motivated the visual interpretation of the intersectional concepts within the context of the study aims. Figure 11 shows the tool created on Microsoft PowerPoint, based on the Data Analysis Framework that was used to track memories as well as demographic identity intersections, in order to make sense of the participants’ unique path toward the decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 11. *Contextual Refraction Grid (CRG)*



Consistent with the Sankofian Color-Codes in Figure 11, the blue represents the sociocultural convex lens of experiences during a participant’s time as a young male of color. This time included experiences during their K-12 school and at Morehouse College. The green sections represent the time period of their life after the participant

graduated from college, where it is assumed there was a high frequency of human capital regulated decisions. The significant memories that are labeled in the CRG were analyzed on a time continuum, seen on the x-axis that focused on power dynamics the participant experienced during each designated time in his life. The pink dotted lines on the y-axis represent various milestone decisions that were indicated on the conceptual framework and used as priority indicators of motivation within the participant's narrative. The solid pink line that intersects with the power continuum, where the (X) within the circle is shown, represents the focus on the central decision to remain a teacher. The dotted green arrow represents the Sankofian process of memory-mapping wisdom diamonds that offer clues to the participant's retention decision as related to professional development. The solid green arrow represents the contextualization of the participant's professional development experience within a human capital framework or lens. The dotted red arrow represents the investigation of memories related to possible motivation to remain a teacher. The solid red arrow shines the light of the self-determination theory so that self-motivation is contextualized within categories of autonomous and/or controlled motivations. Finally, the dotted arrows found after the focal point represent the trajectory the participant is currently on as related to being a current or former teacher since he made his last teacher retention decision. This portion indicates whether the participant left the teaching profession and then returned. The next section explains how the contextualized memories from the interviews were mapped on the CRG using culturally responsive symbols that align with the wisdom needed for a specific power negotiation within a specific time in the participants' life.

Semiotics and Adinkra symbols. In the development of creating a data visualization tool that would express the patterns of life history memories of participants, it was important to the researcher-participant that symbols had cultural relevance and significance to those whose stories were being shared. Symbols can hold strong meanings but also act as directional identifiers in order to understand a concept. This study used symbols to help with the contextualization of the participants' narratives.

Culturally relevant symbols were chosen to offer deeper insight into the intersectional nature of the memory and how it is impacted by the time period in which it was identified. Feldman (1994) described semiotics as “fundamentally cultural in its approach” (p. 22) that studies cultural processes and processes of communication. The role of semiotics in developing the symbols for tracking the significant memories of the interview participants was framed using Peirce’s Sign Theory, which is defined as “an account of signification, representation, reference and meaning” (Atkin, 2010). This study adopted one major concept from this theory, which is the basic sign structure: sign, object, interpretant. According to Atkin (2010):

For the sake of simplicity, we can think of the sign as the signifier, for example, a written word, an utterance, smoke as a sign for fire etc. The object, on the other hand, is best thought of as whatever is signified, for example, the object to which the written or uttered word attaches, or the fire signified by the smoke. The interpretant, the most innovative and distinctive feature of Peirce’s account, is best thought of as the understanding that we have of the sign/object relation. (Atkin, 2010, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/peirce-semiotics/>)

This was the starting place for the construction of the culturally relevant symbol that has meanings that would relate to the specific stage in the life history continuum referenced in the conceptual framework (Figure 1) and Contextual Refraction Grid (Figure 11). The

signs, therefore, would have to relate to a specific contextual memory, regardless of the object.





The choice for a cultural typology that would guide the semiotic development of these contextual memory signs were West African adinkra symbols. These symbols derived from the Akan people of Ghana and were used in their funeral art (Willis, 1998). However, Willis (1998) described these symbols as being more than simply designs for funeral fashion:

These historic Akan symbols depict the panorama of cultural life parables, aphorism, proverbs, popular sayings, historical events, hairstyles, traits of animal behavior, or inanimate or man-made objects. Adinkra symbols reflect cultural mores, communal values, philosophical concepts, or the codes of conduct, and the social standards of the Akan people. . . . Nearly all of the designs have a visual relationship to the name given to them. The symbols on the cloth constitute a language that is multilayered. They convey culturally specific but universally accepted concepts on life and living. (p. 28)

The meanings of these multilayered symbols were then aligned with the time period contextualized in the participants' memory, where the theoretical light of human capital theory and self-determination theory intersects with the participants' self-motivation. The proverbs and literal definitions of the adinkra symbols were positioned as an "ancestral" fund of knowledge that related to the value or skill needed to matriculate through a particular stage, or "Life Lens," taking into consideration various power dynamics that arise when making decisions influenced by human capital and self-determination.

Figure 12 shows the typology for memories that are related to human capital negotiations, known in this study as "Human Capital Adinkras," or HCA. Each of these Adinkra symbols were aligned with the life history context for each "Convex Life Lens" based on their literal and symbolic meaning.

Figure 12. Refraction Key for Human Capital Adinkra Memories





Human Capital Adinkra Memories (HCA) KEY				
Symbol	Meaning	Convex Lens Depth (%)	Adinkra Memory	Convex Life Lens
	Woforo Dua Pa A <i>"When you climb a good tree"; symbol of support, cooperation and encouragement</i>	12.5%	W	YMC: K-12 Education Experience
	Hwe Mu Dua <i>"measuring stick"; symbol of examination of quality control</i>	12.5%	H	YMC: Morehouse College Experience
	Fihankra <i>"house/compound"; symbol of security and safety</i>	12.5%	F	BMT: Life circumstance becoming a teacher
	Aya <i>"Fern of endurance, resourcefulness"</i>	12.5%	A	BMT: Life circumstance of retention decision

Each of these sociocultural contextual lenses was also assigned a quantitative value to measure the possible magnitude of influence for each type of memory on the participant's decision to remain a teacher. An Adinkra memory "stamp" would be applied to the Contextual Refraction Grid (Figure 11) if the interview responses aligned with a rationale related to the theories being used in the investigation, human capital theory and self-determination theory. For example, if the participant recorded responses in the interview that related to motives influenced by the need to secure one's human capital, whether through standardized test scores or grades in school, the type of major that will yield the best job, or having the ability to support one's family, these specific memories were tracked based on the participant's emphasis, frequency, and time period (Convex Life Lens).

Figure 13 shows the Refraction Key for the Self-Determination Adinkras and their correlating meanings. These memories were related to sociocultural interactions that

influenced their identity and self-motivation to being a teacher and remaining a teacher. A participant would receive the Nsorma stamp in their CRG if they had a recorded memory in the interview related to an interaction that highly influenced their entry and retention in the teaching profession. This could be an inspirational teacher during their K-12 experience or a community service project they participated in while at Morehouse.

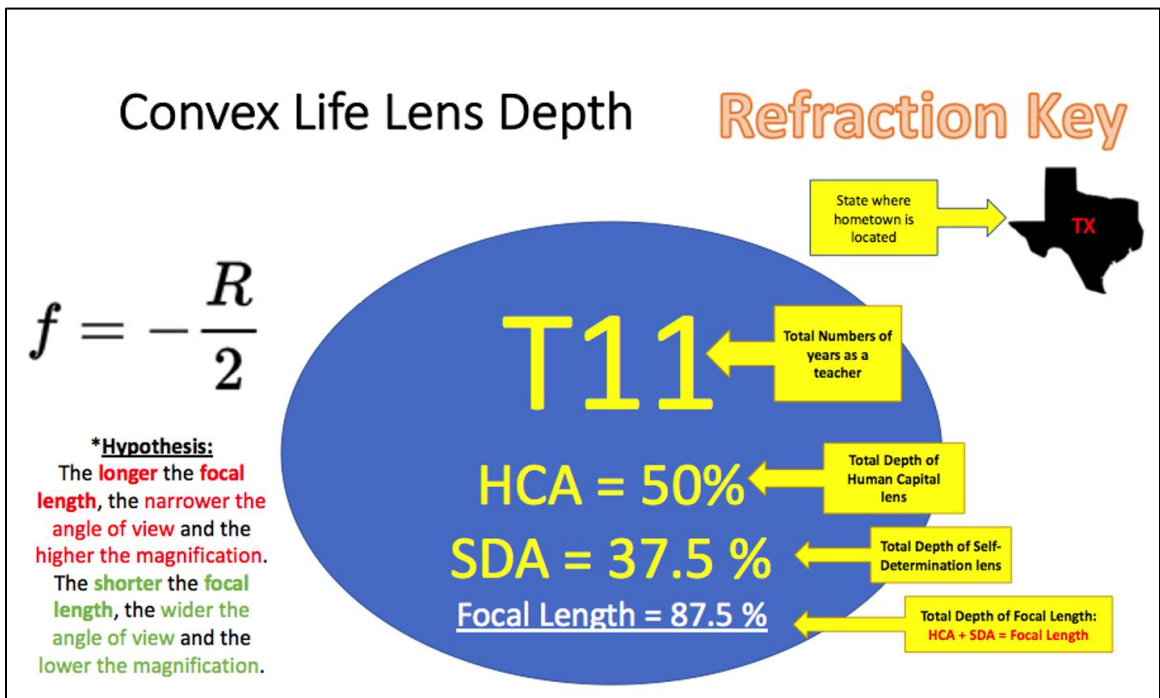
Figure 13. Refraction Key for Self-Determination Adinkra Memories

Self-Determination Adinkra Memories (SDA) KEY				
Symbol	Meaning	Convex Lens Depth (%)	Adinkra Memory	Convex Life Lens
	Nsoroma "child of the heavens", guardianship"	12.5%	N	YMC: K-12 Education Experience
	Mate Masie "What I hear, I keep; wisdom, knowledge"	12.5%	M	YMC: Morehouse College Experience
	Denkyem "adaptability"	12.5%	D	BMT: Life circumstance becoming a teacher
	Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo "Help me and let me help you; cooperation and interdependence"	12.5%	B	BMT: Life circumstance of retention decision

The "Adinkra Memory" column in Figure 13 represents the shorthand for the adinkra symbol, taking the first letter of its name. These letters also were used to identify any common paths that participants had, as well as variations. The quantitative values were also attached to the adinkra memories that are related to the self-determination theory. If a participant received all four stamps during the data analysis, then they would have a Self-Determination Depth of 50%. This represents a quantified view of the influence that the theoretical concepts had in their decision to remain a teacher. This total percent of Self-Determination Adinkra Memories plus the total percent (out of 50) of

Human Capital Adinkra Memories equals the total percent for the focal length. This focal length represents the amount of influence these two theoretical frameworks had in their life narrative as related to teacher retention. Figure 14 shows the “Convex Life Lens Refraction Key.” The alpha-numeric label represents the participants’ identification code, which also shows the number of years they taught in the public school system.

Figure 14. *Convex Life Lens Refraction Key*

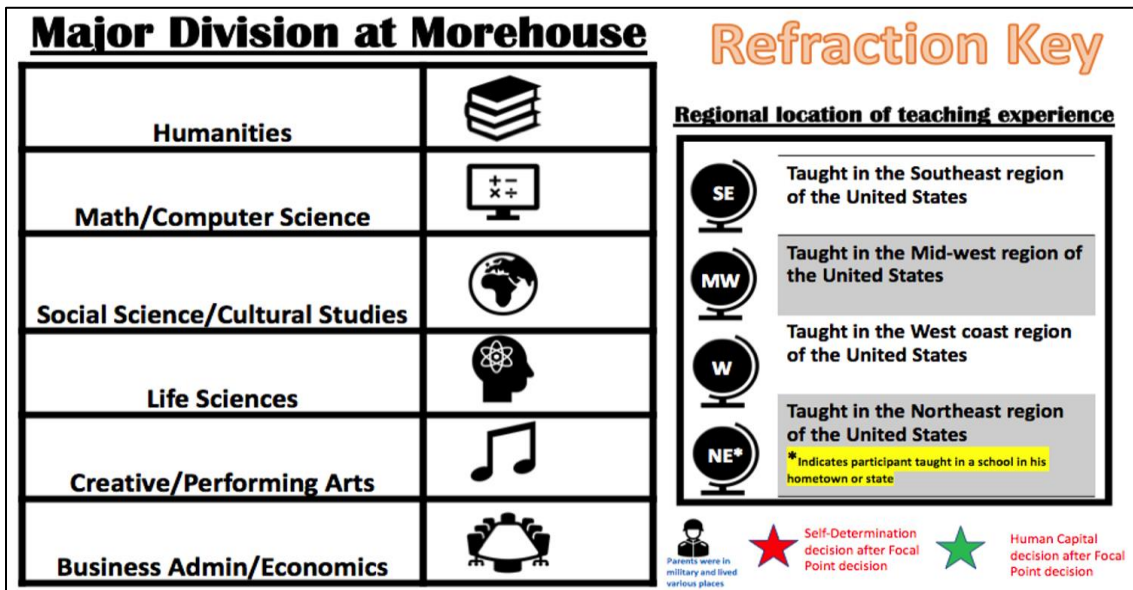


Based on the hypothesis indicated in Figure 14, there is higher magnification of the focal point when there is a longer focal length. In this study, that means that the more Adinkra memories are identified, the greater the understanding of the impact that human capital and self-determination events have had on their decision to remain a teacher. In addition to the memories indicated by aligned Adinkra symbols correlating with the time period of focus and theoretical framing, other symbols represent various elements of the

participants’ demographic quantitative data found in the study’s survey. These additional identity markers pushed consideration of the various intersections in relation to my own identity.

Figure 15 shows the additional factors that were also taken into consideration in the analysis such as: location where the participants taught, their major, whether they returned to their hometown to teach, and even symbols that indicate a change in motivation after the focal point decision.

Figure 15. *Major and Teaching Location Refraction Key*



Sankofian Analysis: Cross-cutting Power Dynamics

Edwards and Esposito (2020) stated there is a variety of articulations for how taking up power is applied to intersectional analysis; however, they noted the importance of naming the “domination forces” that influence the understanding of the narratives being shared (p. 46). Their study found that researchers in the field have developed ways

of interrogating power in studies that critique the analysis made at “anti-categorical and inter-categorical levels,” the idea that researchers “should neither deconstruct and reject social categories (anti-categorical) nor strategically adapt social categories in order to challenge inequality (inter-categorical)” (p. 46).

In an attempt to frame the power interrogation of data for this study using an anti-categorical/inter-categorical approach to research, I created a logic model to analyze the implications of power dynamics as related to a participant’s decision to remain a teacher. These power dynamics pushed me to consider both autonomous as well as controlled motivation in attempting to analyze the origins and influence of a specific memory and how it contributes to the understanding of why they chose to remain a teacher.

To create a logic model that would support this power interrogation, an inter-thematic structure was used wherein key concepts were established related to power and then used to offer a deeper understanding of the influence of power structures within their narratives as well, functioning as another data processing opportunity to quantify the qualitative data in order to identify trends within the thematic unit of analysis. An inter-thematic structure refers to key concepts that can be applied to all contexts under study, but have variations related to the type of possible power dynamics that influence self-motivation. These structures served as inter-contextual bridges between themes and time periods within a narrative under study. This approach is used by science educators in the United States who use the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS) and their pedagogical approach of Three-Dimensional Learning (National Research Council, 2013).

Three-Dimensional Learning is described by the National Research Council (2013) as a framework and mindset toward science education, where the teaching pedagogy acts as a body of knowledge and an evidence-based model and theory-building enterprise that continually extends, refines, and revises knowledge. This is similar to the inquiry and iterative nature of this dissertation study and serves as a body of knowledge as well as a framework and theory for integrating intersectional analysis within mixed-methods studies of self-motivation in ways that are culturally responsive.

One element of the Three-Dimensional Learning approach is “the seven cross-cutting concepts,” defined by the National Research Council (2013) as:

...concepts that bridge disciplinary boundaries, uniting core ideas throughout the fields of science and engineering. Their purpose is to help students deepen their understanding of the disciplinary core ideas (pp. 2 and 8) and develop a coherent and scientifically based view of the world. (p. 413)

These cross-cutting concepts function to help students better understand why they are developing certain science and engineering skills through practice. The concepts are distinct in their focus but interdisciplinary in their application, which was the goal of this study related to understanding how themes are connected to power structures that impact different types of motivation. The NGSS cross-cutting concepts have application across all science disciplines and have been applied to the logic model for this study. These concepts include: Patterns; Cause and effect; Scale, Proportion and quantity; Systems and system models; Energy and matter; Structure and function; Stability and change (National Research Council, 2013, p. 413). These cross-cutting concepts address the foundational layers of nature and inform the way humans attempt to understand them. For example:

...when students analyze and interpret data, they are often looking for patterns in observations, mathematical or visual. The practice of planning and carrying out an investigation is often aimed at identifying cause and effect relationships: If you poke or prod something, what will happen? The crosscutting concept of “systems and system models” is clearly related to the practice of developing and using models. (p. 414)

These concepts were adopted because of the fundamental nature of their descriptions and their ability to be interdisciplinary. In this study, it allowed theoretical analysis to be intercontextual. Figure 16 shows the logic model used to interrogate power dynamics within the narrative data. These “Powered Motivations” indicated in the logic model list possible origins for the power negotiations that may hold a dominating influence over the participants’ self-motivation within a Life Lens context.

Figure 16. *Sankofian Power Inquiry Logic Model*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self-Motivation	Regulation
Systems & Models (S&M)		Adinkrahene “power and authority”	Locus of Control	Political Risks	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Cause & Effect (C&E)		Nstewa “wealth”	Desired Outcomes	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Scale & Quantity (S&Q)		Damedame “intelligence, planning and strategy”	Distance and Money	Geography & Economics	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Structure & Function (S&F)		Euntummireku Denkyemmirik “unity among family members”	People and Institutions	Access	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Stability & Change (S&C)		Akoban “national defense”	Protection and Preparation	Security	Autonomous Motivation	Identified Regulation
Patterns (P&P)		Akoma Ntoaso “love, unity and brother/sisterhood”	Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	Social Identity	Autonomous Motivation	Integrated Regulation
Energy & Matter (E&M)		Akofena “courageous thought and action”	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness	Autonomous Motivation	Intrinsic Regulation

The orange and blue columns represent the themes that were interrogated more deeply within the responses of the participants. Responses were analyzed within both

motivational lenses to determine what power figures might be influencing the type of motivation. In addition, this logic model keeps consistent with the culturally relevant semiotic approach in using symbols to represent aspects of the conceptual model that should be rigorously interrogated. The Contextual Refraction Grid emphasizes the time periods and decisions made during certain time periods indicated on the conceptual framework (Figure 1). The Sankofian Power Inquiry Logic Model emphasizes self-motivation and the power figures that influence that self-motivation. Each cross-cutting concept was strategically aligned with the meaning and history of the Adinkra symbol.

For example, the Sankofian Power Inquiry (SPI) Tower of Stability and Change (S&C) within an NGSS science education context is applied to various science disciplines to connect the importance of understanding that:

...much of science deals with constructing explanations of how things change and how they remain stable. They quantify and model changes in systems over very short or very long periods of time. They see that some changes are irreversible and that negative feedback can stabilize a system, while positive feedback can destabilize it. They recognize that systems can be designed for greater or lesser stability. (National Research Council, 2013, p. 413)

This focus on how the variable of time can impact the stability and change of a system is applied to the cultural semiotic alignment with the adinkra symbol Akoben, which translates to “war horn” (Willis, 1998, p. 66) and is the symbol of readiness for war or call to action. Willis explained that “Because the defense of the town was a collective and voluntary act of the townspeople, the Akoben alerted the townspeople that an enemy was near or that they should assemble for a task for the common good” (p. 67).

This deep meaning contextualizes this power analysis around the need to be protected and prepared, as indicated by the actions of the Akoben who would prepare the

village for war. Therefore, this “Power Negotiation” reflected an autonomous motivation for security, which would in this case involve identified regulations by the participants of the interview. Here is where I interrogated the data to see what power figures or structures could possibly be influencing that specific motivation. In this case of the “Powered Negotiation” of “Security,” I could conclude that it was based on influential factors related to the participants’ parents, teachers, friends, or community’s religious values. These types of intersections were compared among the participants to identify possible trends in the power influence on a participant’s self-motivation to remain a teacher. This sequence of power analysis was used to understand the identified themes found in the interview data.

Social Justice Implications

One major commitment on which this study was grounded, based on Edwards and Esposito’s (2020) research on intersectional analysis, is the advancement of social justice. These authors suggested that this form of analysis is applied to solve problems as well as bring equity (p. 47). There are three areas I hope to bring a significant change to in this study as it relates to the experience of BMTs: recruitment, development, and retention. Bryan and Williams (2017) reminded us that:

Nationwide, school districts struggle to recruit and retain Black males to the teaching profession. As a result, the presence of Black male teachers is lacking in public schools, which impacts the overall student outcomes for all children, particularly Black boys. Such recruitment and retention become even worse at the early childhood level, which explains the paucity of Black male teachers who are early childhood educators. To date, only 2% of teachers are Black males, of which most are middle and high school teachers. (p. 209)

The memory mapping of these participants, particularly during the time they are young males of color, could possibly offer insight into entry points for schools and teacher

pathway programs to investigate as related to encouraging young males of color to pursue teaching as a career profession. Development of BMTs was another focus of this study that attempted to make sense of the negative and disjointed professional development experiences that some BMTs have endured during their time as public school teachers. According to Mosely (2018), “Understanding effective ways for Black teachers to convene professionally is important to creating schools where all of our students can be liberated from an inequitable system” (p. 2).

Finally, the central focus for this study addressed the departure of quality BMTs in public schools. This is particularly important because if this particular stage of the BMT experience is not addressed and systemized, then it devalues the efforts that were put to recruit and develop these men to be quality teachers. Krieg (2006) offered one argument that suggested that:

...instructors with marketable skills are likely to exit the teaching profession, leads many to believe that public schools are populated by teachers of mediocre talent. Yet, teachers with skills attractive to non-education employment may not be the best individuals in the classroom. (p. 13)

How leaders and school systems create equitable opportunities for Black men to be recruited, developed, and retained needs to be re-evaluated as the new educational landscape is slowly awakening to the realization that the school system has failed to give all students a diverse educational experience with diverse teachers.

Issues of Validity

Positionality Memos

The issue of validity for this study—in particular, how the researcher-participant gathered and interpreted the data—was addressed through the relational inquiry research

design which leveraged the intimate relationships that permeated the group of participants. The integration of a self-study allowed for clear distinctions between the researcher-participant's experience and the experience of the alumni participants.

Positionality Memos were also integrated into the analysis portion of the study to disclose the personal reflections of the researcher-participant as related to the intersection of common experiences. These took place after all interviews were completed following the coding process. The codifying of relational proximity levels of participants in both the survey and interviews highlighted the study's transparent design in confronting all possible doubts as to the participants' motives as well as how information was gathered and interpreted. This was applied to both the survey participants and the interview participants and was used to interrogate any unknown motives that might not have been identified in the relational dynamics model (Figure 3) within the context of their relationship with the researcher-participant.

Participant Validation

An additional layer of participant validation was included in this study which ensured that the narratives from the participants were accurate—in particular, the relational contextual analysis by the researcher-participant. These “member checks” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 197) included participants verifying the accuracy of statements as well as exploring the participants' thoughts on the interpretations of the data. Interview participants were sent a copy of the personal memo of their interview summarized by the researcher-participant, graphic organizer summaries of their interview, a copy of the video as well as the transcript, and a completed, personalized Contextualized Refraction Grid based on their interview responses.

Participants were then prompted in the email to complete the validation confirmation form created using *Qualtrics*. This form was used not only to validate that the interpretation was accurate, but also to provide an opportunity for the participant to offer any additional reflections on the analysis or the data shared.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Phase 1 Findings (Quant + Qual)

Phase One of this study focused on data collection through an online survey (Quan) and semi-structured interviews (Qual), which also included a short pilot study of the interview protocols and survey tools, all happening concurrently (+). During the pilot study, I wrote reflective memos to capture the progress of the survey and experience with interviewing participants virtually. Portions of these memos are shared in this section to show the development of my thinking in relation to identifying participants and early trends in the data. The following excerpt captures the beginning stages of the research study, a month after launching the pilot study:

On January 27, 2020, I created a survey on *Survey Monkey* to use as a pilot to test out the platform as well as see the response I would get if I promoted it on social media platforms such as *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*. After receiving feedback from my first draft of my proposal, I reached out to James Gaston, a member of the Washington, DC chapter of the Morehouse Alumni Association. He emailed Curtis Valentine, a well-known Morehouse educator in the Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia area, about my study on February 4th and on February 11th. Mr. Valentine responded saying, “Sure. I’m here to help.” Unfortunately, I was unable to respond to him immediately as I was stricken with a horrible back injury that resulted in me having to be admitted to the emergency room for a herniated spinal disc. I did not respond until February 27, where I emailed him a 1-page brief summary of the study, the study’s abstract, the link to the survey, and a brochure of the new Morehouse Center of Excellence in Education. I did not get any response from Mr. Valentine. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

Another interesting reflection captured in this memo was how volunteers were identified and invited to participate in this research study. One of the reciprocal relational motives emphasized in Figure 3 is this idea of “brotherhood.” In this excerpt, I learned that this promotion of the study could extend beyond online platforms:

While visiting my family in Washington, DC on March 7th, I met a Morehouse graduate at the *Dave & Busters* in Silver Spring, Maryland after wearing a Morehouse sweatshirt. The alumnus was Konrad Miles, '10, and mentioned that he had friends who decided to become teachers. I gave him my University of Pennsylvania business card and he emailed me back later on that week on March 10. I sent him a similar email to the one I sent Mr. Valentine so that he could forward it to other Morehouse alumni in education. That same day, he introduced me over email to Michael Payne, '10, who currently works in education in Michigan who asked if he could pass the survey on to others. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

After this exchange with a fellow Morehouse graduate, I was motivated to start utilizing relationships with other Morehouse graduates and affiliates of the school. I began a list of individuals who would prove to assist in finding participants and participating in the study themselves:

Inspired by the responsiveness of this fellow Morehouse alum, I decided to send emails directly to people who I felt might respond and complete the survey for me. The colleagues I emailed were: Jamille Jones (fraternity brother); Dr. Dimitri White (member of the DC Morehouse Alumni chapter); George Rice (mentor); Dr. Erica Edwards (professor at Wayne St. University, college friend); Dr. Christian Braneon (professor at Columbia University, NASA consultant); Lorne Simpson (Math teacher, former co-worker). Three out of the four eligible for the survey completed it and the others responded that they would share it with others. Majority of the alumni who completed the survey did it during this week (67%; 18 total) and the following week (26%; 7 total) after I shared the link on *Facebook* and *LinkedIn* on March 13th. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

In addition to the qualitative data gathered during the pilot study, there were also quantitative data showing who viewed the posts and who responded. Figure 17 shows the initial data captured by analytic software of Facebook and LinkedIn. Data highlighted in yellow indicate my researcher wonderings related to those viewing the survey post. These indicated possible social media groups and demographics of people to reach out to directly about the study.

Figure 17. *Quantitative Social Media Data from Pilot Study*

FACEBOOK: 546 total friends					
Location of Post (Group/Status update)	Date	Likes	Comments	Seen by	Shared
Personal Status Update	3/18/20	12	4	0	1
Group: Black Teachers Rock!	3/13/20	4	1	0	0
Group: Morehouse in Education	3/13/20	1	2	12	0
Group: Spelman & Morehouse	3/13/20	10	6	0	0
Group: Morehouse Fathers	3/13/20	7	0	0	0
Group: SpellHouse Educations	3/13/20	13	10	0	0
Group: BER! (Black Educators Rock!)	3/13/20	0	0	0	0

LinkedIn: Following 386 with 378 followers		
Date Posted	March 13	Viewer information
Views	334	8 works for DC Public Schools 4 work at Mastery Charter School 27 identify as a School Teacher (8%) 53 were in Washington, DC (16%) 15 were in Atlanta, GA area 12 were in the Texas area 11 New York City, NY area
Reactions	17	
Comments	6	
Reshares	5	

During the first round of data analysis in the pilot study, I found a variety of points that would prove to be a trend in the final data set. Some of these included how many of the participants taught multiple subjects in addition to having 5 or more years of teaching experience, which was the demographic of teachers I was looking to secure for the semi-structured interviews.

The following summarizes the quantitative findings based on a researcher reflective memo:

As of April 24, a total of 27 alumni from Morehouse College completed the survey. Majority of the participants were from the east coast (55%; 15 total) and taught either middle school (67%; 18 total), high school (59%; 16 total) or both. Only 22% of those who participated in the survey identified as teaching elementary students and less than half (30%; 8 total) are currently full-time teachers. I also found that most of the participants had taught in multiple cities around the country (59%; 16 total) as well as in multiple subjects/grades.

However, most participants taught Social Studies (33%; 9 total) with smaller amounts teaching Science (11%; 4 total) and Math (11% 3 total). The data also revealed that most of the participants graduated between 2001 and 2009 (63%; 17 total) and majored in subjects related to the Humanities (52%; 14 total). I also discovered that two of the participants majored in “Child Development,” which was not offered to my knowledge when I was attending Morehouse between the years of 2000 and 2004. Some other interesting outliers that I noticed included an alum who teaches Art and majored in African American History, an alum who was a Chinese teacher, and a class of 1976 alum who taught for over 20 years. Majority of the participants had five or more years as full-time teachers (78%; 21 total) giving me several possible candidates for the interview portion of the study. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

Survey Pivots

As a result of some of these early data, I made shifts to the survey, particularly when it came to the online tool. In addition, I reflected on the importance of follow-up emails as well as the different data processing abilities of Facebook versus LinkedIn. The following describes my thinking as it relates to pivots to the survey tool found in a reflective memo:

Using *Survey Monkey* was easy however it did not convert the data to an excel spreadsheet like a Google Form. I had to manually input the information in a separate spreadsheet where I analyzed the initial data. I was informed of a program called *Qualtrics* that may offer a better platform for gathering the data. I’m wondering if there is a way to create a custom dashboard where I can see live data through bar graphs and line graphs. Calculating the trends manually was time-consuming, so if this program was able to give me a view and even notifications when someone completes the survey, it would help me greatly in analyzing any new trends. I also noticed that when you don’t use dropdown or checked-boxes in surveys, it leaves the opportunity for possible typos which may alter the data analysis. However, I wonder if I should put ranges of experiences on that portion of the survey so as to keep that aspect somewhat general? One thing I did like about *Survey Monkey* was the fact it monitors how long, on average, participants took to complete the survey (2 minutes 25 seconds). My goal was to make sure that the survey did not take more than five minutes. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

Another difficult task I struggled with was the follow-up with potential participants of the study. This excerpt shows recognition of the health condition I was in during the time of data collection based on this reflective memo:

Although I had a medical emergency, I realize now the importance of following up immediately with emails related to the study. While I was able to post my survey link on the Morehouse Educators *Facebook* page, I did not get a response from Curtis Valentine who manages the group. I would have hoped that I would have been able to have a verbal conversation with him; however, the gap in communication might have caused my email to get pushed under others of higher priority. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

As related to gathering data using social media, I was surprised with the overwhelming response I received on LinkedIn regarding his survey. After noticing how active friends on LinkedIn were in sharing the post, it became a primary platform to share the study with others:

I was surprised by the amount of views that I received on LinkedIn versus *Facebook*. However I underestimated my professional network and the fact that I rarely post or respond to posts. While *Facebook* will still be a platform I use, I feel *LinkedIn* will offer more meaningful views and possible shares. I'm thinking of doing some videos to thank those participants and ask others to participate which I think will get more traction than just the link and one-pager. Specific time however needs to be allotted for analyzing social media data and generating activity so that followers will be more responsive through sharing and comments. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

One of the findings that proved to be a challenge throughout the study was identifying current teachers who were Morehouse graduates who could participate in the study. The following excerpt explains my thinking related to participant criteria for the semi-structured interviews:

Out of the 27 participants in the survey, there were only eight who were current teachers. I wonder if I should put together a separate one-pager that emphasizes the importance of their voice in the study. I wonder if there is another group online that I'm not tapping into that has current teachers who graduated from Morehouse. This also makes me think more about the diversity among the former

teachers who are going to be a part of the study. Since I will probably have more to choose from, I should think closely about the criteria I want for those particular participants. If I can secure the eight alumni or are currently for an interview, then I only find seven more to ensure that I have a balanced number of current and former teachers. (Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

The following indicate the action steps I reflected in a memo about the pilot study data:

1. Explore *Qualtrics* and create an update version of the survey.
2. Create a one-pager that encourages current teachers to complete the survey.
3. Schedule remainder pilot interviews by May 1.
4. Write Memo reflecting on pilot interview with Jason Hamer.
5. Determine best way to incorporate pilot survey data in proposal hearing.
6. Create a list of people to directly email the survey to.
7. Send Thank You Email to participants who completed the survey.
8. Get email addresses of alumni presidents so they can share the survey link.

(Reflection Memo, April 24, 2020)

After implementing the strategies that would address findings from the pilot survey, I began the bulk of the data collection during the summer and fall of 2020. The following reflection from September 17, 2020 shows my response to the strategic alumni to whom I reached out after analyzing the pilot study data:

After about five months of pushing the survey, I have been able to get 67 out of my 100 surveys completed by alumni who have taught or are currently teaching. I noticed a spike in survey participants after I reached out to the presidents of the various alumni chapters in various cities. While some of the emails bounced back, I was able to reach the chapter president in New York City who sent a chapter-wide email with my survey link and information about the study. Majority of the participants graduated in the 2000s (28) which is understandable since it was the decade in which I graduated. However, I saw an increase in alumni who graduated in the 90s after the email blast from the New York alumni chapter and was able to find 16 alumni who graduated right before the turn of the century. The interesting spread of alumni from different decades made me think of the various

public school reforms that were taking place when some of these alumni started teaching. It would be interesting to include in my interviews probing questions as it relates to the impact of these reforms and movements such as “A Nation at Risk,” NCLB, Race to the Top, Common Core Standards, and ESSA. Nearly a third (18) of the participants graduated in the last ten years which may have interesting implications on some of the education preparation opportunities Morehouse has developed through their various program offerings. (Reflection Memo, September 17, 2020)

This was also a point of the study where I had conducted several interviews and was gaining a perspective on the participants of the survey. The following reflections give clear insight into my perspectives and inquiries as the survey data were being collected in the later stages, based on this reflective memo:

I was surprised that more than half (51) of the participants had taught at least 5 years. I assumed that there would be more alumni who taught for a couple of years and then moved to leadership or another profession, but I was pleasantly surprised as this could give implications for the level of commitment Morehouse men have when they become a teacher in the public school system. A third of the participants (21) had 10+ years of teaching experience. However, there was still clear indication in the survey that more alumni leave the profession with 40 of the participants indicating that they are not currently a classroom teacher. One interesting note about these 40 alumni who indicated that they left the profession, 19 of them taught at least five years or more. I wonder if the difficulty to secure a substantial number of alumni who are currently teachers is a reflection of the transient nature of Black Male teachers within the profession. Looking at the 26 alumni who indicated that they were currently classroom teachers, 19 had five or more years of teaching experience. I wonder if it would be valuable to interview alumni who taught less than five years to see what factors impacted their decision. This may bring some insight on the short-lived career of alumni compared to those who stay 5+ years.

Undergraduate major. Data related to undergraduate majors revealed that the majority of the participants were Humanities majors (35), with 16 alumni indicating that they majored in a STEM subject. I wondered if there were education-focused classes or opportunities for those who had a Humanities major. In addition, I also wondered if the teachers who had STEM majors were a part of the NOYCE STEM initiative at the

school. One interesting outlier to explore were the 8 alumni who indicated that they majored in Early Childhood Development. This program was not highly publicized when I attended Morehouse and was not promoted on their school website.

Hometowns.

The demographic information on where alumni are from is one area, I would like to have a visual representation that shows alumni hometowns and what areas may have a culture of education that encourages young Black boys to enter the teaching profession. Nearly half of the participants (31) indicated that their hometown was found on the east coast with and a third (20) who were from the South. What is it about the experience in southern and east coast schools that may encourage Black boys to join the teaching profession later on in life? The data also indicated no one from the west coast of the country.

Grade band teaching experience.

One common stereotype that I have found is that most Black Male Teachers are found in the middle school and high school grades with a small group working as elementary school teachers. The survey results indicated a significantly large amount (29) of alumni who taught elementary grade students; however, the data did show a larger number of participants who taught middle school (38) and high school (35). Another interesting note is that nearly a third (20) of the alumni taught both middle school and high school showing the higher numbers in those specific grade bands.

Content focus as a teacher.

I was not surprised at how the data revealed that more than half (41) taught multiple content areas. With the majority of the participants having non-education majors, it would seem that they were able to secure their teaching jobs with credentials that were not always aligned to teacher certification requirements but went beyond the resume. While more than a third (24) of the participants were able to teach only one subject, many seem to have had to get positions as they become available. Nearly half of the participants (29) taught a STEM subject which was surprising as I have not come across many Black Male science or math teachers. Other subjects that were also taught by a good portion of the participants were English (22) and Social Studies (23). There was one alumnus who indicated they taught a foreign language and am wondering why there aren't more teachers in the world language department becoming teachers. I am interested in interviewing this alumnus who taught Chinese on multiple grade-levels.

Location of alumni teaching experience.

The survey revealed that the majority of the participants (54) taught in an urban area/city. More importantly, nearly half (33) indicated that they taught in multiple cities and towns which shows how common school transfers are for Black Male Teachers. (Reflection Memo, September 17, 2020)

Interview Pivots

The pilot study provided an opportunity to find out what it was like to conduct semi-structured interviews in a virtual setting. This required ensuring that all links were accurate, and each participant was able to hear one another clearly. The first pilot interview was conducted with Dr. Jason Hamer, one of my college peers who lived in the same area where I worked. Knowing that Dr. Hamer was in his early stages of being a principal, I felt it would be important to compare his exit out of the classroom to my own. However, the biggest finding that I was able to identify was the sequence of questions during the interview. In this excerpt from a reflective memo on April 22, 2020, I expressed this realization and the shifts that should be made with the other interviews:

The biggest takeaway from this first interview was the sequence of questions. I naturally ordered the questions in chronological order, starting with Jason's K-12 experience, then his Morehouse experience and ending with his time as a teacher. While I was able to gain great insight on his formative years, I never got a chance to get his thoughts on professional development. In fact, his final answer to the core question of what motivated him to remain a teacher was lost in the autobiographical narrative that gave more details than needed. I should have front-ended the retention questions to get their initial reactions and then see if they made any explicit connections to that motivation in their stories about their childhood. (Reflection Memo, April 22, 2020)

Another understanding gained from the pilot interviews was the importance of recognizing bias during the data collection process. I felt that compensation was central in my own and others' decisions to remain a teacher. After interviewing a former classmate from Morehouse who worked in Washington, DC, at the same time as I did, a

shift in ensuring that there were explicit questions asked in future interviews related to the participants' experience with young males of color as teachers. This excerpt came from a reflective memo on May 26, 2020:

My interview with Ebbon Allen today was the first interview where students were the key anchor in motivating him to remain a teacher. Like all of the previous alumni, Ebbon's family also put in time in making sure that he had a quality education. He seems to have been influenced from a variety of factors as it relates to teacher retention particularly the lack of support school leaders would give to teachers. Certification as it related to the Praxis Test was also another factor in choosing to remain a teacher. As it relates to Morehouse, Ebbon was exposed very early to the campus, traditions and legacy of the school. "It was either 'Mohouse' or No house," he said and there was no doubt where he would attend college. Ebbon's father died when he was in 6th grade and his brother was killed while he was in college. Both had a profound impact on his Morehouse trajectory and professional trajectory. After taking time to grieve the death of his brother, Ebbon substitute taught in Washington, DC, and was even voted "Substitute Teacher of the Year" by the students. His second return back to Morehouse was to get his degree so he could position himself to be a teacher in DC. After 9 years of teaching, difficulty with securing teacher certification through passing Praxis scores along with lack of leadership support eventually pushed Ebbon out the classroom.

Following these pilot interviews, I decided to display the graphic organizers to capture key points in the interview for data validation, as a visual cue for the alumni participants to ensure that they stayed on topic during the sharing of their narrative. This proved helpful in the coding process, as the slides became theme markers for specific questions that were asked during the interview. The next section explains the findings from the data visualization tools created to better interrogate the life circumstance and teacher retention variables of the interview participants.

Phase 2 Findings: Sankofian Refraction Analysis (Qual →quan→←Qual)

Phase 2 discusses how the qualitative interviews were processed quantitatively using culturally relevant data semiotics to emphasize the contextual nature of the

participants' memory as well as the theoretical implications that the interview responses had relates to the theories of human capital and self-determination. Once the interview data were quantified, I made sense of the quantitative data using my contextual understanding of the qualitative interviews to draw conclusions about self-motivation and professional development. This means that each percentage or sum was used to identify possible implications that the qualitative data may have for the theoretical focus. However, each quantitative summary has a specific context to consider which may or may not be consistent with the other participants. The goal of the quantified data of the interview responses was to give value to the memory and help compare them to other interview responses within the context of human capital theory and self-determination theory.

Life Circumstance Variable Findings: Human Capital vs. Self-Determination

This section focuses on the life circumstance variables related to participants' experiences as young males of color in K-12 schools and while at Morehouse. Each memory that qualified as an Adinkra memory on the Contextual Refraction Grid (Figure 11) was also given a quantitative value to measure and compare the impact of human capital theory and self-determination theory on their decision to remain a teacher. Each Adinkra memory was valued at 12.5%, and the maximum influence a participant could have in one theoretical focus was 50%. This means that the identified memories found in the interviews, the Adinkra memories, were given value, based on their interpreted impact on the participants' decision to remain a teacher.

Table 3 shows the results of these Adinkra memories based on the participants' life circumstance variable information found in the survey. This table includes the total number of participants from each region and the number of total participants who identified as being a "current teacher." The Adinkra memory is a unique memory described by the interview participants and interpreted as a significant indication of the influence of human capital theory or self-determination theory. A participant, for example, may receive an Adinkra memory on his Contextual Refraction Grid if he expressed pressure to obtain high scores on standardized tests or remembered circumstances impacting their employment decisions; then, he would receive an Adinkra memory connected to human capital theory, and the specific symbol would correlate with the life context in which the memory was expressed.

Table 3. Theoretical Refraction Average by Hometown Region of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants

	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification (mode)
Southeast Region	10	4	41.3% (50)	39% (37.5)	80% (87.5)
Northeast Region	5	1	46% (50)	32.3% (37.5, 25)	80.6% (87.5)
Midwest Region	4	2	50% (50)	22% (25)	72% (75)
Southwest Region	2	1	43.8%	38%	81.3%
West Region	2	2	38%	43.8%	81.3%

Note. HC references the "Human Capital Adinkra Memories" and SD references the "Self-Determination Adinkra Memories" (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 15).

The following sections will highlight trends and patterns in the data based on each category.

Hometown trends. The “Hometown” variable was included in this study to acknowledge the importance of recognizing the context in which a participant was being educated. I did not assume that all participants, because they have taught in public schools, attended public schools. Various geographical communities around the country show varying approaches to educating students. The goal of this variable was insight into alumni from different geographical regions to see if any particular area was shown to have more human capital influence as related to a focus on personal value being determined by standardized test scores, grades, and access to higher education and opportunities for financial stability. The goal of this variable was also to interrogate certain memories of the participants that may reflect a strong intrinsic motivation to become a teacher as a result of certain sociocultural interactions in their life.

Table 3 indicates that more than half of the interview participants were from the northeast (NE) and southeast (SE) regions of the United States. However, data revealed that only a small portion of those teachers in the NE and SE were current teachers (5 out of 15). The data pushed me to consider what factors in the experience of participants from the NE impacted their retention decision.

Comparing the Human Capital Adinkra Memories (HC) based on theoretical depth within these sociocultural life lens variables showed that regardless of the region a person is from, that person is still highly influenced by decisions and events related to human capital. In every region, the HC average depth was higher than the Self-Determination Adinkra Memories (SD). The highest SD average came from those

participants who indicated they were from the West (W) region of the United States. Even though this was a particularly small group of interview participants (2), the data revealed that both individuals were current teachers. This led me to wonder whether high SD averages implied a higher probability of a participant being a current teacher.

In comparison, I also started positioning the HC averages as a possible indicator for the likelihood of a participant being a current or former teacher. It was also important to highlight the mode number in the table, which shows the frequency of certain total depths based on each hometown category. Examining participants from the SE region in Table 3 revealed that while their HC average was the lowest among all the regions (41.3%), it had several alumni scores a full 50% of their HC total convex lens depth, according to the mode. This indicated that there was not an exact correlation between HC and SD averages to a participant's status as current or former teacher.

College major trends. Table 4 indicates the same HC and SD averages but for the life circumstance variable of "College Major." It was important to get an introduction to the participants' college experience as a young male of color through the academic lens that was assumed to highly influence a participant's mindset as related to human capital theory and self-determination theory. The question posed in the analysis of this section was, "Does your college major prepare you differently to be a teacher?" The table shows the division in which the participant's major was categorized, based on the division of departments at Morehouse College.

Table 4 shows that the Humanities division majors dominated the experience of the interview participants. In addition to their high number among the participants, they also represented the largest group of current teachers based on each division major

category. Majors in the Humanities division at Morehouse of participants who were included in the semi-structured interviews were: English, History, and Philosophy. Six of the 10 humanities majors indicated they were current teachers.

Table 4. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Division of Majors of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

Participants	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
Humanities	10	6	40% (50)	36% (25)	77.5% (87.5, 75, 62.5)
Life Sciences	3	2	42% (50)	33% (25)	75% (75)
Social Science & Cultural Studies	2	0	50% (50)	44%	94%
Business Admin. & Economics	4	0	50% (50)	28.1% (37.5)	78.1% (87.5)
Math & Computer Science	2	1	37.5% (37.5)	43.8%	81%
Creative & Performing Arts	2	1	50% (50)	31.3%	81.3%

Note. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14).

One part of this particular data set that stood out to me was that there were no participants who had majors in Social Science & Cultural Studies or in Business Administration & Economics who were current teachers. It was not surprising, then, that the Business & Economics division majors had a high HC average (50%) and a low SD average (28.1%), as the content which they studied at Morehouse centered on the idea of capital in various contexts. This high HC average was the same for Social Science & Cultural Studies division majors; however, this group also had the highest SD average among all the participants in this variable category, yet they still decided to leave the profession of teaching.

This led me to question why those participants who majored in the Social Science & Cultural Studies division had several memories charted on their grid, indicating that they had strong autonomous motivational influences in their life but stronger HC memories, based on the averages shown on the table. Another small group within this data set that caused me to look more deeply into the interview responses was that those participants who majored in Math had the highest SD average of all the life circumstance variables. However, only one of those teachers was actually still teaching; thus, an interrogation of the two paths would be key to understanding how alumni with the same college major can be on two different trajectories, based on identity and context. This is why the quantitative data and qualitative data were integrated in this study because single data points are full of contextual insights. At the same time, these insights raised the rigor of analysis to contextualize the qualitative data within a quantitative baseline for comparison.

College graduation year trends. The final life circumstance variable related to when the interview participants graduated from Morehouse College. This data point was important to capture because it gave a historical timestamp of participant matriculation at the college. This involved taking into consideration the sociopolitical landscape of their education and the economic opportunities they had following graduation. Table 5 shows a breakdown of the interview participants based on the decade in which they graduated. It was not surprising that the majority of participants graduated in the decade of the 2000s because it was my decade as well. This has implications that those who might have been familiar with the me were more prone to follow up to participate in an interview. The relational dynamics are analyzed further in a different section of this analysis.

Table 5. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Graduation Decade of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
1990s	5	3	43% (50)	38% (50, 25)	80% (75)
2000s	13	4	46.2% (50)	35% (37.5)	81.7% (87.5)
2010s	5	3	38% (37.5)	35% (37.5)	73% (75, 62.5)

Note. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14).

While participants who graduated in the 2000s decade dominated the total number of participants in this category, the data also revealed that only four out of 13 currently identified with being a full-time teacher. Only five participants graduated in the 1990s decade, but this group had the highest average SD depth than any other decade. Table 5 shows that those who graduated in the 2010s had the lowest HC average than any group, in addition to having three out of five alumni identifying as current teachers. Although this study did not go in-depth into the sociopolitical context, particularly as it related to presidential administrations, it could be implied that choosing a teaching profession could have been influenced by the economic landscape of the country. Later sections in this study explore how access to teacher pathway programs like Teach for America (TFA) was also a major factor in choosing and remaining a full-time public-school teacher.

Teacher Retention Variable Findings: Human Capital vs. Self-Determination

The second portion of the survey focused on variables related to participants’ teacher retention, especially after graduating from Morehouse. These variables included

participants' status as a full-time public or public charter school teacher, the number of years they worked as a full-time teacher, the location of their teaching experience, the subject they taught, and finally the grade level of the students with whom they interacted. The following sections describe the impact that human capital theory and self-determination theory had on the participants' decision to remain a teacher based on their status and convex lens depth average.

Table 6 shows the interview participants divided up based on their identified status as a full-time teacher. It also must be noted how fast teacher status changes with Black educators.

Teacher status trends. Of the 23 interview participants, including the researcher-participant, only 10 were current teachers. Three out of 13 participants identified as a teacher through the survey; however, after I conducted the interviews, I discovered that some of them had accepted new positions since they completed the survey. It was a study goal to identify more current teachers than former teachers; however, he was not expecting status to change by the time the study reached the interview stage.

Another aspect of this particular data set was that the range was not large as it related to HC averages and SD averages, with both being less than 5%. This data set also highlighted the importance of including the mode along with the average. When looking at the SD average for former teachers, one can see that the average was 37%, which was higher than the current teachers who were interviewed, 33.8%. However, the inclusion of the mode indicates that several alumni had recorded all four Adinkra memories, showing a mode of 50%.

Table 6. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Teacher Status of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification (mode)
Current Teacher	10	43% (50)	33.8% (37.5)	76.3% (75)
Former Teacher	13	44.2% (50)	37% (50)	81.7% (87.5)

Note. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14).

Years teaching trends. The length of time that a participant taught in the public school system was impacted by a variety of different circumstances. This section divides the participants into three different categories, based on the number of years they indicated on the survey that they served as a full-time public school teacher. The categories included the “Novice Teacher,” who indicated that they had between 3 to 5 years of teaching experience; “Mid-Career Teachers,” who indicated 6 to 9 years; and veteran teachers, who shared that they had taught 10 years or more in a public school. Table 7 shows these categories and reveals there was a relatively even spread of participants among the groups, with the veteran teachers having the largest number (9), while only six novice teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews.

Table 7. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Teacher Experience of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teacher	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
Novice Teacher (3-5 years)	6	2	46% (50)	29.3% (25)	75% (75)
Mid-Career Teacher (6-9 years)	8	4	37.5% (50, 37.5)	36% (37.5, 25)	73.4% (87.5, 62.5)
Veteran Teacher (10+ years)	9	4	47% (50)	38.9% (37.5)	87.5% (87.5)

Note. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14).

Based on HC and SD averages, veteran teachers had the highest HC and SD averages, compared to the other categories. Averages were shown to be consistent with the number of teachers who were indicated as current teachers, with novice teachers averaging the lowest SD average among the subgroups based on years of teaching. In addition, a close look at mid-career teachers shows that their low HC average yielded four current teachers out of a total of eight participants from the category. One reason that the HC and SD averages were so high for veteran teachers may have been because they had more memories to express, based on their time in the profession. Mid-career teachers, who yielded low HC averages, may be a result of their short limited experiences in life, particularly as related to supporting an expanding family unit. When looking more deeply into the data, one can find that most of the participants in that particular category also graduated after 2009, making some of them the youngest participants in the study.

Location of teaching trends. The geographical data gathered from the data set helped to establish a clear contextual understanding of both how the participants were educated and how they were educating their students, particularly young males of color. The Life Circumstance variables focused on various regions where participants were raised during their K-12 school experience. The geographical data point that included the Teacher Retention variables was the location where the participants were full-time teachers. Table 8 shows the breakdown of locations where study participants taught. It must be noted that some alumni during the interviews explained that they have taught in multiple regions.

Table 8. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Location of Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
Southeast Region	10	4	38.8% (50)	39% (50)	77.5% (75)
Northeast Region	8	3	46.9% (50)	36% (37.5, 25)	84.4% (87.5)
Midwest Region	7	4	46.4% (50)	27% (25)	73.2% (62.5)
Southwest Region	2	2	37.5% (37.5)	31%	68.8%
West Region	2	2	38%	43.8%	81.3%

Note. Some interview participants indicated that they taught in multiple regions.

While the majority of the participants taught in the SE, NE, and MW portions of the United States, the data showed that all of the participants who were from the Southwest and West Regions identified as current teachers. The HC average also supported this as these two groups had the lowest average of HC; however, their HC

average, in all cases, was higher than their SD average. Those who taught in the MW had the lowest SD average, yielding only four current teachers out of a total of seven. These totals indicated that a closer analysis of the qualitative interviews by those not from the SE and NE regions was important to unpack in order to understand why there is such a high number of current teachers from the MW, SW, and W regions. The consideration of the number of current teachers is critical to the study in order to identify specific factors that have motivated them to remain in the profession.

Subject and grade level of teaching trends. This section focuses on the content that interview participants taught while being a public school teacher as well as the age range of students based on the categories of Elementary School (ES), Middle School (MS), and High School (HS). Table 9 shows that the majority of the participants taught MS and HS grades, with many indicating on the survey that they taught multiple grade levels.

Table 9. *Theoretical Refraction Average by School Grade Level Taught of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teacher	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
Elementary School	6	2	45.8% (50)	33% (25)	81.3% (87.5, 75)
Middle School	15	4	44.2% (50)	37% (37.5)	81.7% (87.5)
High School	18	7	42.4% (50)	36% (25)	79.2% (87.5, 75)

Note. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14). Some survey participants indicated that they taught in multiple Grade-Level Schools.

While middle school for some would be considered a difficult age group to teach, the SD averages showed that the alumni who taught middle school had the highest SD average among the different subgroups of participants. Another compelling pattern was the frequency of 50% HC average depths by the participants as it was the mode for each subgroup.

Table 10 shows the various academic subjects or courses that the participants taught while being public school teachers.

Table 10. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Subjects Taught as a Teacher of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
English Language Arts	6	3	41.7% (50)	33% (35)	77.1% (87.5)
Math	4	2	37.5% (37.5)	37.5% (50)	75% (75)
Social Studies	6	2	46% (50)	44% (50, 37.5)	90% (87.5)
Science	3	1	50% (50)	33% (25)	83% (75)
General Ed/Other Specialized Course	7	2	46.4% (50)	34% (37.5)	80.4% (75)

Note. Some survey participants indicated that they taught multiple subjects. HC references the “Human Capital Adinkra Memories” and SD references the “Self-Determination Adinkra Memories” (see Figure 12 and Figure 13); Focal Length is the sum of HC and SD total depths (see Figure 14). Some interview participants indicated that they taught multiple subjects.

Half of the number of teachers (3) who taught English were current teachers, with the majority of the participants indicating that they taught General Education or specialized courses such as Physical Education, Art, Music, or Technology. No interview

participants indicated that they taught a world language as well. Two of the six participants who taught Social Studies were current teachers, yet this group had the highest SD average among the different categories, 44%, with the modes being 50%. This pushed me to reflect on how connected the participants were with the content and the implication this has for a teacher's personal negotiation among autonomy, convenience, and relatedness. The HC average for those who taught science (50%) was consistent with the one teacher who was interviewed and identified as a current science teacher.

These HC and SD averages were not designed to show an exact correlation between the participants' decision and the external and internal factors that influenced that decision. As shown in the findings, there were instances where high HC average does not necessarily equate with more current teachers. The process simply offered the chance to compare the summarized qualitative data within a quantitative context in order to lead to meaningful inquiry questions. The overall HC average for the entire group of interview participants was 43.5%, while the SD average was 33.9%. The tables shown in this section also include an average focal length magnification, which combined the average of both the HC and SD memories into one number representing the total magnified influence of human capital theory and self-determination theory. The average Focal Length for the interview group participants was 79.3% and is explored further by looking at each individual variable from the survey.

Contextual Refraction Grid Interpretations: Memory Map Focal Lengths

In the spirit of mixed-methods design, I attempted to include elements of rigorous comparison and measurement through quantifying qualitative information. These quantitative summaries of the qualitative data offer an important comparison to the

magnification of human capital theory and self-determination theory. This section analyzes the sequence of Adinkra memories based on different variable categories. The specific demographic within the category chosen was based on the Average Focal Length Magnification (FL) seen in the previous tables. qq shows the breakdown of memories and the sequence for each participant.

Focal Length Analysis based on Life Circumstance Variables

Hometown analysis. In analyzing the average FL for each participant based on their hometown region, it was found that participants from the W and SW regions had the highest FL average among all the different regions, 81.3% (Table 3). Once these two groups were identified, their specific memory path was organized in a visual table to see if there were any patterns in the characteristics of the qualitative data.

Figure 18. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants with Hometowns in the West and Southwest Regions*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	K-12	K-12/NC	MC/BMT1	MC/BMT1/BMT2	BMT1/BMT2	BMT1/BMT2	BMT2	BMT2
C8	62.5%	37.5%	25%	W	M	F	B	A			
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
S5	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	F	D	B		
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A

This particular group was of interest because three of the four participants in these categories were current teachers. Based on the data from this group, no participants had the same number of Adinkra memories. This is important because it shows how different participants emphasized the impact that various life circumstances had on their decision. Some participants had multiple Adinkra memories in a certain life context lens, which

showed the presence of both HC and SD in their experience, giving a higher magnification of contextual insight. Alumni C8 and Alumni D10, for example, did not receive any Nsorma (N-Adinkra) memories.

The N-Adinkra memory represents examples in the data where the participants expressed a profound experience in their K-12 school experience that they felt inspired them to become or remain a teacher. This showed no specific trend within this group as both alumni were from different regions. One pattern that was shown in the data was the prevalence of the Mate Masie memories (M-Adinkra) among the participants from the W and SW regions, with every participant receiving one. The M-Adinkra represented significant memories related to their motivation to become and/or remain a teacher and showed that alumni from this region had impactful experiences at Morehouse related to their motivation and identity as a teacher.

Human capital theory experiences dominated the K-12 memories expressed by the interview participants. This showed that consideration of their value in society took place early in their socialization and, in this study, acts as a point of origin for their perception of education and the education profession. Of all the participants in the study, 19 of 23 interview participants received a Woforo Dua Pa A (W-Adinkra) memory as a result of sharing an experience from their K-12 time where their human capital value was being framed using grades, quality, and safety of a school or opportunities for financial and social access. Totals for each Adinkra memory are summarized in Table 11. The data revealed there are certain time periods in the participants' lives that expressed more HC or SD memories. Table 11 shows that 91.3% of the interview participants expressed HC memories during the time period leading to their start in the teaching profession as well

as the time period leading to their decision to remain a teacher. However, only a third of participants, 30.4%, expressed memories during their K-12 experience that could be interpreted as influential in their decision to become or remain a teacher. The smallest total Adinkra memory shown in Table 11 is the N-Adinkra, which represents significant memories during the participants' K-12 school experience. This was shown to be true for individuals from the W and SW regions of the United States.

Table 11. *Summary of Total Number of Adinkra Memories from Interview Participants*

Adinkra Memory	Theory	Convex Life Lens	N	%
Woforo Dua Pa A (W)	Human Capital	K-12 Education Experience	19	82.6%
Hwe Mu Dua (H)	Human Capital	Morehouse College Experience	20	86.9%
Fihankra (F)	Human Capital	Life Circumstance Becoming a Teacher	21	91.3%
Aya (A)	Human Capital	Life Circumstance of Retention Decision	20	86.9%
Nsorma (N)	Self-Determination	K-12 Education Experience	7	30.4%
Mate Masie (M)	Self-Determination	Morehouse College Experience	16	69.5%
Denkyem	Self-Determination	Life Circumstance Becoming a Teacher	20	86.9%
Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo (B)	Self-Determination	Life Circumstance of Retention Decision	21	91.3%

College major analysis. The college division majors that had the highest FL average were the Social Science/Cultural Studies, Creative/Performing Arts and Math/Computer Science (Figure 2). Of this subset of six participants, two identified as a current teacher, one majored in Music and the other in Math. While the majority of study participants chose to leave the role as a teacher, in certain cases participants were terminated from their position due to budget cuts and rules related to teacher seniority. The clear trend that can be seen in Figure 19 is the time period in which similar decisions or events took place. The visual data display was developed to indicate patterns, and it uses the Sankofa Color-Code system to identify HC and SD trends.

Figure 19. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants with Division Majors in Social Science/Cultural Studies, Creative/Performing Arts, and Math/Computer Science*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	K-12	K-12/MC	MC/BMT1	MC/BMT1/BMT2	BMT1/BMT2	BMT1/BMT2	BMT2	BMT2
C10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	A	B	
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
D4	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
K6	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B		
L6	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	

The data displays that five out of six of the interview participants received an SD Adinkra after they graduated from Morehouse. This offers another opportunity to probe the qualitative interview data to analyze the varying circumstances during the time period following their graduation from college.

College graduation decade analysis. The participants who had the highest population in this particular life circumstance variable were those identified as graduating from 2000 to 2009. Figure 20 shows the details of each participant’s memory path. This

group was chosen because of their high FL average and high number of participants in the study, 13. Of these 13 participants, only four identified as being current teachers. This raised questions about the sociopolitical context of when these participants graduated. Six of the 10 participants who are still teaching graduated in the 1990s and 2010s. What events led to their decision to remain a teacher?

Figure 20. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Graduated from Morehouse during the Time Span of 2000 to 2009*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
A9	62.5%	12.5%	50%	N	M	D	B	A			
C10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	A	B	
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
D4	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
J10	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	M	D	F	B	A		
L6	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
P10	87.5%	50%	25%	W	H	M	F	A	B		
P4	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
S3	63%	50%	12.5%	W	H	F	D	A			
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A
T5	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	A	B		

One commonality among all the interview participants who graduated during this decade was the W-Adinkra they all received during their K-12 life lens. This visual display also offered the opportunity to identify outliers in the data. In this case, Alumnus A9 showed having a very different memory path than the others in the group, which consisted of a higher SD average than HC average—rare in any of the data sets, even though he identified as a former teacher.

However, even though Alumnus A9 had only one HC Adinkra memory, that event showed to be significant as it was his last Adinkra memory before his decision to remain a teacher, which indicated a place in the qualitative data to analyze further. Although the majority of the participants started with a W-Adinkra, several had different

numbers of memories recorded, with some even showing HC and SD memories at every life lens stage (Alumnus D13 and Alumnus T11). These two participants were shown to have the highest FL percent and, thus, indicated that they recorded a significant number of memories in their narrative related to the theoretical focus.

Focal Length Analysis Based on Teacher Retention Variables

This study explored a variety of life variables to unpack the possible intersectional experience and identities of the interview participants. One central variable that was focused on with all categorical comparisons was the status of the teacher. This variable was the central indicator because it acted as the point of origin for analysis. From the status, the analysis looked to draw connections to other variable factors as all participants integrated to reveal a possible rationale for their decision to remain a teacher. The next section further analyzes both groups to explain patterns in their narrative memories. Based on Table 4, former teachers in the study had a higher average FL, 81.7%, than current teachers, 76.3%. While this section looked mainly at the category with the highest FL average, the next section examines both since this variable acts as the point of origin for analysis.

Teacher status findings. Figure 21 shows the memory paths for interview participants who were former teachers. One immediate noticing was the difference in the SD average and the SD mode for the former teachers. While this group made the decision to leave the role of teacher, five of them had full SD memories in their path, which indicated strong self-motivation toward being a teacher. However, their status indicated that their memories, particularly their HC Adinkra, should be interpreted further to

identify the magnitude of influence because their own personal drive to be a teacher did not sustain them through their retention decision.

Figure 21. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Were Former Full-time Public School Teachers*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
A9	62.5%	12.5%	50%	N	M	D	B	A			
B9	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	D	B	A		
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
D4	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
L6	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
P10	87.5%	50%	25%	W	H	M	F	A	B		
P4	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
P7	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
R5	75%	50%	25%	W	M	H	F	B	A		
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	
S3	83%	50%	12.5%	W	H	F	D	A			
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A

The data showed the Alumnus A9, Alumnus B9, Alumnus D13, Alumnus S14, and Alumnus T11 all had full 50% SD Adinkra memories. I then isolated these alumni to see what patterns or similar stories could be found in their narratives. Figure 22 shows those alumni from this variable group who had the highest SD averages.

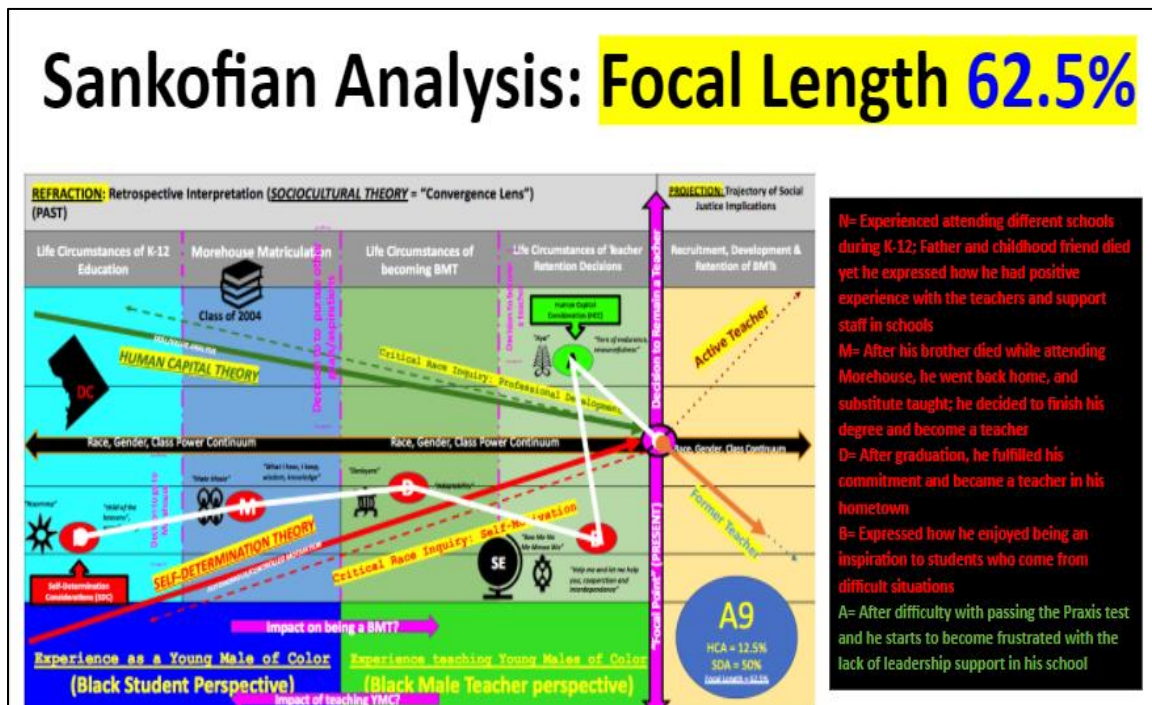
Figure 22. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Graduated Who Indicated That They Were Former Full-time Public School Teachers Who Had a 50% Human Capital Adinkra Depth*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
A9	62.5%	12.5%	50%	N	M	D	B	A			
B9	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	D	B	A		
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A

In examining these data closely, the visual display offers an opportunity to identify the common HC memories and events that might have influenced their decision

to remain a teacher. Three of the five participants in Figure 22 began with an N-Adinkra, showing that there were significant memories from their K-12 experience that influenced them to become a teacher. Sequential patterns can start to be analyzed here as well when these three participants are isolated even further. The Contextual Refraction Grids (CRG) offer deeper information on these N-Adinkra and why, based on this data set, there is a 66.6% chance that a participant would receive an M-Adinkra following their N-Adinkra. This is important because it shows a correlation between significant SD memories during the K-12 lens and how they extended within the Morehouse life lens. Figure 23, Figure 24, and Figure 25 show the individual CRGs for the three mentioned participants.

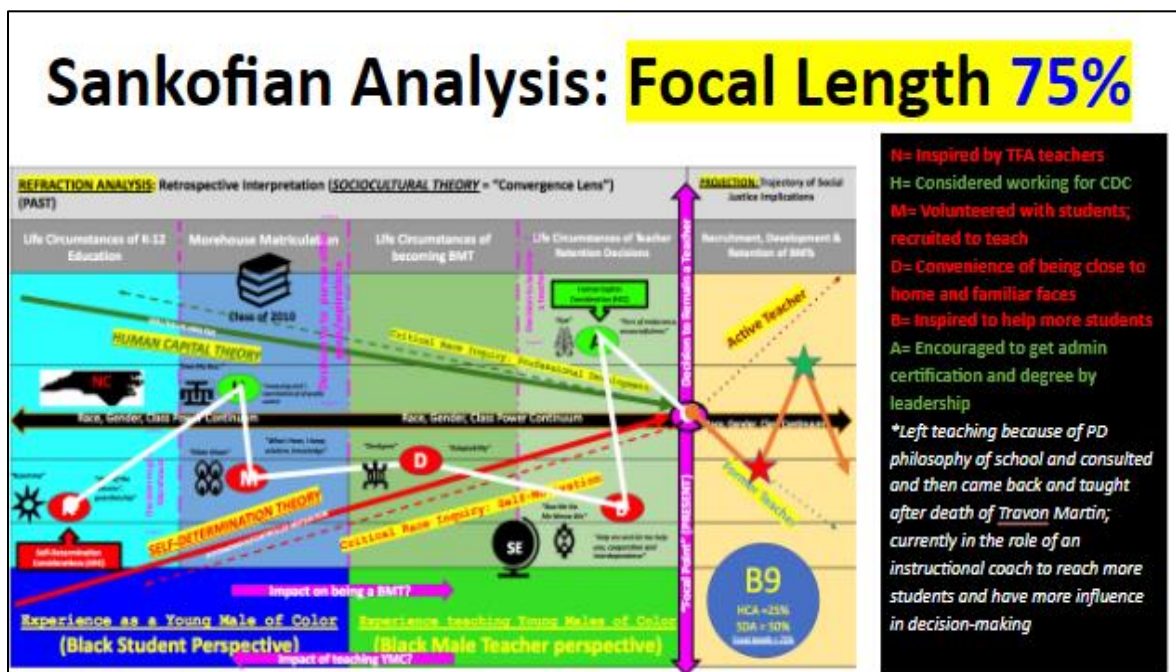
Figure 23. Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus A9



This CRG Memory Path for Alumnus A9 revealed more details regarding his intersectional variables and insight on each Adinkra memory. What is interesting about

Alumnus A9's two SD Adinkra memories was that both are related to family deaths that were shown to have a significant impact on his self-motivation to be a teacher. This raises the question of whether Black men use challenges from their life as motivation to teach others. The interpretation of perseverance typically derives from how the interview participant expressed the memory. In the case of Alumnus A9, it was clear that he had internalized the traumatic deaths and positioned them in his memory as reference points for motivation. This is explored more in the qualitative data when participants express challenges experienced while matriculating through their K-12 education context.

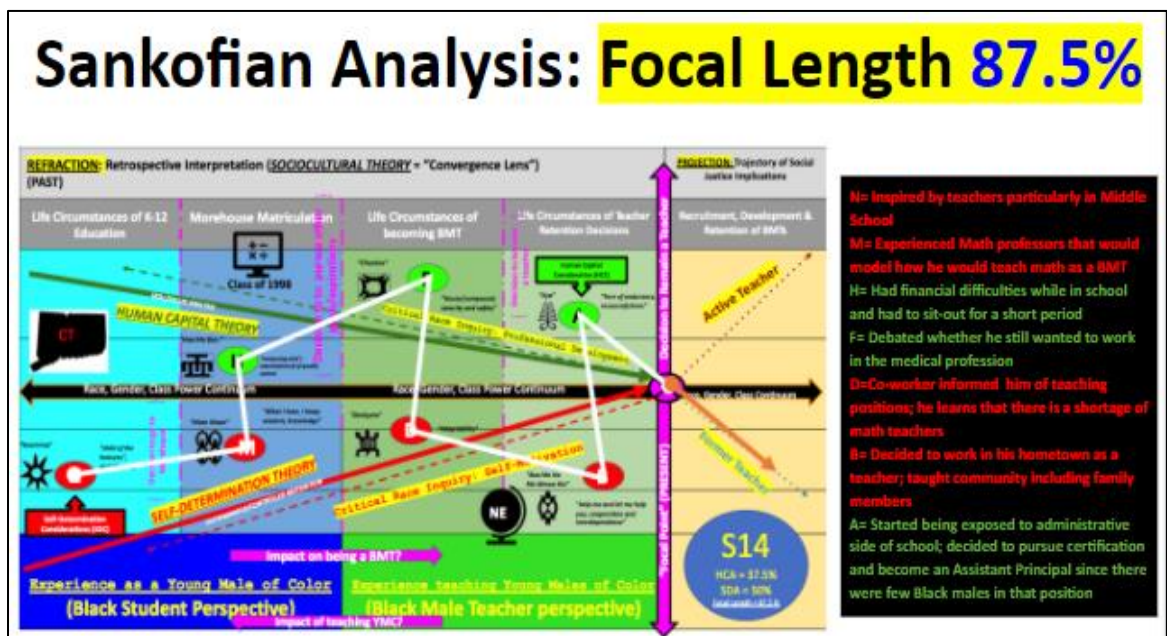
Figure 24. Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus B9



This CRG Memory Path for Alumnus B9 revealed even more context for analysis in understanding the factors that led to his decision to remain a teacher. One important note to make, which is not indicated in the theoretical magnification percentages, is the multiple trajectories that some teachers showed they had through their interview.

Alumnus B9, for example, as indicated by the orange arrow in his CRG Memory Path, decided to leave the profession, then decided to come back, and then ultimately left again. A Sankofian analysis of his Adinkra memories revealed that he had a significant Hwe Mu Dua Memory (H-Adinkra) while at Morehouse, which may indicate a possible point of analysis for understanding his multiple trajectories after his initial decision. That particular Adinkra memory related to his contemplation of careers outside of teaching, particularly working for the Centers for Disease Control, as shown in the black summary box of the Adinkra memories. This was unique in comparison to Alumnus A9 and Alumnus S14. Figure 25 shows the CRG Memory Path for Alumnus S14.

Figure 25. Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus S14



Alumnus S14 had the highest FL average among the participants currently being analyzed. Like Alumnus A9, this participant also had a significant SD memory from his time at Morehouse, which was shown to be very different from that of Alumnus A9.

While Alumnus A9’s M-Adinkra memory centered on his motivation to teach as a result of a death in his family, Alumnus S14 had influential professors at Morehouse who would model for him best practices as a math teacher. This shows the importance of using multiple data visualization tools because they illuminate context in order to understand the similar and different intersectional events related to the interview participants’ shared narratives.

It was common to find a wide range of varying experiences related to former teachers; however, I wondered if the same variations existed among the current teachers who participated in the semi-structured interviews. Figure 26 shows the memory paths of participants who identified as current public school teachers.

Figure 26. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Were Full-time Public School Teachers*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
C10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	A	B	
C8	62.5%	37.5%	25%	W	M	F	B	A			
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
E20	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
J10	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	M	D	F	B	A		
K6	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B		
S5	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	F	D	B		
S9	62.5%	37.5%	25%	W	H	F	D	B			
T5	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	A	B		
T8	87.5%	50%	37.5%	N	W	H	M	D	F	A	

In this data display, there is a clear pattern of strong HC memories during the K-12 life lens. Those who started with a W-Adinkra had a 66.6% chance of encountering a significant HC memory during their time at Morehouse. Another interesting pattern found in the data was the high frequency of SD Adinkras during the time they were at Morehouse as well as following graduation. Those that received Denkyem Adinkras (D-Adinkras) experienced an important SD memory during the life lens that led to their decision to remain a teacher.

A total of five participants in this subgroup expressed this type of memory. The Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo Adinkra (B-Adinkra) represented a significant memory while the participants were teaching that impacted their decision to remain a teacher. These memories are most significant because they were the closest in proximity to their retention decision. Three participants had B-Adinkras; however, this data display does not show how they differed qualitatively. Alumnus J10, Alumnus S9, and Alumnus E20 all expressed an SD memory during their time as a teacher. Figure 27 shows the CRG Memory Path for Alumnus J10 and indicates a synopsis of the memory. For this particular participant, his SD memory was rooted in his experience working in an after-care program, which led to a summer school position. This opened the study to further investigation of the entry-level positions in education that some alumni accepted prior to becoming a full-time public-school teacher.

Figure 27. Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus J10

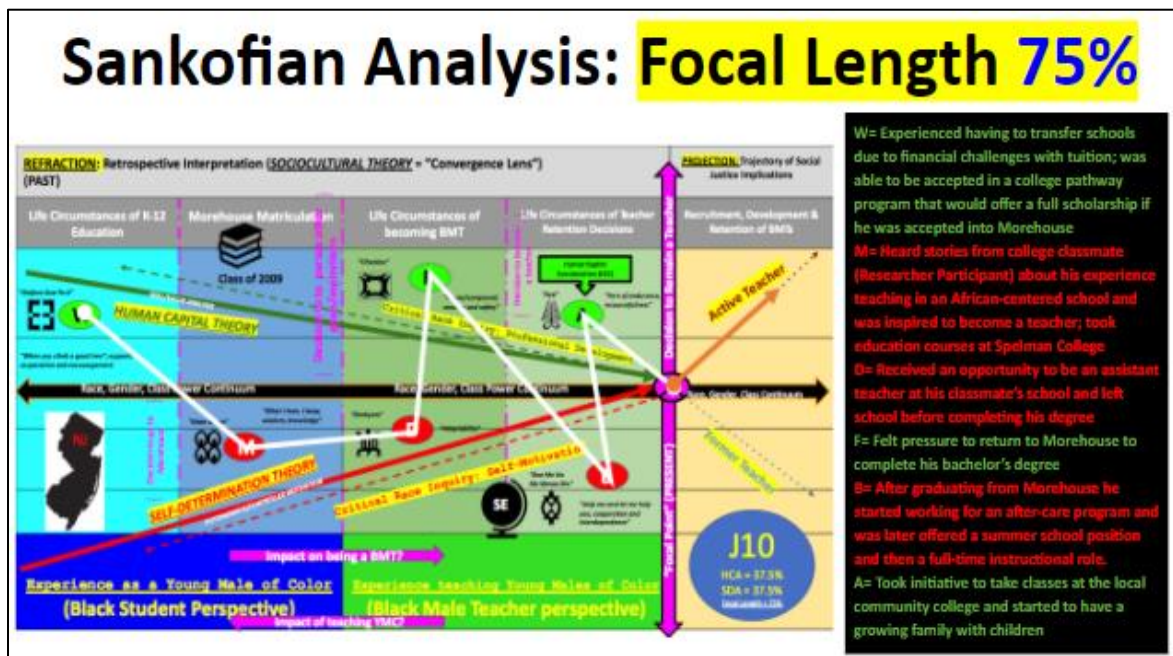
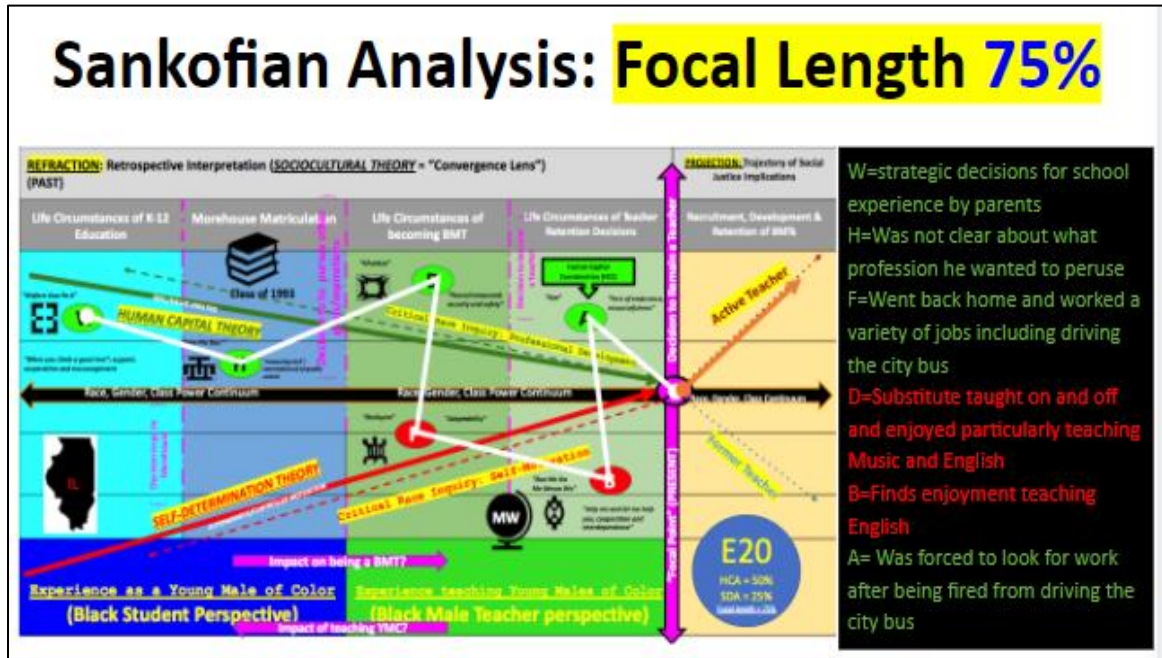


Figure 28. Contextual Refraction Grid Memory Path for Alumnus E20



In contrast to Alumnus J10, the alumnus in Figure 28 was shown to have the same Adinkra memory stamp but a different contextual drive. This means that it is important to investigate the life circumstance of the participants after finding trends in the visual data display because the motive behind different decisions can be revealed through a closer look at the qualitative data. For Alumnus E20, it was not an entry-level position that motivated him to be a teacher, but his experience teaching a subject that he was passionate about. This is an example of Sankofian analysis that allowed me to drill down to specific motivations that were impacting the participant. In the case of Alumnus J10, his motivation would be considered a result of integrated regulation which factored into variables related to autonomy and convenience. In the case of Alumnus E20, his motivation seemed to lean toward intrinsic regulation, which considered variables related to passion and relatedness. This helps us understand that similar entry points may have

different motives. Another point of analysis that could be extended from this finding is to investigate further how other participants viewed the entry-level positions as well as the teaching content in which they were genuinely interested.

Years teaching findings. Study participants were grouped based on a range of years of teaching experience, as shown in Table 7. Of the three categories of novice (3-5 years), mid-career (6-9 years), and veteran (10 or more years), the veteran group of participants were shown to have the highest FL average. Figure 29 shows the Adinkra memories for each participant who indicated that they taught as a public school teacher for 10 or more years.

Figure 29. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught 10 or More Years as a Public School Teacher*

C10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	A	B	
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
E20	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
J10	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	M	D	F	B	A		
P10	87.5%	50%	25%	W	H	M	F	A	B		
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A

All of the participants in this subgroup had six to eight Adinkra memories, with two having full 100% magnification with their FL total. Another trend in the data that was noticed was that all of the veteran teachers who graduated between 1990 and 2009, except one, had a significant SD memory from their time at Morehouse. In addition, the majority of these participants indicated a Fihankra Adinkra Memory (F-Adinkra), which correlated to a HC memory during the time period after they graduated from Morehouse.

Thus, while the majority of these men had strong SD memories at Morehouse, the majority confronted HC situations immediately following their college graduation. This

shows an important emphasis in specific life circumstances of the BMTs. It also brings up many questions including: How are schools and teacher pathway programs supporting these men when they graduate from college? Some patterns have been shown in this study that indicated that how Black men get introduced, framed, and acclimated to the teaching profession weighs heavy in their eventual decision to remain a teacher.

Location of teaching findings. One trend found in the qualitative data was how many of the survey participants would travel back to their hometown to become teachers. Others settled in areas near Atlanta, while others attempted to find places that had a higher population of Black teachers and students. These various life circumstances are explored further in the Sankofian Power Analysis section. The group who showed the highest FL average based on the region where the participant taught was the one who taught in the NE. This group’s 84.4% FL average was significant, particularly considering varying economic challenges that may arrive based on the region in which one teaches.

Figure 30 shows the Adinkra memory paths for these participants, the majority of whom had full 50% total HC Adinkra memories expressed in the interviews.

Figure 30. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught in the Northeast Region of the United States*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
C8	62.5%	37.5%	25%	W	M	F	B	A			
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
D4	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
P10	87.5%	50%	25%	W	H	M	F	A	B		
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	
T5	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	A	B		
T8	87.5%	50%	37.5%	N	W	H	M	D	F	A	

Interestingly, for these particular participants, only three of the eight participants are current teachers who were not from the region. The data indicated that the majority of the HC Adinkra memories came during their K-12 schooling, Morehouse matriculation, and the time period immediately following graduation, indicating that a deeper look should be given at the context from which they were coming prior to entering Morehouse. In this particular group, four of the eight interview participants were from the NE region, in particular the area where they taught. An analysis of whether there were any correlations between the alumni's experience in K-12 schools and their motivation to return home to teach in a familiar community is discussed further.

Subject and grade level of teaching findings. The final variable that was analyzed focused on the content the participants taught as well as the age group. This was categorized based on various subjects with elective and specialized courses lumped in with general education courses and teachers. The data in Table 9 showed that interview participants who taught middle school had the highest FL average. As well, several of the interview participants indicated that they taught multiple grades and multiple subjects during their time as a teacher. Figure 31 shows the memory paths for those who taught middle school grade students.

Figure 31. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught Middle School*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
A9	62.5%	12.5%	50%	N	M	D	B	A			
B9	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	D	B	A		
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
D4	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
E20	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
J10	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	M	D	F	B	A		
L6	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
P10	87.5%	50%	25%	W	H	M	F	A	B		
P7	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
R5	75%	50%	25%	W	M	H	F	B	A		
S14	87.5%	37.5%	50%	N	M	H	F	D	B	A	
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A
T5	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	A	B		
T8	87.5%	50%	37.5%	N	W	H	M	D	F	A	

The data revealed that this group had several participants who had six or more Adinkra memories, showing high FL magnification as related to the impact of HC and SD memories on their decision to remain a teacher. The data also revealed a pattern of SD memories during the life lens following their Morehouse experience. Moreover, a series of Aya Adinkra Memories (A-Adinkra) was shown during the seventh life lens leading to their decision to remain a teacher. The final Adinkra memories are critical for the analysis because they revealed key events closest to the decision point. These particular Adinkras could be examined more closely to see how they are similar or different and whether they had a lasting impact on the participants' decision to remain a teacher. Of this group of 15 participants, only five currently are teachers.

Figure 32 shows the memory paths for interview participants who taught Social Studies during their time as teachers in the public school system. This particular group had the highest FL average, 90%, compared to all other Teacher Retention variables. Another interesting data point shown in Table 6 was that the difference between HC and SD depth average was very small, only 2%, versus differences ranging up to 20 percentage points. Three participants in this subset had 50% SD Adinkra totals but none

were current teachers. Even though those who were current teachers had lower SD totals, the data indicated that the impact of HC memories played a larger role in their decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 32. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated That They Taught Middle School*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
B9	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	D	B	A		
D10	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	H	M	F	D	B	A	
D13	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	F	D	B	A
H11	87.5%	50%	37.5%	W	M	H	F	D	B	A	
T11	100%	50%	50%	W	N	M	H	D	F	B	A
T8	87.5%	50%	37.5%	N	W	H	M	D	F	A	

These Memory Path patterns offered exit signs off the qualitative data highway in order to compare experiences within the prism of human capital theory and self-determination theory. They focused the study soundly on the narratives of the participants; however, the semiotic typology used to compare the memories allowed a more directed inquiry into the participants’ stories. The next section lifts the actual words from the participants based on themes identified using quantitative inquiry questions. These questions were based on the survey data and the Memory Path data and serve to introduce the context for analysis and a point of entry for interpretation.

Phase 3 Findings: Sankofian Power Analysis (Quan → qual → quan → ← Qual)

This phase of the analysis focused on taking inquiries from the quantitative summaries and interrogating the qualitative data to identify themes in the interviews (Quan → qual). The review of the data came in various forms using the raw video to analyze noticeable body language after certain responses, reading through coded transcripts using the Dedoose software, and identifying key points in the individual memos written for each interview that included reflections from the researcher-

participant and graphic organizer summaries. Figure 33 and Figure 34 show an example of the graphic organizer summaries.

Figure 33. Screenshots of Examples of Data Sources That Were Reviewed during the Data Analysis Portion of the Study: Memo, Zoom Interviews, Coding Guide, and Dedoose Coding Analysis

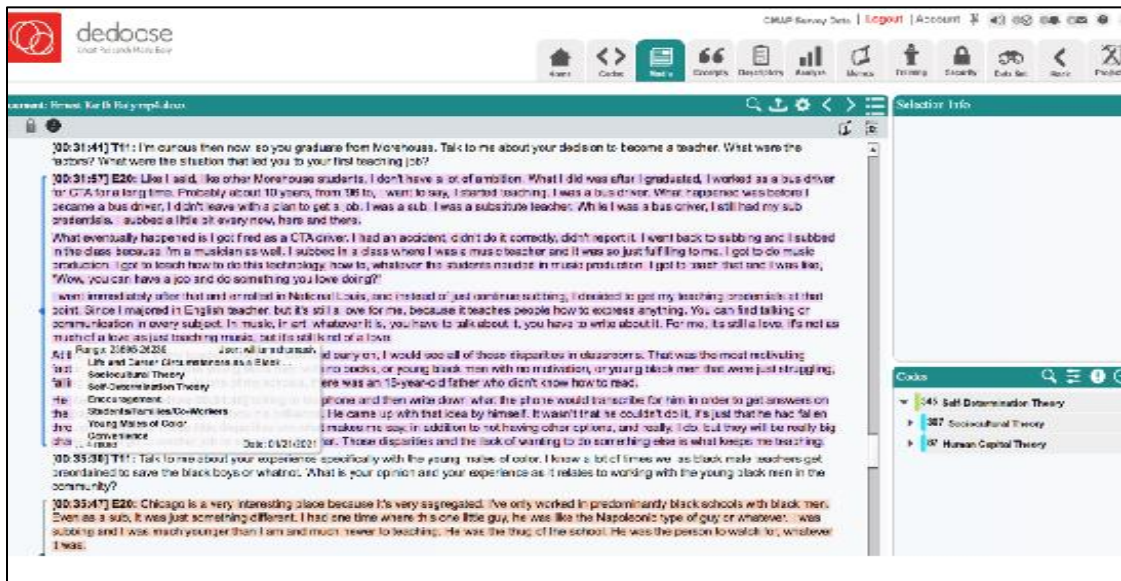
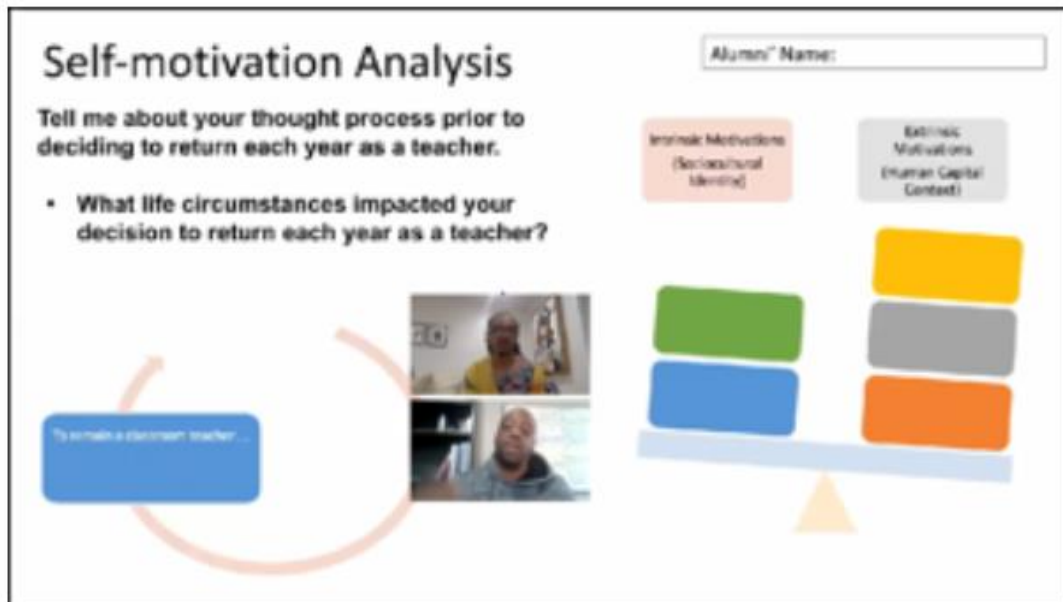


Figure 34. Screenshots of Example of Graphic Organizer Summary for Interview Participant Responses That Was Used during the Data Analysis Portion of the Study



Once teacher motivation themes were identified within the interview responses, they were categorized based on the Power Themes (qual → quan) chosen in the logic model, discussed earlier in the methods section of this study. The following sections answer a series of inquiry questions based on the results of the quantitative analysis (quan → ← Qual). These include two central questions related to the variable under study, based on the survey results as well as the frequency of Power Themes identified using the logic model.

Life Circumstance Variable Power Analysis

Similar to the previous phases, this analysis begins by examining the qualitative data related to each study participant’s experience as a young male of color. In particular, these excerpts pulled from memories that stemmed from the participants’ experiences in K-12 schools as well as their time at Morehouse College. Table 12 shows a summary of data indicating the hometown regions of the survey participants.

Table 12. *Hometown Region of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Southeast Region	42	38.5
Northeast Region	36	33
Midwest Region	22	20.2
Southwest Region	6	5.5
West Region	3	2.8

The data reflected similar demographics as the interview participants, with the majority of survey participants, 71.5%, being from the SE and NE regions. One startling statistic from this data set was the number of participants in the survey study who were

from the Western region of the United States. While there were only three survey participants, two of the three participated in the semi-structured interviews, which provided insight into why there were so few alumni from the Western region who became teachers or had access to the survey.

Another interesting point to raise as it related to this variable analysis /was the frequency of W-Adinkras for participants in the semi-structured interviews. Data in Table 3 indicated that 82.6% of the interview participants shared a significant memory related to human capital negotiations during their time in K-12 schools. A more glaring statistic was that 78.2% of the interview participants' first Adinkra memory expressed related to a human capital memory. This led to the following inquiry questions related to the hometown variable: Why do the SE and NE regions yield the most teachers based on the survey? How do the K-12 experiences compare in different regions, and what impact do they have on the decision to remain a teacher?

The data in Table 13 showed the breakdown of survey participants based on division majors while at Morehouse. The data showed that of the 109 survey participants, including me, the largest group was the Humanities majors, who represented 23.9% of the survey participants.

Table 13. *Division of Major of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Humanities	26	23.9
Life Sciences	23	21.1
Social Science & Cultural Studies	19	17.4
Business Administration & Economics	18	16.5
Child Development	10	9.2
Math & Computer Science	8	7.3
Creative & Performing Arts	5	4.6

It is interesting to note the outliers in these data sets and whether there is sufficient qualitative data to explain the low number. In this case, the Creative & Performing Arts majors only had five alumni participate in the survey; however, I was able to secure two of the five for an interview. This led to the following inquiry questions based on the survey data: Why do Humanities and Social Science/Cultural Studies majors yield the most teachers based on the survey? How does the experience at Morehouse with certain majors impact the decision to remain a teacher?

Table 14 shows the final Life Circumstance variable of graduation decade for survey participants. There, the decades of the 1970s and 1980s were not represented in the interview data because no alumni from those time periods agreed to be interviewed.

Table 14. *Graduation Decade of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
1970s	1	0.9
1980s	6	5.5
1990s	25	22.9
2000s	51	46.8
2010s	26	23.9

Nearly half of the survey participants graduated between the years of 2000 and 2009. This may be because I graduated in 2004 and utilized relational dynamics to recruit participants for both the semi-structured interviews and survey. Those individuals who graduated in the 1970s and 1980s showed the long tradition of Morehouse graduates being teachers, following the publication of the history of Morehouse by Jones (1968). The following inquiry questions probed the qualitative interviews based on the survey

results related to graduation major: Why did the majority of the participants in the survey data graduate after the year 2000? How do the professional pathways and development opportunities differ based on graduation year, and how do they impact the decision to remain a teacher?

The following sections attempt to make sense of the possible answers to these questions posed by the quantitative data findings. They quote specific excerpts from the semi-structured interviews and analyze the possible Power Themes that arose in the narratives.




Hometown themes: “Mapping the options in the K-12 education system.”

The next several subsections use the following questions as starting places for analyzing the participants’ responses within the context of where they were raised and how they experienced their K-12 education: Why do the SE and NE regions yield the most teachers based on the survey? How do K-12 experiences compare in different regions, and what impact do they have on the decision to remain a teacher?

While all of the interview participants taught in a public school, many of them attended private schools during their K-12 learning experience, which was shown to have a profound impact on their perception of education as a teacher. This thematic analysis is divided into three parts: unpacking how the interview participants experienced the mapping of their school options in their specific context of K-12 education; making sense of their interactions with school culture within their K-12 education system; and, finally, how they navigated out of their K-12 education system to attend Morehouse College. The first set of excerpts highlights the interview participants’ perceptions of their K-12 education system and their interactions within it.

Perception of system: Parents as educators. Looking at the memories from these alumni as related to their K-12 learning experience revealed how parents as educators have had a multifaceted influence on the interview participants' life trajectory as student and teacher. Figure 35 shows the Power Themes identified in this set of data.

Figure 35. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to Parents Being Educators*

Data Sample	Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
A) Perception of system	1A: Parents as Educators	Identified Drive 	Introjected Regulation 	S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS 

Based on the various contextual understandings of the impact of parents as educators on how participants perceived the K-12 education system, I concluded that these parents could act as a controlled motivational source for some participants where the parent is positioned to negotiate the power between the school system and their child. This a key point because the role of being a school advocate was not always present among the parents of the interview participants. However, given that all of the participants with parents who were also educators also explicitly described how this had an influence on their decision to become a teacher.

Within the framework of the Sankofian logic model (Figure 16), the Structure and Function Adinkra Funtummireku Denkyemmirek (S&C Adinkra) contextualized the power dynamics to unpack data implications related to the negotiation of people and institutions. The powered motivation that drove some of these parents to advocate for their children was access to an education they felt their sons deserved. This was clearly

seen in Alumnus T5's experience of trying to enroll in his neighborhood public school. These memories had a profound impact on how and why these future teachers gravitated to the profession. It can even be assumed that those who had parent educators who were active in their life understood the importance of having someone advocate for them as a young male of color within the K-12 school system. Another contextual lens with which to analyze the power dynamics with these parent educators is through the lens of the Stability and Change Adinkra Akoben (S&C Adinkra).

The S&C Adinkra interrogates possible autonomous motivations connected to observing parents as educators. This particular power inquiry analyzes power negotiations related to protection and preparation. This can be looked at as an identified regulation, which is common because people want to survive and, for some, have optimal survival. This can be seen in the case of Alumnus D4, who expressed how his mother actually encouraged him not to be a teacher and pushed him to save his money so that he could be prepared financially for his experience at Morehouse. She was concerned about his level of security and stability while at Morehouse and wanted him to have both protection from the challenges that Black men face in a credit-driven world and the proper preparation for situations that may call for added funds. While no interview participants directly stated they became teachers because of their parents, it was clear that parents were influential in the participants' understanding of the importance of education.

This was also seen from alumni from different geographical locations and set the cornerstone for their understanding of what a teacher meant to a community. Alumnus D10 explained that he was born and raised on the West Coast and was one of few Black kids in his school. He mentioned that he accepted this context and viewed it as common.

He also painted a picture of a household that very much valued education as both parents worked in the profession. He described that his parents encouraged him to go to college but not necessarily Morehouse or an HBCU. This may imply that the decision to attend was less attached to Morehouse's reputation, but it was encouraged by both parents who valued education:

Born and raised in San Diego, California growing up I wouldn't say my younger brother and I were the only Black kids that were in the school, but we were one of a few. That was common. I never really thought that much of it. I was fortunate enough both my parents were very active with us. My father just a couple of years ago retired from a local community college. He had started off as a football coach, and a teacher, or a professor there and then he ended up as a dean and was managing a bunch of schools. My mother worked with local public schools for years. Education was always a big thing. It was very common. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

The alumnus expressed how education was not only stressed in his household, but also integrated into his understanding of how adults were expected to conduct themselves. In addition, it was not difficult for him to see himself in the role of an educator since he was able to witness his parents working in the profession.

Alumnus S9 grew up in an economically privileged suburb in Savannah, Georgia, where he attended a relatively diverse school. His father retired from the military and became a teacher, where he was exposed first-hand to the experience of an educator.

Yes. I think, high-level, I had a really good K-12 experience. I think some things that stick out to me is, I mentioned this earlier, but my dad was an officer in the military, retired, and then he started to teach. That was around the time—I was small, my sister and I were in elementary school, spent a lot of time in his classroom. I think that that just impacted me in just a lot of different ways, and just seeing him and his students, and just the impact.

He was there for 20 years after that. He just retired. That, I think, was just a big influence. Obviously, your dad works in the school system, you don't really act a fool. People know you. I'm from Savannah, it's not huge. [chuckles] It just made school feel like, yes, it was a good place. I think one thing, though, is that my

sister and I went to a school called Georgetown Elementary School, which was opened the year I got there. We lived in a very nice area in Savannah, very suburban. (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

The value and emphasis of education proved to be important to both parents, particularly because they were educators. Alumnus S9 mentioned explicitly reflecting on how his father as a teacher in the community impacted his perception of the community. Alumnus D4 grew up in New York and Delaware and was highly influenced by his mother who also worked in education. She encouraged him to work at the Delaware Autism School in order to save money for that time when his parents could not support him. However, his description of his mother's influence on him also showed an emphasis on human capital, particularly how his mother pushed him to save money to attend Morehouse.

Let me see. My freshman year, well before I got to Morehouse, I was working at the Delaware Autism Program, which is now known as the Brennan School, you can look it up. It's the first public school in the United States that specifically deals with children on the autism spectrum. My mother, she taught in New York City, from the 70s, all the way up until '89, '90. There's a whole family thing that happened, and she ended up teaching for the Christina School District, who I ended up working for, for a little while, but they run the Brennan school. Needless to say, my mom, she's looking at it like, "Yo, you're going to need money to go to Morehouse, and we're not going to be able to help you, so get as much money as you can." Every summer, because I was supposed to do inroads, I was supposed to do a whole bunch of stuff, and she's like, "No, you need to come back home and work at the autism program because this is guaranteed money because we can only help you up to this particular point." (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Another alumnus, P4 from the NE, discussed the influence that watching his mother as a teacher had on him when it came to his decision to remain a teacher. He explained that he understood the nature of education from a distance with his mother and grandmother being former educators.

No. I will admit that I didn't want to quit because I'm a third-generation educator, so I didn't want to just jump into it and then quit so early because I knew I had—my mom was a teacher, she's retired now, and my grandmother, she's deceased now, but she was an educator as well. Now, outside of the money, I wanted to help students. I wanted to be a positive role model, but there was nothing else going on. (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

The ongoing impact of parents in the participants' lives revealed the importance of how education is framed for young males of color. Alumnus D4's mother emphasized the importance of preparing financially while at the same time exposing him to an opportunity to learn a valuable skill that helps those less fortunate. Alumnus P4 even described a sense of hesitation when he faced his retention decision. Alumnus T5, who is from St. Louis, Missouri, showed how parents as educators can also serve as strong advocates for their Black sons who may be unfairly categorized as special education because of their race and gender.

One significant memory that Alumnus T5 shared was the challenge he had trying to enroll in the first grade at his local public school. Because he had a September birthday, the school said they were mandated to put him back in Kindergarten because students have to be 6 in order to start the first grade. After his mother, who was an educator, inquired about the content that was being covered in the first grade classroom, the school proceeded to give Alumnus T5 a series of intellectual and physical tests. After exceeding their expectations on the tests, the school offered to put Alumnus T5 in gifted and talented classes and even skip him to second grade. However, because of the lack of cooperation and doubt the school displayed when they attempted to enroll, Alumnus T5's mother decided to enroll him in a private school where she would not have to confront the same issue:

My mom was trying to get me to the neighborhood school. In the neighborhood school, I was supposed to go and get to first grade and my birthday falls in September. I would've been five going into the first grade. They were like, "No. Students have to be six to go into the first grade. That's the policy. It's what it is." We go into the neighborhood elementary school with my mother. They were like, "What's going on in first grade? What kind of information?" She's trying to use her understanding of teaching and education to kind of get a feel for what it is going to be going on. I remember having to go through a battery of tests both physical and intellectual. To get in the first grade in my neighborhood school. This is no longer having to get bussed from one neighborhood to the other, like on the 30-minute bus ride. This is like, "Hey. You could walk to school and be right there. You can ride your bike to school and be right there." I just had to go through a battery of tests. I think they were like, "Can you walk on a balance beam? Are you physically competent?" and then ask you to read a book because, again, I was in the space where I was reading pretty well, pretty formally. They asked me to read a book. I chose a book and I read it all the way through, and they said, "You might have memorized that book. Let me choose one." Then it was like, "All right. You jumped through the first hoop, you jumped through the second hoop, now I'm going to give you a third hoop." As a kid, I'm not thinking about them like, "All right. Just give me the book. I'll read it." Voracious reader, good appetite for that. Read it, and then after the set of tests, they were like, "We don't care how old are you. We're going to put him in the talented and gifted program. Advanced. He might be able to move on to second grade." And my mom was like, "No. Did you see what you just made us do? What you had us go through, to go to your neighborhood public school. That's okay. I'll take him somewhere else." She ended up enrolling me in a private school that some of my older cousins had gone to. (Alumnus T5, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus R5 also had an influential parent who was a teacher. His experience growing up in Toledo, Ohio, shaped his receptiveness to become a teacher and planted the seed for his passion to support young males of color:

From the time I started coaching, that was a major, major, major operation in growth for me because I got a chance to coach a sport that I loved, at a school that I love because I grew up—The school that I taught, it was at Robinson Junior High School. Not only did my parents used to teach there at the same time, my dad went to middle school there. I always loved that school. (Alumnus R5, personal communication, 2020)

Although he had an active father in his life, Alumnus R5 was passionate about filling in the gaps for other Black males who may not have a Black man to be "emotionally"

available for them. He talked about how impactful it was to coach basketball at his mother's old school that he used to visit and that his father attended as a child. He reflected on how he learned the power of vulnerability particularly around young Black men in public. He shed tears in front of his players who saw him model what it was like to be a father and husband:

I loved that neighborhood, but I tell you what, I learned so much leading young men. I always say now. I said, "If all I ever taught these young men was basketball, then I have failed miserably." I know one of the things I learned about manhood, not that I had planned to teach it at all, was the power of vulnerability and the power of vulnerability in a public space in front of young man who already had maybe a limited edition or limited experience of what it means to have a Black male in their life. There were times where my players saw me shed tears, there were times my players heard me apologize. There were times where my players saw me be a father and a husband. That I believe, at least now they tell me, those were very poignant points for them, because yes some of them had men in their lives but as you know and I know, most males that they were around, men that they were around weren't emotionally available to them. (Alumnus R5, personal communication, 2020)



In this case, integrated regulation seems to dominate the participant's autonomous motivation to support young males of color. Circumstances that lead to this type of regulation typically involve the person taking into consideration the level of autonomy and convenience that the context allows. Alumnus R5, in essence, activated his autonomous motivation through his hometown setting that gave him a level of familiarity, where he could be vulnerable with students in order to inspire them to strive for excellence.

The next section extends this view of the influence of parents on the interview participants' trajectories and decisions and includes those interview participants who did not have parents as educators. Specifically, this next section provides examples of how parents put strategic effort in getting their son into what many alumni described as a

“good school,” meaning a place where they would receive a quality education and be protected by stereotype threat as well as potential violence.

Perception of system: Public school vs. private school. The decision that parents made as it relates to the type of school the interview participants attended was shown to highly influence their perception of education and the education profession. This idea of a quality education was in constant question for me as many of the interview participants spoke of private schools as a standard for quality schools. This was seen by participants particularly from the MW and NE regions. There were others whose geographical location did not lend itself to a variety of educational options, and therefore had to settle for what they were able to have access to. Figure 36 shows the Sankofian Power Inquiry (SPI) summary for this particular thematic focus.

Figure 36. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to Public versus Private School Searches by Parents*

Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
2A: “Good” School search between public and private schools	Integrated Drive 	External Regulation 	P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY
			C&E Adinkra	*Desired Outcome	COMPENSATION AND REPUTATION

The SPI Adinkra “towers” that were identified for this set of excerpts relate to motivations based on social identity and/or motivations seeking compensation and positive reputation. The SPI towers that were identified were the Patterns Adinkra

Akoma Ntoaso (P&P Adinkra) and the Cause-and-Effect Adinkra Nsrewa (C&E Adinkra). The P&P Adinkra refers to power dynamics related to the negotiation of social identity through the observations of ethical and moral behavior patterns among different people in society. Here, one sees the influence of role models based on circumstance, not choice. The C&E Adinkra shows implied motivation for compensation and reputation through the negotiation of and identified desired outcome. The controlled motivation in this context is regulated by external factors that force a power negotiation between the system and its desired outcomes. The parent in this case acts as a direct influence on the interview participant's understanding of school and amplifies the value of education as a representative of their reputation and how they will be compensated for their obtained skills and knowledge. The autonomous motivations in these excerpts are regulated by internal, integrated factors that involve the negation of one's ethical and moral behavior along with valued relationships. The parent in this case acts as a role model for the value of education as a representative of ethically and morally respected behavior that should be integrated within a person's social identity.

Alumnus E20 was raised in a single-family home in Chicago, Illinois. He recalled how his mother put him through private school in order for him to get a strong and safe education. Alumnus E20 would eventually get support from his father, and he showed a clear appreciation for the effort his parents put into making sure he did not fall through the cracks within the public school system:

The one thing that stands out to me, and it's not necessarily a moment, but it's a background. For me, I was raised in a single-parent home. My mom is the one who, for the most part, raised me. My dad was there and was there throughout my childhood, but they were divorced and separated. There were these custody things or whatever. My mom, she did a great job. She sacrificed, she put me in private

schools all from kindergarten, all the way up to eighth grade. Then my dad took over and he helped finance in a private high school. My education was a little better than what public school offers. I was able to see that when I became a teacher. I looked and was like, “Wow, I am necessary here because these kids don’t have the same thing that I grew up getting.” (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)

The fact that Alumnus E20’s parents invested so much in his education leads me to believe that he developed a certain understanding of the value and priority of education as a young Black boy. However, this did not come overnight. One of the memories that Alumnus E20 shared was how his father removed him from private school and enrolled him in public school as punishment for inappropriate behavior. However, in public school, he came to the realization that his education was vastly different from what his peers were receiving in private school. After nearly failing out, he turned the corner and began to take his education seriously:

Yes, absolutely. Here’s one that really stands out. Freshman year, as I mentioned before, my dad took over financing my education in high school. Freshman year, actually, it’s going into my sophomore year, me and some friends, we got wasted, we got sloppy drunk. We were at the school during our summer session, band camp and we were just cutting up. My mom had to come and get me. All of this filtered over to my dad and my dad was like, “Well, I’m going to put you into public school. I’m paying all this money for you to go here to Mendel Catholic high school and blah, blah, blah, so forth and so on. I shouldn’t be paying all of the—” He was looking for ways to stop paying money. We had that experiment. I went to public school my sophomore year, and I was able to miss in one semester, 40 days of class, just cutting. This couldn’t happen at the Catholic school I was going to because even if you showed up late, there were consequences. Public school was a whole new world to me. I was like, “Oh my goodness.” I missed about forty days that semester, still passed and this is what happens in a public school. You’re just on your own. I was still passing, but they got word that I just was falling through more cracks. That was phenomenal that there was such a marked difference, and that the students who went to public school that were doing well were just self-motivators. That was the only way I could see, or I was just really good at discipline or found some intrinsic way to just do well. Long story short, my dad put me back into Mendel. I was able to recover without having to repeat the year or anything like that. I just stayed on track and wound up

graduating and going on to college and doing good things. That, to me, was a clear demarcation between what it was like to go to private school and what it was like to go to public school. (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus H11 was an advanced student, starting Kindergarten at the age of 4. As a result, he was typically the youngest in his class. Alumnus H11 went to predominantly White schools and he noticed that in middle school, teachers started characterizing negative behaviors with Black boys:

For the most part, I was always definitely the youngest in class. That never really presented a problem because, academically, I was on par with the kids in my class, until about middle school, when my parent started hearing, I should say, things about maturity and things like that. I went to a predominantly Caucasian school. We were about 1% to 2% non-African American, and pretty high-socioeconomic status Caucasian area. Pretty much, we were the first crop of African American kids who grew up in that area who didn't live in the "black pocket" which was one street. The teachers weren't really used to dealing with parents like mine who were both educated and high expectations that they set forth for our kids, at our school. If you did see Black kids, they were oftentimes be segregated to one remedial course. (Alumnus H11, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus H11's parents set high expectations for him and refused to have him in remedial classes because they felt he wasn't mature.

Coming in advanced, obviously, my parents were like, "No, my sons aren't going to be in that remedial course. You don't just put them in there because of what they look like when their skills are saying something else." Then they started saying, "Yes, well, you know, things like mature—We understand they can read well and reason and critically think, but the maturity piece." A lot of the answers they started to hear once we got to the middle school, they say they didn't really appreciate. (Alumnus H11, personal communication, 2020)

Therefore, his parents took him out of public school and sent him to a boarding school to avoid the remedial labeling and stereotype threat to which he would be exposed. The boarding school was more diverse and smaller than the public school experience:

My parents took us out of the public school in middle school, and both my brother and I went to boarding school, which was very different. Much smaller



environment, and also way more diverse than the large public school that I was in. There were kids from all over the country. Now, it's a school with a lot of kids from New York and New Jersey. Kids from Africa, kids from China, kids from Israel. That was an opportunity to really expand the network of kids that I was around. A lot of those kids, I still keep in touch with today. That definitely had a major impact on me. (Alumnus H11, personal communication, 2020)

Interaction with system: Busing experience and crossing borders. Another trend related to the study participants' interactions with the K-12 education system was that many of them experienced being "bused" out of their neighborhood. These busing policies were created by the government in an attempt to desegregate schools following the *Brown v. Board of Education* case (Delmont, 2016). This particular interaction with the K-12 education system exposed some of the interview participants to a new sociocultural lens through which they looked at school being strangely connected to economics. Figure 37 shows the SPI analysis for this portion of the theme which shows a strong possible motivational origin with social identity and how it is positioned within certain geographical and economic contexts.

The motivation to understand, maintain, and establish an identity in society involves various levels of negotiation of ethics, morals, and behaviors that constitute meaningful relationships. This integrated regulation forced some participants to confront identities that were preconceived for them. These Black men then had to choose to accept the identity from the social context into which they had been brought or use other sociocultural interactions to define the personal morals and ethics they valued. There is an also a possible external force that manifests itself within introjected regulation, where an individual takes on the identity or values of a specific context, even though he does not personally identify with the people or ethics of an organization or institution. The

major negotiation for this regulation is centered on acquisition of money through navigating specific geographical spaces in order to gain access to resources that will benefit their financial stability.

Figure 37. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Community Ties and Crossing Borders and Busing”*

Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
1B:Community Ties and Crossing Borders and Busing	Integrated Drive 	Introjected Regulation 	P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY
			S&Q Adinkra	*Distance and Money	GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS

Alumnus T5, mentioned earlier in relation to his mother advocating for him to be enrolled in school, also recalled his experience with busing. One of his earliest memories from K-12 education was his experience being bused out of his neighborhood in St. Louis, Missouri, and the contrasting environments he experienced when he would take the trip from the inner city to the suburbs. He felt this strongly impacted his purview and lens, shaping how he looked at situations related to Black and non-Black access to resources and education.

One significant memory that this alumnus shared was how in his Kindergarten class, Alumnus T5 showed he was more advanced than his classmates and would be at times neglected and minimized when he answered with the correct response:

I can probably pull out—I’ve got plenty of them. I’m going to pull out three or four stories and I want to try to go chronologically as best as I can, but these are the kind of things that have stuck with me in terms of my K-12 experience as a

student, as a Black male student that, for better or for worse, they were just experiences. Some have been more traumatic, others were not, but they left a lasting impression on me. I will start with K, so kindergarten. We were living in an urban—We're living in St. Louis City where I'm from, and they had a desegregation program or seems like a busing program. They're called different things in different places, but the point was to bring Black kids from the city and take them out to a good school in the county so that potentially the playing field would be leveled. In kindergarten, I went to school in one of the richer suburbs of St. Louis. I would do a cultural crossover. In the morning, I would get dropped off, I'd go with the babysitter or whomever, then I'd catch the bus at 4:00 or 5:00. I will got catch the yellow school bus, the yellow cheese, and it would drive us across town to the rich affluent area, rich affluent suburb, drop us off. We got a half day at that time so it was like, it wasn't even a full day. It was like 11:00 to 3:00 or something. 11:30 to 2:30 or something. Like a short day, but just driving from urban to suburb. I remember that. Then also, having to take the bus back. I'm five and everybody's going back to the neighborhood. They was all the way up to eighth grade. You got anywhere from 5- to 13-, 14-, 15-year-olds on the bus. You can sit in the back in the bus if you want to little kid, but some back in bus things going. You remember thinking about the stratification of age and what that looks like early on. Take that as one. I think that definitely informs my lens to this day. I still think of things as Black and non-Black. I look at it in that way because I'm Black. I grew up with a predominantly Black family. I've had experiences educationally and otherwise that are outside of that sphere so I look at it as black and non-Black. I would say yes that the polarization was early. (Alumnus T5, personal communication, 2020)

Here are seen the seeds of what may cause some Black men to become teachers. Personal experiences of needing to adapt and negotiate one's identity because of location could inspire some to ensure that other students do not have to compromise their personal identities for a social context like school. The forced need to code-switch in school in order to be respected and heard can weigh heavy for young males of color. The participants in this study expressed that they understood the importance of creating both brave spaces and safe spaces for other Black students to explore their identity and self-worth, as it is not always available for them within a public school context. Alumnus C10 explained explicitly how he had certain aspirations because of the school setting to which

he was being bused. He explained how he was embraced by his community, who motivated him to pursue his gifts as a musician.

Alumnus C10 was raised in an inner-city neighborhood in Nashville, Tennessee. He explained his experience of living in a high-poverty area and how he was involved in both orchestra and choral at an early age. During elementary school, he was bused out to the predominantly White schools and then eventually had them come back to his neighborhood in middle school:

I grew up in the projects, I was probably one of the only few kids in the orchestra that lived in the projects. I was probably one of the few kids that consistently was in the elementary school programs. I was probably one of the few kids who sang in the chorus. Chorus was a little more popular than orchestra, but I was in orchestra two years, and then I was in the Handbells for a year. I was probably one of the only kids that actually did that and enjoyed doing it on top of sports. It's a musical city, but where I'm from, I'm from the roughest part of Nashville. Very urban, very low income, very subsidized, that whole—we were literally bused out for elementary school. I forget the term they use, but we were bused out to the suburbs for elementary school, and then we were brought back in for middle school. During those years, that's when I realized what I was good at because I always thought I wanted to be an architect and a computer engineer. I don't know why because I have not—I'm just now becoming a techie, and I'm not even a techie. That's when I realized, and that's when mother and my village realized what you're good at. That's when the arts had cultivated. That's when I became a singer. That's when I became a theater person. That's when all of those experiences happened. (Alumnus C10, personal communication, 2020).

This kind of busing experience was also expressed by Alumnus T8. While he did attend predominantly Black schools, he recalled having to merge with a school nearly 20 miles away while in high school, where he did experience a different population of students. He also noticed that the teachers were not as supportive as they had been in his previous schools that were predominantly Black:

Yes, it's majority Black. I grew up in Arkansas. Bill Clinton was the governor. There was a movement to consolidate the smaller schools. We didn't have the numbers of students. It was probably 80/20, African American to White. My

junior year, we had to consolidate and merge with a neighboring school that was 20 miles away that was majority white. That experience was different because

when we had to go down there to go to school, their teachers were not predominantly African American. I think the only, at that time, one of the few African American teachers they had was the home economics teacher, and she had taught at my school previously. My experience there, the teachers, they weren't as supportive as the teachers had been previously. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)








The experience of crossing borders forced many of the participants to take a tourist vs. traveler mindset as related to navigating various school environments outside of their own community. Some felt like a tourist, a foreigner who was pushed into the circumstance and thus vulnerable to the environment. Others viewed the experience like a traveler who was anchored in their identity based on their community and how it was positioned relative to the school they experienced outside their neighborhood borders. Both were shown to develop a level of awareness that related to the culture of education, which could have highly influenced their later decision to become a teacher. This is emblematic of the constant power navigation that Black men face in the education system, whether they are in the position of student or teacher. In both instances, they are forced to conform, compromise, and sometimes assimilate their personal values and aspirations to be recognized as an equal contributor within any education context.

Hometown themes: “Interacting with school culture in the K-12 education system.” The second layer of interaction within this hometown theme focused on the interview participants’ experience in school, particularly with teachers and various members of the community. Several themes emerged from the data, particularly how interview participants benefited from the K-12 education as a result of certain privileges as well as the challenges they had with the system and how they persevered through it.

Figure 38 shows the SPI analysis for this particular data sample from the semi-structured interviews. One clear noticing with this set of excerpts was the emphasis on access and how the interaction with the school culture of their K-12 system positioned them to negotiate between various people who held power as well as the institutions.

The one outlier emphasized is the data sample that highlighted the experience of being labeled as a Gifted and Talented student. This returns to the theme from the previous theme related to mapping a route through the K-12 education system of Nsrewa, which interrogates the participants' controlled motivation centered on desired results. This would be expected, as the "pedagogical mask" (Harris, 2016) became more distinct and differentiated as participants reflected on how they felt about getting a better-quality school experience than some of their peers. This mask is the acceptance that the school system for students is perceived in the same way that adults view the labor system. Their academic grades and test scores are equivalent to the compensation a person receives for their labor, knowledge, and skills, even though child labor is illegal in the United States. Therefore, those in Gifted and Talented classes would be equivalent to a white-collar profession, while general education students would be considered blue-collar workers. This section examines the impact that various kinds of teachers had on the controlled and autonomous motivation of the interview participants that these individuals influenced. This includes memories that reflect the impact of teachers in their overall perception of education as a profession.







Figure 38. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Privileges and Benefits of the System”*

Data Sample	Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
A) Privileges and Benefits of the system	1A: Embracing Teachers	Integrated Regulation 	Introjected Regulation 	P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS
	2A: Black Mirror Teachers	Identified Regulation 	Introjected Regulation 	P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS
	3A: Community convenience and nurturing	Identified Regulation 	Introjected Regulation 	S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS
	4A: G&T Positioning			S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY
			External Regulation 	C&E Adinkra	*Desired Outcome	COMPENSATION AND REPUTATION

The data visualization portends possible power entities to interrogate in the qualitative data. Figure 39 shows the SPI Adinkras for this set of data focused on the challenges that interview participants experienced during their K-12 education. This particular data set is striking because there were no repeated SPI Adinkras, showing that there were varying ways interview participants viewed the challenges they faced while in

school prior to attending Morehouse. One comparison to highlight is the SPI analysis for those who were stigmatized by being academically advanced as well as those who may have had academic difficulties while in school. Here, we see the first appearance of the Energy and Matter Adinkra Akofena (E&M Adinkra), which examines how various power dynamics shaped the interview participants’ views of what they are passionate about and what is fulfilling personally and professionally.

Figure 39. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Perseverance through Challenges in the System”*

Data Sample	Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
B) Perseverance through challenges in the system	1B: Neglecting and Traumatizing teachers	Integrated Drive 	Introjected Regulation 	P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS
	2B: Lack of Black Teachers	Identified Drive 		S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY
	S&Q Adinkra			*Distance and Money	GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS	
	4B: G&T Stigma/Academic Challenges	Intrinsic Drive 	External Regulation 	E&M Adinkra	Passion and Fulfillment	HEALTH AND WELLNESS
				C&E Adinkra	*Desired Outcome	COMPENSATION AND REPUTATION

System privileges and benefits: Embracing teachers. One natural starting place to identify possible influences on a BMT’s decision to remain a teacher is their experience with teachers in their particular hometown context. While it is sometimes

assumed that all young males of color experience challenges throughout their time in the K-12 education system, yet the following interview participants expressed how certain teachers truly embraced them as individuals and growing intellectuals. There are two possible origins of motivation based on the SPI logic model. These Morehouse alumni use introjected regulation in their controlled motivation to make sense of how to navigate power people and institutions in order to have equitable access. Others may view their embracing teachers as ethical and moral individuals who modeled what they wanted in their own social identity. The ability to use content and context to shine light on self-identity while at the same exposing students to windows that reveal opportunities beyond history books and math problems, for some, resonated with their sense of intrinsic purpose and their personality. It was these individuals who represented the gatekeepers of knowledge for any profession they wanted to pursue, and many of them looked to replicate their teacher's passion for inspiring people to empower themselves with the knowledge they gain through their experience. Teachers, for many of the participants, were the role-models for moral behavior and ethical obligations.

Alumnus T8 expressed a K-12 learning experience that highly influenced his identity as a teacher. He spoke of his education as an experience that all students should have and deserve. His close-knit southern community in Arkansas valued the importance of a quality education. Alumnus T8 made reference to his childhood several times during the interview, particularly when he was asked about what motivated him to return each year as a teacher:

Also, I had some outstanding teachers when I was in school. I grew up in Arkansas, so being a teacher of color, particularly a male teacher of color, was very rare. The ones I did have were very impactful. I remember my English

teacher from high school, Ms. Williams, she said, “The most impactful thing is to learn one thing a day in each class.” If you learn one thing a day in each class, look how more knowledge you gain by the end of that day. It expounded over a lifetime. That’s the philosophy I use with my students as well. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

The love Alumnus T8 received from teachers was clearly a seed that allowed him to feel comfortable as an educator. The impact of not just one quality caring teacher in a student’s life, but a series of good teachers is an impact that school systems today are trying to measure. This builds a certain consistency and confidence in a student in navigating various education settings. Instilling important values particularly as it relates to the amount of effort that is required to be a successful Black man in the world is critical for young males of color. Alumnus T8 recalled specifically an Algebra teacher who modeled that level of commitment and the standards that teachers should have within the craft of teaching:

I will say I had some really good teachers, K-12, particularly elementary teachers. I grew up in a small community. There was probably 523 people in my entire town. My kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers knew my parents. Some of them had taught my parents as well, they had taught my brother. I remember my English teacher, her husband was a deacon in my church. It was almost like it was a community. If I did something in school, even if the teacher didn’t call home, I knew on Sunday, there was going to be a conversation with my mom about what occurred in school. I always felt like you hear students say, “You don’t care about me.” All of my teachers, for the most part, cared about my education. They thought that you could be successful. I grew up in a time here where there was corporal punishment. We got corporal punishment, that was their way of tough love. You need to stay here and this is important. We know what life is like without an education. An English teacher who—We could talk about, teach us Shakespeare and Julius Caesar and all those things, but also tell us as young African American young boys and girls that life is not going to be easy. It’s not going to be fair. Every teacher every year said, you got to work twice as hard. That was drilled into us. You got to work twice as hard as everyone else. Anytime you’re given an opportunity, an education, you have to take it. Then I remember even my favorite math teacher was a white male, Mr. Jordan. I tell my students this because sometimes they complain like, “Mr. T8, why are you so hard on us?” I’m like, “Let me tell you about my math teacher in high school. We had to get a

certain grade on our—” Every Friday we had a math test, Algebra 1, Algebra 2. Every Friday, we had a math test. Each student, you talk about differentiation. This was before anyone knew about differentiation. You had to receive a certain score on your math tests that Friday. If you did not receive that certain score, playing basketball, he would come down to the gym and say, “Commuter,” “Yes, Mr. Jordan.” When he came with the test, you know what it was about. “You got an 83. See you tomorrow at 7:30 on Saturday morning.” You’re playing basketball at night and he would call home. Well, you just say, “Mr. Jordan, you got no life. Why are you doing this?” My mom would wake me up. “You got an 83, you got an 80. Mr. Jordan said you needed to get an 85.” You had to get up on a Saturday morning, go into school. He had the custodian come in, open the school, and you would sit and do math. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus T8 showed he had strong autonomous motivation to be a teacher based on his positive experiences with nurturing teachers. While this particular alumnus is a current teacher, there were also former teachers who had strong motivations to remain a teacher based on their K-12 education experience. One indication of this was when alumni began to make reference to this particular life lens when asked about their decision to remain a teacher. At the onset of the interview with Alumnus S14, when asked about what motivated him to remain a teacher, he described the impact of his K-12 schoolteachers while he lived in Georgia. He later explained that it was not a question of year to year; he knew he was going to be a teacher or, as he explained it, it was a “no brainer.” He eventually got an administrative itch and took additional courses, learning about the limited Black leadership representation, which then pushed him to want to impact students in a different way and become an assistant principal:

I grew up part of my childhood in Decatur, in College Park, East point, before I then returned back to Connecticut for my high school year started. Seventh grade, I had some wonderful teachers of color and they inspired me. Actually, I had an English teacher who was Black, a math teacher, Mrs. Beard. I’ll never forget her. She was incredible. She was Black. My social studies teacher was Black. I was surrounded by some educated family that they inspired me and they kept me going and they cared about us, man. It just fed my whole energy. Now I wanted to

be an engineer too, but I always wanted to give back to our community by being an educator. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The decision to come back was not a decision. It was a no brainer. This is my destiny. I knew that especially being a math teacher, it was like getting that mathematics at Morehouse and then bringing that with me to the seventh—because I started off teaching middle school, looping every year, seventh grade, eighth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade. I always have my kids for two years, no matter what school I was in. (Q. Salem, personal communication, 2020)

System privileges and benefits: Black mirror teachers. The study participants had a wide range of experiences related to the teachers they interacted with in their K-12 education system. Some participants also shared how important it was for them to have BMTs while they were matriculating through K-12 schools. Some had frequent BMTs with whom they interacted and who modeled for them examples of individuals who reflected their social identity. Alumnus D13 explained how he had limited BMTs, but the one with whom he did interact profoundly influenced his motivation to be a teacher:

My second experience was the fact that in my whole high school experience, I only had one Black teacher, that was my engineering teacher and not even in elementary school. I only remember and this was when I was living in New York, I had a Black teacher in elementary school in New York, but it was an art teacher. The reason I was a social studies teacher was because it just dawned on me, if Black men teach, we don't teach any real subjects. We teach the extracurricular activities, we teach PE, and then we're coaches. I was like, I didn't want to be that. That's not what I wanted my story to be. Those are my two K-12 experiences that influenced the decision, the route that I went. (Alumnus D13, personal communication, 2020)

For some of the interview participants, these BMTs influenced their actual pedagogy when they eventually became teachers. Alumnus J10 attended school in Newark, New Jersey, and explained how there was one teacher after whom he modeled his eventual approach towards students as a teacher:

I would say some of the best Black male teachers that I had, number one was Mr. McDonald, and that was in high school. He was my world history and my United States history teacher. He also had a lot of cultural knowledge about Africa, and

he would teach us about our history. He would also teach us about world history, and it was something that I would soak up. He became like a mentor to me. I wanted to be able to teach like him. I would be finished before every student and he would allow me to go to the library to look up books on John Henry Clark or Malcolm X. That impacted me greatly. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

This experience with BMTs seemed to genuinely resonate with some participants, particularly those who attended predominantly White schools. Alumnus P4 did not have an opportunity to take classes with many Black teachers; however, he did recall one BMT who taught African American History who allowed him to embrace his identity as a young Black high school student:

It's two different examples. Actually, the African American class and the first teacher I had was a Black woman teacher. She taught math. For me, it wasn't anything direct. I'll give you the two examples. In the first example, it wasn't anything direct, but everybody liked this particular black woman for her math class. Her name is—Now she's the principal. She worked her way up to principal. Principal Linda Murphy. She worked her way up to being the principal of Morristown High School. From an early age, I learned in high school that everybody likes to take her class. I felt like it really reflected the fact that she's such a great teacher. I'm talking about White, Black. She had everybody in her class. That was indirect. That was that's something that was motivational. Then more directly in the African American history class, African American studies, I felt like we could code-switch. I felt like we can completely embody our full black identity in that class and still learn. We still had structure. He was an old school, Texas teacher from back in the day, so he didn't have no riff-raff in the class. He put up with no collar now disrespecting the teacher. None of that. I felt a lot of affirmation and validation in my racial identity from that particular class. We didn't have a lot of students in that class. One of the things that I noticed from a curriculum point of view, one of the things I said earlier is that the African American studies class in high school, it was an elective. It's not a required class. It's certainly an elective. You didn't have to take that class. You could take basket weaving, woodshop, woodworking, welding, something like that, home economics, whatever, whatever electives we had available. Then there was African American studies. Looking back, I don't even know why I took that class. I feel like I took it just because the teacher was probably Black and I didn't have many Black teachers in high school and I figured, on my way out, let me at least be able to say I took his class. I remember distinctly senior year, I got into Morehouse. (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

Here, the alumni was being highly influenced by those who reflected their culture and experience. Each of them noted how the BMT was engaging and allowed them to be themselves in class. They also showed they were engrossed with their knowledge-base and able to give insight into topics that resonated with their experience as young males of color. Alumnus J10 and Alumnus D13 explicitly noted how these teachers inspired them to become teachers. These Black Mirror Teachers reflected an option for these alumni that resonated with how they wanted to be viewed by society.

System privileges and benefits: Gifted and talented positioning. The final analysis of study participants' experiences in the K-12 education system relates to privileges from which they have benefited that focused on those who attended "Gifted and Talented" classes. This particular theme resonated with the notion that some students who receive quality instruction have the potential to be future quality instructors. However, the culture and power dynamics involved for Black children are challenging and begin human capital indoctrination through strategic positioning within the K-12 education system—with high-stakes tests, frantic parents, and students as innocent human capital investments. The experience of Alumnus D4 showed the complexity and strategic thought that his parents took to position him on an honors track starting in Kindergarten:

I'm from Brooklyn. I was born in Brooklyn. The way that the New York City public system works is tracking. It's still tracking. I'm an '80s kid. Tracking was heavy. What you had to do was, you went to daycare this, that, and the other, and then you had to get a placement, right? In order to get your placement, you had to take this test, and I still remember. We went to the South Shore High School down in Canarsie, which was my first placement for doing student teaching for teaching fellows to do my summer teaching placement, but you had to sit down and take this crazy test, right? That would dictate basically where you ended up, from elementary to high school. They switch it up in New York where it's like it

goes from elementary to middle school. Middle school, you got to take the test to get into the selective high schools, to get into the best high schools. However, if from elementary school you were dope and you scored high, then you're good. Right. I beg your pardon? (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus P10 lived in Harlem where he attended Catholic schools during his K-2 schooling, which he described as diverse. When he moved to New Jersey, he interacted with more Black people and witnessed a growth in the Black population. He attended a magnet arts school in New Jersey and realized that in middle school, there was a shift in focus on standardized tests. Alumnus P10 played an instrument from an early age and loved to read, but he felt he lacked the necessary math and science skills to compete with his White counterparts. His mother decided to move him back to the Catholic schools during high school as a result of combining the local high schools from two different neighborhoods. He explained how he was able to get put on the "A" track:

It was more or less the increase of the—At that time, I'm going to be honest and say, they combined two high schools in one. It was no longer, how can people be safe? It was fights. My whole eighth grade year, you heard about fights. We would go into what's considered lockdowns now, but we would get alarms saying, "The high school around the corner is fighting. They're doing this." The whole demographics just changed from my time from third grade up until about seventh, eighth grade. That's when we were able to see, "Okay, yes, the neighborhood's changing, yes, things are changing." I was still gung-ho about going, but at that time, my mom made a decision. She said, "If I send you there, where you'll be safe, a lot of things are changing, and are you going to be as astute as you are now? Are you going to stick with it?" At that time, there were schools like St. Benedict's, Seton Hall Prep, SS Catholic. It was like all-male schools, all co-ed Catholic schools that were on the rise. It was more or less like, "Oh, wow." Every African American household who's middle-class is now sending their kids to these schools, whereas now, most of that affluent African American send their kids to the public schools, that at that time it was, "Okay, you're going to go to this Catholic school, this academy, this prep school." That shaped my experience. More or less, they'd opened up my eyes, because I went to school in where I live now, I live in Montclair. I went to Catholic school in Montclair, but the difference that I noticed that, immediately, going to that Catholic school coming from an urban environment, like Hillside Irvington was,

they see me as being attending this Catholic school. I now have to show them that I belong, because they ranked you immediately. You're either in A, B, C or D section. We all knew D, you didn't pass. I was in A, but it was almost like, "Well, in order for you to stay in A, you get the privileges," I got to choose certain things. That shaped me knowing, "Okay, so we all are equal, but this is not equitable." Again, that shaped me for, where do I want to go to school, and that's possibly why I chose Morehouse. (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

In the case of Alumnus S9, he described a clear difference in his educational experience once he was put into "Gifted and Talented" classes, particularly after being treated as if he had a learning disability because he stuttered. This connects to the next section where this more deeply examined the challenges that interview participants had in their K-12 education system.

Alumnus S9 recalled having a stuttering problem early in elementary school that resulted in him being put in remedial classes along with an IEP. His younger sister was a year younger than he was and had tested into Gifted and Talented classes. In the fourth grade, the school decided to test him for a Gifted and Talented program. After being accepted, he explained that his educational experience changed drastically. He recalled being pulled out of class and learning differently than the general education students did. His Gifted and Talented classes were more engaging, with students frequently being able to stand when they learned, along with other hands-on projects. This continued until high school where students were put into two tracks: a "college track" and a "tech track":

The school was pretty diverse, a really diverse school. Even my mom says this now, that was just a blessing to have that at that time. It just so happened to open up in our neighborhood at the same time we had moved in. I think, at Georgetown, it's where— Okay, I think two things happened there. I used to stutter as a kid, and so, obviously, I had to go to speech therapy, so they gave me an IEP. What happened at Georgetown was that- and I started to notice it. Because people think because you stutter, there's something cognitively wrong. [chuckles]. They started to put me in classes with kids who could not read, and I could read really, really, really well, I just stuttered really bad. I remember like

first or second grade, I started to just tell my mom, I was like, “This just can’t be.” [chuckles] I was the only— It just was strange. I just knew something was off in my classes. One of my teachers, my second grade teachers, she was a Black lady, and her and my mom were in the same sorority, and they had a friendship. She said something to my mom about— She thought that they may be putting me in classes that were probably a little low, because at that time, they were tracking students. She was like, “I think they might be putting him in classes that may be a little lower.” My mom just kept that in mind. I think around my fourth grade year, that’s when—I just remember something happening, and they tested me to be gifted, in the gifted program, and I had stopped stuttering by this time. Mind you, I had stopped stuttering by this time, I just kept getting tracked into these classes that weren’t the best. The thing was my sister was—My sister’s only a year behind me, and she was in the gifted program. To me, it just was weird. Then in my fourth grade year, I got tested for Gifted and got into the program. I think it’s when I got into the Gifted program is that just changed everything. School just became—I just felt like I was finally at a— You know, where people match you where you are? Everything was—curriculum, I was just like, “Yes, I loved it.” They pulled us out of class. We didn’t sit down, all of it was standing up. We had projects. My friends were in the normal classes, and they would come in in the morning. We would come in with everybody, and then they would pull out all the gifted kids. I was the only Black boy. We would do all kinds of activities. It’s just stuff that was so different than what my other classes were like. I was in that program up until high school because at high school, it goes away. I was in the gifted program from right at the end of elementary up until high school. When I got to high school, that’s when I got into the honors program in my high school. (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

These reflections are important because the participants expressed their sense making of two tracks of education based on access. This awareness influenced them through their educational experience as they interacted with privileges that some of their peers were not to have. It could be assumed that this recognition of educational inequity resulted in their eventual choice to become a teacher and support both those young males of color who may not have the opportunity be on a gifted track and those who may not realize the responsibility that comes with having access to these educational resources. The complexity of this system varied based on geographical location; however, it was

clear to these participants that their experience in Gifted and Talented classes was rare and should be expanded to others like them.

System challenges and perseverance: Traumatizing teachers. In analyzing these interview data, it was also found that many of the participants had very challenging situations within their hometown school context. Many of the participants described some teachers who did not know how to respond to their energy and advanced intellect. Here, one finds that motivation can come from traumatic experiences as well as empowering ones. Alumnus J10 was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, and attended Catholic school for the majority of his K-12 school experience. After attending public school in first grade, his mother moved him to Catholic school to avoid the ongoing fights that were taking place in the school located in an underserved part of the community.

While in Catholic school, J10 gained leadership skills and was elected to a class officer role in the eighth grade. However, this was taken away from him after he refused to say the Pledge of Allegiance in his acceptance speech. When the position was taken away from him, he explained how his teachers showed explicit animosity toward him and claimed his uncle, who was a Black Panther, was a racist. This event profoundly impacted his interest moving forward as he started becoming interested in civil rights and civil disobedience:

There, I was able to get a Catholic school education, which at that time in the black community was considered the best type of education that somebody can get. There I was able to actually learn certain leadership skills. I was a part of student government from the time I was in third or fourth grade. I was either vice president or president, or something like that. That impacted me a lot of my eighth grade year. Yes, my eighth grade year, I think that had the most impact on me. My eighth grade year as far as elementary was concerned, elementary middle school. The reason why is because I was elected president of the class and I was taught by my aunt at the time and my uncle, who was a Black Panther, a lot of

cultural information. I was asked to say the pledge of allegiance on stage to receive my presidential position and stuff like that, and I wouldn't do it. I was elected by all of the students, but this was something that I wouldn't do, and they took it away from me. That had a big impact on me.

The lady who was the head of the department, the student government or whatever, this nun, she was very aggressive about her decisions and stuff like that. It created this animosity, as well as my teacher who was White, he told me that my uncle being a Black Panther was horrible, and he was racist and stuff like that. Even in an all-Black school, I dealt with some racism or racist attitudes, and so it impacted me. From that time, I really became interested in civil rights, civil disobedience, things like that. That just fueled me as a young person to learn more about myself. I was starting to develop my identity of who I am. I looked a lot towards my family members, my uncle, my aunts, my mother, who had this cultural knowledge. I would take that and then use that in the schools to debate my teachers in regard to what we were learning, which fueled my fire to learn even more, even the things that they were teaching me. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

These varying power dynamics between what some interview participants felt they needed and what was available to them intersected with their identity development as young males of color. Many times, these challenging situations involved White teachers. Alumnus L6 remembered two important situations from his childhood that affected how he would view race relations in this country. These incidents also correlated with the challenges many of the interview participants expressed about having a limited number of Black teachers during their K-12 experience:

I'm a military kid. The last of— [crosstalk] I went to— I counted it a couple years back, I went to 14 schools between K and 12. Germany, Maryland, North Carolina, Colorado, Hawaii, and Virginia. I'd never had a Black male teacher. K12 at all, I'd never had a Black male teacher. I had several, ironically, Black administrators though. I had Black guidance counselors all the way through middle to high school. I had a Black male assistant principal at the high school that I graduated from in. I was only at that school for two years. It was a magnet performing arts school. I had several instances. I remember two vividly instances in K through 12 schooling where I was— They were racial incidents. My second grade teacher just believed that I was dumb. She did not grade my papers. We had been in school for a little over a month and I had not gotten any work done. I noticed and I asked my mom about the fact that when I turned my work in, she

just would put it on her desk. Everybody else's work, she would go through and whatever. Any work I gave her, she would just put it on her desk, she would never grade it. My mom came to the school. I had a Black principal at that time. My mom came to school. She was not Black and she was not White. She was something else. They had a whole conference. All I remember is she was very irritated with me. You telling on an adult. (Alumnus L6, personal communication, 2020)

There was another situation that happened in elementary school when a teacher who Alumnus L6 admired at the time shared details of his wedding that was planned to be a "Confederate Reenactment." At the time, L6 did not see any issue with what he shared and, in fact, expressed how he was fascinated that the groomsmen would have swords. His mother was deeply disturbed by the news and spoke with the school about her concerns. After that situation, L6 noticed that his teacher started excluding him more and treating him differently. From that situation, he reflected on how he learned that what people show on the surface is not always how they feel inside. Once he got to middle school, he started performing and earning a reputation for being the Black kid that was "articulate" and getting good grades:

She started grading all of my work as soon as I gave it to her and giving it back to me. Most of the stuff, I'm not by far— I'm not a genius and I'm good on that, but it was second grade and my mother used to make me read and write all the time. I wrote scriptures and all kinds of stuff. My dad is a preacher. In second grade I was getting hundreds on everything. It was like it made her angry that I was getting stuff right. It was just bothering her. I remember talking to my mom about that and my mom being like, "L6, you have to know that everybody in life does not want you to be successful." That's always something that I've kept with me. There are people in the world who genuinely would like to see me fail for no other reason than the fact that I am a black man. That was second grade. Then in fifth grade, Mr. Baddick. Mr. Baddick who at the time I thought was a great teacher.

Mr. Baddick was getting married. He talked about his wedding all the time. His wedding was a confederate reenactment wedding. He talked about it all the time and I thought— Fifth grade. I was 10. He talked about and showed us pictures of the Confederate uniforms that him and his groom mates are going to wear. I was

stuck on the fact that they had swords. I thought that was the coolest thing ever. My mother was livid. She was so mad. He showed us this because we were talking about, some kind of way I don't know how it came up, but he was showing us this in relation to *Gone with the Wind* because the women were wearing those 1800 gowns with the big hoop skirts and all this stuff. Yet another time in which my mom and dad came to school, whatever. I went from being one of the boys in the class who was always in the group with him to then I was not. In anything we did in class, I was always in the other group. I just kind of cut his conversation with me altogether. From that experience, I learned that there is a difference between what people are saying and what they're doing. It was the whole family. My grandmother got involved in the conversation. Everybody's like, "We need to talk about this. This is a huge issue." Once I finally understood it, I was like wow. His mind and his heart is doing and saying something different than what he's saying in class. Those two things were my experiences through my schools. I was always a novelty. I was always the only Black guy or the only Black guy getting good grades or the only Black guy that was articulate enough to speak at the award ceremony. Once I got to middle school, I started winning awards for singing and all that kind of stuff. It was in seventh grade that I met a Morehouse graduate who had come to Hawaii. (Alumnus L6, personal communication, 2020)

These obstacles represent challenges that many young males of color experience in the K-12 system. The lack of cultural sensitivity and identity recognition by these adults in the school system gave participants key insight into the importance of code-switching and how to manage introjected regulation based on the expectations of the setting. However, it also could have had a negative impact on their longevity in the profession as they interacted with the same challenges they had in their childhood but through students in their teaching experience. For Alumnus J10, he continued to explore his identity through a social justice lens, which also impacted his decisions once he entered Morehouse.

System challenges and perseverance: Transferring schools and commutes. One element that was unique about Alumnus L6's experience was that he had to adapt to new environments. In this trend, interview participants described having to move abruptly and

adjust to the entire new education system. Alumnus A9 grew up in Washington, DC, and attended several school different public and private schools during his K-12 learning experience:

Growing up in Southeast DC, my mom actually had to move around to different schools. I went to some private schools, and then I also went to some public schools. I navigated throughout in and out of the city throughout my K-12 experience. Some of the teachers, I think were awesome, but then there were other teachers it was almost pretty much like a blur. (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

An aspect that resonated with Alumnus D4 related to his K-12 experience was how “normal” it was in school, not violent, until he got to middle school. During middle school, Alumnus D4’s mother noticed the increasing violence that was taking place in the city and the heightened risk of her kids riding the New York transit and something negative happening to them. Alumnus D4’s parents were divorced when he was young, but his father had always been nearby. His mother decided to move to Delaware for a fresh restart on life, along with an opportunity to have her kids be educated in a safe environment. Alumnus D4 described how he was two levels ahead of other students because of his experience in New York City school Gifted classes and would typically finish his assignments early. The state would eventually start a Gifted program which he entered during middle school. He explained he was getting bored and in trouble as a result of his “idle mind” and was the type of person that if someone did give him a plan, then he would make his own. He described himself as very different from his brother who would be able to “toe the line,” but Alumnus D4 was willing to take risks.

Various power structures impacted these transient experiences for these interview participants. In the case of Alumnus D4, his mother was concerned about her children

having to travel on the train to attend a quality school. She decided to move them to Delaware, where she felt it would be a safer environment to learn and would expose Alumnus D4 to a variety of intersecting identities while living in the South:

There's tons of it, but to make a long story short, let me see. New York, it wasn't a big deal because everybody around me was black. My block was pretty much black. Outside of the white people who didn't want to sell their house and they didn't interact with anybody or the Jews who were orthodox and wasn't dealing with anybody with regards to their race and a couple of Puerto Ricans, everybody was Black. Everything was normal. Everybody had jobs, there wasn't any violence. I don't remember violence growing up, up until middle school. Straight up, everybody was normal. Everybody knew everybody. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D4 expressed a strong awareness of race, culture, and identity and how these impacted his perception of education. This is another indication of the importance of recognizing the deep racial experience that BMTs have had and how it may impact their approach to educating students. Varying life circumstances can cause these racially aware experiences, as seen when Alumnus D4 was forced to move from New York to Delaware:

What ended up happening was like— My parents were divorced since I was, what, three, four years old. My father, he always lived near us. My mother, she's just like, "Okay, this is New York." During the '90s, Brooklyn was crazy during the '90s. There's so much stuff that I saw, just random stuff. My mother was just like, "Okay, this is not going to work for us, so let me find somewhere to go." One of my aunts, my aunt, Pat, who lived right up the block now, actually because I'm in Delaware right now, she was like, "Just come down to Delaware. There's jobs, and you ain't got to worry about the kids or whatever" because it was reaching a point where it's just like. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Here is more introjected regulation that impacted Alumnus D4's controlled motivation that was steered by the perception of what was quality and safe, based on his aunt and mother:

“Well, D4 has to transfer, and Randy’s going to have to transfer.” My older brother’s name is Randy. It’s like, “Randy is going to have to transfer, so that means that he’s really going to have to take the train because he’s going to qualify to go to a school that’s in the city,” the city, meaning Manhattan. That means he’s going to have to take public transportation because ain’t no money and there aren’t any buses that’s coming from South Brooklyn to take a kid all the way to Manhattan for school. He’s going to have to get on a train, and you would get jumped. That’s it, you would get jumped. Kids would jump you. You get beat up, there’s pedophiles, all this other stuff. Mom was just like, “I’m not putting my kid on the train,” and then she’s like, “I’m definitely not putting D4 on a train neither.” She’s like, “All right, let me just—” whatever, because everything in New York is crazy at that time. We had to live with— My mother, she left. At that point, she started in the ‘70s, so she left like ‘89, ‘90, I want to say. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

The power dynamics of geographical locations is highlighted here as the participant’s mother was afraid that her sons were at high risk to experience violence by simply commuting on the train. The external influence forced an introjected regulation by Alumnus D4’s mother and thus initiated the move to a safer school environment. However, when Alumnus D4 arrived in Delaware, he realized that he was more advanced than many of his classmates, which did not always benefit him as it should have:

She was already vested as a teacher in a public school system or whatever, but she moved to Delaware to just restart that and to get us out of there. Then my grandmother died at the time. It was a whole bunch of other stuff. My grandmother owned the house and whatever, but she just got up out of there. What ended up happening was, after living with our dad for basically two years, we went to Delaware. Once my mother got situated, she got a legit teaching job. Delaware didn’t have a gifted program. What happened to me was, I was just advanced, there’s no way around it. I was ahead of the other kids by two grade levels, straight up because New York Gifted is really good. NYC Gifted Program, it’s super good. It’s almost like going to private school. I was ahead of most kids by two grade levels, so what happens? I’m already ahead, so there’s, “Oh, well, can you read this passage and write something?” I’m done in like 15 minutes. I’m like, “Yo, this shit is light.” [chuckles] I ended up getting in trouble because an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. Initially, my mother had a lot of trouble with me just having idle time. She was like, “Is there a gifted program because he’s from the gifted program.” I’m a pretty energetic dude, so as a kid, it’s just like, “If I’m not busy, I’m going to make myself busy, but it’s not going to be good things I’m making myself busy with. I’m just going to follow my whims.” My brother,

he knows how to toe the line, but me, I'm just like, "Listen, if I don't have a plan, I'm going to make my own plan."

That was the thing. I didn't get put— School District in Delaware, they didn't devise something like the honors system for elementary school until I was in fifth grade. In fifth grade, they put me in the honors program or whatever or the accelerated program, but it still really wasn't much because, from the beginning, I was front-loaded. That means that I had these particular skillsets. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

While some participants expressed deep appreciation for being in Honors or Gifted and Talented courses, Alumnus D4's narrative showed that it could also be a burden that some young males of color have to carry when navigating certain geographical locations. While in Delaware, the Gifted and Talented program seemed to distance him from wanting to cooperate within the school setting. The school system was not able to accommodate him, and the literature shows then to be common among some academically advanced young males of color.

One compelling story of having to navigate between two drastically different school systems came from Alumnus S3. Growing up in Inkster, Michigan, Alumnus S3's parents did not feel comfortable with him and his siblings attending Detroit Public Schools, so they had them attend school in Romulus, Michigan, as well as private Muslim schools in their area. The school he attended in third-fourth grade was conducted in a converted factory that S3 described had limited academic resources. However, students would have high GPAs, whether or not the students and teachers in the school were living below the poverty line. His father helped start the school he attended; however, S3 described going to 12 different schools during his K-12 experience. He started school in Mississippi but throughout was going back and forth between Michigan, spending half a year in both locations.

In middle school, Alumnus S3 moved to Atlanta to be closer to his sister who was attending Clark Atlanta University. While living in Atlanta, he remembers his father taking him and his brother out of school so they could work at the family restaurant during the day and do custodial work at the Muslim school he attended in the afternoon. He described students asking him and his brother why they were serving them lunch and not being in class. While the situation was more complex than Alumnus S3 could grasp at the time, he would simply tell his classmates that he was being homeschooled. In the case of Alumnus S3, the power dynamics between him and his father came to a confrontation where he had to choose a controlled motivational route where introjected regulation forced him to comply or an autonomous motivation that was intrinsically regulated in order to fulfill a specific passion or aspiration. In this case, Alumnus S3 was intrinsically motivated to take control over his own education:

Kindergarten all in Mississippi. I started school in Mississippi. Kindergarten all in Mississippi. First grade, first 2/3 were 1/2 and 1/2. 1/2 in [unintelligible 00:10:32] 1/2 in Woods Park. Still not quite sure why. Found out more so with my dad. We're still not quite sure why. Yes, then fourth grade, that's when we started at LA class, which was Michigan, and we got double promoted there, fourth and fifth, I got double promoted and went to sixth there. Seventh was Brahmas Middle School. Eighth we moved to Atlanta because my sister wanted to start at Clark Atlanta. She was in twelfth grade, my dad [unintelligible 00:11:03]. My dad didn't want her—he was like, "You're not going down there by yourself." The whole family moved to Atlanta. Now, this is the most defining moment in my dad. This was eighth grade, there was another Muslim school down here off 2nd and Glenwood in Decatur. A little Sister Clara Muhammad School. The whole family was there. My dad took my brother out of school the year before my older brother wind up right over me. We went to school that whole eighth grade year. My dad was also managing the restaurant down the street and he was managing the lunch program at the school and the cleaning program at the school.

He just couldn't really work for nobody, always with a busy person, those kinds of feeling, so he's like his own boss thing. After that eighth grade year, he took myself and my other brother out. What was supposed to be my ninth grade year, we were actually working at the school. 4:00 AM to 10:00 PM six days a week

we got one day off. Cleaning the schools, wake up, clean the schools, go down the street, prep for the morning at the restaurant, come back up to the school, prepare lunch, serve lunch to the kids we was in school with the year before. We served the lunch to the [unintelligible 00:12:31]. People were like, “Why are you not in school?” [laughs] “Oh, we getting homeschooled” because we didn’t want to say it. Go back down, finish lunch at the restaurant, come back up, clean the school up. They had after school programs, so we serve food there. Down to the restaurant, cleaning out, down there. Finished about ten o’clock at night. He had all of us doing that, that year. The ninth year was about to start. The same thing was about to happen. It wasn’t a conversation like this was going to happen. He told the girls to go into class and this is a big issue and also just when the young [unintelligible 00:13:08], three boys, four girls in the household at the time. The girls, it was assumed, “You all definitely got to go through the education side,” which actually for the generation, my mom explained, that with her dad it was the same thing with her dad. Girls go get education. Boys got pulled out of school and worked. He was about to do the same thing. Again, it wasn’t a conversation. The night before school started because we didn’t know, so we just got in a little ball in the back of the bed. He’s like, “Girls, go get ready for school.” We got to go back up to the [unintelligible 00:13:39], to the restaurant.” We knew, that was like, “We not starting school tomorrow.” Myself and my other brother right in front of me, we saved a little money here and there, and we took the bus back up to Detroit one day. Took the Marta to the Greyhound. Took the Greyhound back to Detroit.

My mom ended up flying out. We went over to my grandma. Called my grandma when we got there. My mom flew up. Of course, at this point, they panic. He let my mom put us back. (Alumnus S3f, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus S3 described how going to school in both Michigan and Mississippi felt like a psychology experiment. The expectations S3 described were so much lower in comparison to Michigan. They saw this directly when they went out for the school football team and realized how low the GPA requirements were to participate.

Prior to leaving we all are going to graduate the same time, prom, everything else. I come back, I’m a year behind, don’t want to say why, so I kept my records with homeschool because it’s embarrassing. They know I didn’t fail. None of them know I didn’t flunk a grade, but I checked that with my mom. That was something that I didn’t do, cause me to be in this position. That had nothing to do with me, why should I put forth the effort again? Luckily, I always tell the story, I was a good enough student that I could swing by. You can swing your test. Then it kicked in before too long, that it was going to be my life, not my dad’s. I can be as frustrated, resentful as possible, but at the end of the day, I had to take

ownership for the future. It was one of my future. Luckily, that ninth grade year, it kind of lucked out. Tenth grade, we was in Mississippi. We went back to Mississippi in my tenth grade year. Just me and my brother, we was literally [giggles] broke every year. Only my tenth grade year, though. I'm very blessed. It kicked in in Mississippi because we were advance coming from Michigan and some of the schools and the classrooms. We were able to keep that three-point whatever GPA. In the eleventh grade, it kicked in, like, "Okay, it's time to start preparing for college, da, da, da." That's when I, other than that math class, I boosted it back up. Yes man, it was, whatever. (Alumnus S3f, personal communication, 2020)

This aspect of the K-12 schooling experience was not directly addressed in the literature review of this study. However, it important to highlight the external challenges that are present when trying to obtaining a quality education, similar to making investment decisions related to a prized asset. This human capital shows it is more precious but dealt with differently by the parents of the participants. The sheer will power to take control of a deprived education that was the result of complicated power dynamics between parents revealed a passion for education and learning that was not previously expressed in the interviews. Alumnus S3 was a unique case as he was very clear about why he decided to become a teacher and what prevented him from remaining in the classroom. However, his traumatic K-12 schooling experience could have also influenced his perception of the education profession, particularly as it relates to what impact one can have on the community and on young people specifically. His narrative revealed that he still works with special programming that impacts students just not directly within the classroom setting. The perseverance needed to navigate the complexity of finding a quality school showed how it was a driver to both become a teacher and remain a teacher. The majority of the interview participants taught in underserved urban schools which

many times presents some of these same challenges they experienced while matriculating through their K-12 education.






Hometown themes: “Navigating to Morehouse from the K-12 education system.” The last theme that was identified within this specific variable category focused on how interview participants navigated their K-12 education system to position themselves to attend Morehouse College. The first two data samples showed how parents and teachers were key people in influencing the interview participants to attend Morehouse. Others had access to college preparatory programs that offered college tours and scholarships. These offered great insight into their decision to attend Morehouse and which power people supported the aspiration.

Figure 40 shows the SPI analysis for this particular theme. The visual display of the SPI Adinkras indicates a specific pattern with the power negotiation of “protection and preparation,” which has implications for an identified regulation of an autonomous motivation for security. However, some excerpts from the data show that participants also had controlled motivation for access, particularly access to a strong institution of higher learning. Within this analysis, we see an introjected regulation that negotiates power based on an individual desired outcome centered on typical compensation and reputation. This means that their motivation for access is anchored in a desire for financial stability and comfort, not to gain skills that would help them advance their community.

In addition, when the interview participants described how they felt when they visited Morehouse for the first time, it is clear that some used an integrated reregulation to determine if the young men they interacted with aligned with their aspired social identity. This particular decision to attend Morehouse was one of three major milestone

decisions that I was interested in investigating for whether the motivations that influenced these decisions also influenced their ultimate decision to remain a teacher. This theme indicates strong security, access, compensation, and social identity.

Figure 40. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Navigating to Morehouse from the K-12 Education System”*

Data Sample	Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications	
A) Guardian Recommendations for the System	1A: Parents and Family Routing			S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY	
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS	
	2A: Directions from teachers			S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY	
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS	
	3A: College Prep Program vehicles			S&C Adinkra	*Protection and Preparation	SECURITY	
				C&E Adinkra	*Desired Outcome	COMPENSATION AND REPUTATION	
B) Identity Reflections in the system	1B: House tours of Morehouse			P&P Adinkra	*Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	SOCIAL IDENTITY	
				S&F Adinkra	*People and Institutions	ACCESS	
	2B: Television signs				E&M Adinkra	*Passion and Fulfillment	HEALTH AND WELLNESS
					S&M Adinkra	*Locus of Control	POLITICAL RISKS

The Adinkras shown in Figure 40 reveal there were many variations of how participants remembered their decision to attend Morehouse. No clear motivation led to their decision to attend Morehouse. However, in most cases, they all had a level introjected regulation where participants were negotiating whether the values they were learning about related to Morehouse aligned with their own identity and aspirations. The process of utilizing community and family guidance showed to be a trend in actions later in life when making the decision to become a teacher. This shows how integrated regulation influences motivation when it comes to remaining in the profession, as participants implicitly expressed that they strongly valued the opinions of others when entering new communities.

Guardian recommendations for the system: Parent influence and teacher influence. As it related to the decision to attend Morehouse, Alumnus A9 had several uncles who graduated from the school. At the age of 5, he visited the school, and he remembered his brother giving him a tour of the campus. Alumnus A9's grandmother felt that Morehouse developed men who would change the world and believed in the legacy of the great alumni and educators who have helped shape the school. Alumnus A9 described how it was "Morehouse or no house":

Well, my grandmother sent three of her sons to Morehouse College. Basically, in our house, because my grandmother— I basically lived with my grandmother for a certain amount of years as well with my mom. It was either Morehouse or no house. That's all she instilled in all of the males in our family is that it's God, family, and education. Morehouse, she was always sold on Morehouse College. That's pretty much the only college I learned about as a young black boy growing up in the city of DC. That Morehouse just create world leaders, and that they're game-changers, and that with a Morehouse degree and a Morehouse experience, you could change the world around you, your society, and you can just leave a legacy. My grandmother always talked about the Dr. Kings, the Benjamin Mays, the Hugh Glosters, that's all I pretty much heard about in my household. My

uncle also, when we come back to DC, I'll be very inquisitive about his Morehouse experience. I think my actual my first college tour, I was five years old, Will and my mom's youngest brother gave me my first college tour at Morehouse. I remember the drum major, marching band, walking across campus green, and walking across past— What's what? Not maze. Graves Hall. I think my uncle stayed in Graves Hall. One of them actually went to school with Martin Luther King's son. They were there at the same time as one of Dr. King's son. That's pretty cool man as a five-year-old. I'll never some of that experience. (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus K6 also mentioned the influence of his grandmother who worked at the school and arranged for him to have a mentor who was associated with Morehouse:

Yes, I think interesting too, one of the things, my grandmother, she worked at Morehouse, she was on the switchboards one of the ops. She was like this switchboard operator at Morehouse for years, and so I had a little bit of insight to the college growing up a little bit in middle school, in the early years of high school, I say she dated, she was really good friends with a Morehouse professor, Henry Gore, who was a math professor at Morehouse, and so I had a little bit of influence watching him and talking with him, and it just never really dawned on me about not seeing African American male teachers. I just don't know why man. (Alumnus K6, personal communication, 2020)

These participants described teachers having a strong influence on their decision to attend Morehouse. Here, we again see more introjected regulation where alumni gauge their access based on their negotiation with people of power and institutions with whom they work. This means that the community that supported these participants could be a driving force for them wanting to help others have access to quality educational opportunities. Alumnus D10 explained that he was born and raised on the West Coast and was one of few Black kids in his school. He mentioned that he accepted this context and viewed it as common. He also painted a picture of a household that very much valued education as both parents worked in the profession. He described that his parents encouraged him to go to college but not necessarily Morehouse or an HBCU. This may imply that the decision to attend was less attached to Morehouse's reputation, but it was

encouraged by both parents. He remembered that one important influence in his decision to consider and eventually attend Morehouse was a teacher in high school who pushed him to consider how HBCUs may give him a unique experience. He also mentioned that he lacked any formal courses taught by Black teachers, so he was interested in having Black instructors:

I don't think that in high school I thought as much of my identity until later. When I think of it, there was a specific moment I had a professor, not as a teacher. It's interesting because I think growing up, a lot of people assumed because I went to Morehouse, Morehouse was always in the air, HBCUs were always in the air, and it actually wasn't. Both my parents went to San Diego State. The college was always in the air, but HBCU wasn't. Anything more than any other school, right? It wasn't you've got to go to HBCU. Nobody in my family had really been big on them, other than you should go to college. You should go to college was definitely the expectation. There was actually a teacher I had. I distinctly remember him pulling me aside because I was an athlete in college. Actually, I played football at Morehouse. It was never a thought for me about like, I always planned to go to college, but I never thought about I was just going to go where they let me play football. That was my thing. I remember a teacher pulling me aside and saying like, "Hey, have you thought about these HBCUs? Have you thought about a school like Morehouse because this is what it can do for you?" Really, he was the first teacher that really pushed me on thinking about this idea. He was always remembered jokes, I'm still friends with some people in my class, but he was the first one. I used to tell him I was a Democrat and he said, "Why are you a Democrat?" He used to give me projects, where he pushed me to, you've got to think from the Republican side. He was that first teacher that forced me to think like that. I think when he sat me down and started talking about Morehouse, I knew that it was coming from a different perspective. When I applied to schools, I applied to three or four state schools in California, San Diego State being one. Morehouse was the only one I applied to outside of that.

Again, I didn't think I was going to be then. I was like, I'll probably go to a state school, again, try to play ball, try to do something like that. Then I got into Morehouse and it was this different experience. My dad and I went down to visit. Saw the school, fell in love. Again, thinking about my K-12 experience, the big thing that stands out for me is, I didn't have any black teachers growing up. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

The majority of the teachers and students with whom Alumnus B9 interacted in Garysburg, North Carolina, were Black. He described a sixth grade teacher who was the

first teacher to actually mention college to him. This teacher particularly stuck out to him because this same teacher was the one who encouraged him to apply to KIPP for a teaching position. When Alumnus B9 reflected on the factors that led to his decision to remain a teacher, he explained that he only applied to two schools: Morehouse College and East Carolina University. Ironically, it was his recruiter at East Carolina University who convinced him to go to Morehouse:

Well, I only applied to two schools and that was East Carolina University and Morehouse. I applied for the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. Mostly because my older sister had applied and she didn't get it. Some of it was competitive between siblings. Okay, you applied for it I know you didn't get it I'm going to apply and see if I can get in. I applied for that and I was waiting to hear back from Morehouse. I had gone to the open house at ECU and everything and the tour guide then was like, "If you get in Morehouse I would advise you to go there." I was like, "Now you're supposed to be telling me to come here not go there," but I wanted— because I felt somewhat different from, even though I was around mostly Blacks I wanted to be in an environment where there were more guys. I'm the only boy in my family. (Alumnus B9, personal communication, 2020)

The extended support offered to these interview participants appeared to be extremely influential in their decision to attend Morehouse. Very few participants claimed to have an intrinsic drive to attend the school, which showed the trust that many had to have in the adults offering them guidance related to navigating their higher education experience. This was a crucial trend because it showed how young males of color can benefit from strategic support by community members in their pursuit of a respectful career and a quality education.

Guardian recommendations for the system: College prep programs influence.

One benefit that several alumni mentioned supported their entry into Morehouse was college preparatory programs that gave students an opportunity to visit Morehouse and

advise them on their college choice. One alumnus mentioned that one organization offered a full scholarship if he was accepted into Morehouse. Alumnus J10 described how he was able to attend Morehouse based on his affiliation with one of these college prep programs:

Well, for some reason, I will always see it as a certain Morehouse poster, that a lot of people see in guidance counseling offices, of all the men standing in front of Graves Hall. For some reason, that same poster was at Essex Catholic, as well as at Chad Science Academy. It was like Morehouse was following me in a sense. At the same time, when I got to Chad Science Academy, I became interested in the movement. At that point, because of the things that I've dealt with in middle school and at the Catholic school, because I also faced a few things at the Catholic school as well, because of that, I wanted to be in the movement pretty heavy, which I started doing. I got involved with a few civil rights organizations. One of which was a very militant group, and the person who led the group, he needed brothers in Atlanta. I was already interested in leaving New Jersey. I wanted to leave New Jersey and see something outside of it because I've been there this whole time. Also, the program that I was in, I was in a part of a program called READY, Rigorous Educational Academic Program for Deserving Youth, where they would help us with our skills and different subjects. They also gave me a scholarship to Morehouse. I had to keep a certain GPA, and then I also had to get in, get accepted into Morehouse. I was accepted into Morehouse, I got a full scholarship there, and that's all I needed. I packed my bags. I got a full scholarship to Morehouse. They paid for room and board, everything, but there were stipulations, I could only have room and board up until my second year and things like that. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D13 attended a college tour that exposed him to the campus and the potential admission into the college after high school graduation. He mentioned that his parents did not graduate from college and did not necessarily spend time taking him around to different colleges. A visit to Morehouse while he was attending Junior College had a profound impact on his decision to attend:

When I was in high school, they do the spring tours, at this time, the name has changed, but it was YMCA Black Achievers Program. They did a spring tour. They did a college tour over spring break. We went to Morehouse's campus. I didn't know anything about HBCUs. My parents did not go to college. My dad dropped out in middle school and I think my mom completed middle school. That

was the extent to our education experience for my parents. So, we were first generation going to college. My brother went to college and dropped out, my sister went and she totally took it and ran with it. When it came up to me, I was getting exposed to colleges through this college tour, and they took us on an HBCU tour. I went and I went to see— We drove up on Morehouse’s campus and it was in the spring, and so the dogwoods were blooming. I just felt a connection to the campus. You know what I’m saying? It was just like, “Yo, this is dope.” My next major impactful experience was, I went to go pick my best friend who was telling me about where I should go to school, like I said, I went to the junior college first.

At the junior college, I ended up getting me a car, whatever, and he was at Morehouse, he needed to get picked up, so I drove up there to pick him up. We went around, I was able sit around campus, followed him around and stuff, and hung out with him and his crew, and it was just like, learn a little bit more about the actual students that were attending the college. That was the first time that I experienced such a diverse group of African-American men that was around my age and was just coming from situations like mine, and totally different from mine, and it was just like, that was dope. I had never seen that side. It just cemented like, “Yes, this is where I need to go.” (Alumnus D13, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D4 also described how he was able to visit several colleges with a program that his mother arranged:

We had this college tour because my mother had a homegirl, who was part of this program. It wasn’t Upward Bound. It was something similar to Upward Bound that they did here in Delaware/the Philly area. All you had to do was pay \$20, and we basically visited, on spring break, every college from Cheney down to Savannah State. We visited every single black college. When I say every, I mean every single Black college. It was almost like hitting the road with James Brown. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

These experiences visiting various colleges exposed these interview participants to Black colleges and gave them an opportunity to choose which school matched their social identity. These identity reflections after attending these college visits are explored in the next section. These college visits helped the participants to reflect on their social identity and how the college visits forced them to reevaluate their life trajectory as well as how Morehouse could be used as a springboard for those aspirations. The visits for some

allowed them to process the school without any direct feedback from their parents. They were able to create new experiences that would plant seeds that would grow into the motivation to be a man of Morehouse one day.

Identity reflections in the system: College tours influence. Alumnus P4 attended the Morehouse “Perspective Student Seminar,” where he was able to get a thorough introduction to the school that his grandfather hoped he would attend. With both parents having experience attending HBCUs, Alumnus P4 felt it was important for him to be in a place that affirmed his purpose as a Black man. His father wanted him and his twin brother to attend a predominantly White school, but his mother, who graduated from Morgan State University, supported the decision to go to Morehouse, along with their grandfather. Alumnus P4 had the opportunity to attend the Perspective Student Seminar at Morehouse which gave him first-hand insight into the culture and people of the school:

Racial validation. I got into Morehouse. It’s one thing to get into Morehouse, but I’m going to answer your question about actually choosing to enroll. I was one of the many students. I don’t know, Will, if you participated. I don’t remember seeing you, but did you go to PSS? Okay. Okay. Okay. I thought so. I didn’t think you were in my group. I think Morehouse knows this, PSS was probably the program that pushed me over the edge. It was definitely like, what was the two or three days, something like that. You sit in all classes, you talk to current students. I ate it all up. What made me go to Morehouse was the validation of the racial identity, the Black excellence. The fact that Morehouse alone in its existence pushes back on black mediocrity, the fact that ain’t nobody black doing nothing in the world. Again, I guess the same validation that I was seeking when I took that African American studies class, it definitely applied to my going to Morehouse. My mother was excited. My father was not as excited because he felt like we should have gone to a White school. He felt like we should have gone to a White school for the opportunities. Like I said, he went to University of Maryland, but only reason why he finished at Bowie State was because he was dodging the draft from Vietnam. He was getting ready to graduate from Maryland, but Vietnam jumped off, and then they came up with the rule that if you were in school, you don’t have to go. He just decided to take more classes and transfer to Bowie State to dodge the draft because he was like, “I ain’t going to war,” because he heard the stories already from friends that started coming back from the war already. He

felt like we should have went to a White school, but when we went to Morehouse— There’s a backstory. He felt like we should have went to a White school, but my— may he rest in peace, my father’s father, my grandfather, he really wanted me and my brother to go to Morehouse. (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

Many interview participants explained that they had “unofficial” visits to Morehouse through family members who were already present in Atlanta. Alumnus H11 explained how his older brother attended Morehouse and was able to visit him during middle school:

For me, there was two schools that I was always going to. Morehouse, it was number one on my list. Since around that time, I had that epiphany in seventh grade, it was around the time I decided I’m going to Morehouse. My older brother went to Morehouse. That was the initial pathway in for me, and going down and visiting him since sixth grade, and being in dorm rooms, and going around, and staying with him and his roommates senior year, and hanging out with them. I was like, “There’s no other place where I want to be.” A lot of first times for me happened in Atlanta, from the AUC before I even stepped foot down there as a high schooler. Even though we have a lot of aunts and uncles who went to the AUC, either Spelman, or Morehouse, or Clark, or Morris Brown, we have family who matriculated through all schools. We always knew about the AUC and just the strong legacy that came from there. I’ll never forget getting my letter saying that I had gotten into Morehouse. I have been talking it up for so long. Like some of my close friends really knew about it. “Oh, wow, that’s awesome, you’re going to be so happy.” (Alumnus H11, personal communication, 2020)

Many circumstances influenced Alumnus S9’s decision to attend Morehouse. One of his earliest memories as a child was wanting to attend the institutions which he called at the time “House Moore.” He remembered reading a book on Dr. King early in elementary school, in addition to having several family members who attended Spelman College. As a result of his sister and cousin attending Spelman, he had the opportunity to visit the school several times before attending. He reflected on how he had a skewed view on what a Morehouse Man was and what type of person schools aimed to develop. He viewed the school as a place that created the ideal “Black White Boy.” His parents had an

influence in his decision to attend Morehouse. Alumnus S9's father was an HBCU graduate and supported the decision to attend the historic college. His mother had a connection in the admissions office through a line sister, in addition to other family connections that allowed for a smooth admission process for him. He went into Morehouse, viewing it as the epitome of "Black Excellence," but recognized that this changed once he graduated and learned of how White supremacy has even influenced the school where he enjoyed his college experience:

I don't know. Literally I cannot tell you how. I think that— I do not remember. I don't remember at all. I just remember being first or second grade and— I'm going to House More. It may have been— We read a book, it was a book about Dr. King. It may have been there. I don't think that's it though because I think I wanted to go there before I read that book. It was just like this, but I will say I have a lot of family that went to Spelman. My sister went there, and my cousins went there. At that time one of my cousins was there. She was at Spelman at the time that I remember making that claim, but yes, I think that outside of that little kid's story, yes, Morehouse, I think the biggest thing for me is I knew I wanted to go to HBCU. My dad went— Well my family has really been to HBCU. My dad went to one—my mom went to a White school. My dad went to HBCU. He got to see a lot of that culture. Growing up in Georgia, my sister always wanted to go to Spelman. She was influenced by our cousins that went to Spelman and we would visit a lot. Then around third grade, that's when we started to visit. I've been to homecoming a few times, things like that. By the time I was ready to apply, I had seen it. I had gone. I had the tour. It's so crazy. The admissions director at the time I was going in, his sister is my mom's line sister. We just called, she made the— It was just a lot of connections that just made it seem, kind of fell in place for me, thank God. That was really what just kind of influenced me to attend Morehouse, and this, I think Morehouse— I had the perception that, and I would say this is different now, Morehouse to me at that time was like the epitome of what an educated Black male should look like. He's smart. He wears suits, that kind of thing. I was very much intoxicated by that look and thinking that I wanted to be like that guy. Now, I don't think that at all anymore. That mindset that I went in there with is of the progeny of White supremacy. Basically, I wanted to just be a Black White boy, and I thought that Morehouse produced the perfect Black White boys. You could walk into any room and people would— That's how it was explained to me. I think that, yes, I was intoxicated by that from a very young age. That does not all mean I regret— I love Morehouse College right to my soul, but that's one critique that I do have of just my narrative of it as I went in. (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

As these excerpts revealed, the interview participants received a variety of different messages related to Morehouse and interpreted the institution's role differently. Alumnus S9 had an impression that Morehouse would develop him into a person who could seamlessly navigate the racial power structures that Black men encounter without feeling devalued because of race or gender. There was also a difference in the interpretation of Morehouse for interview participants based on when in their life they were exposed to the institution. The close access to campus life and the college experience was available to alumni like H11 and A9 and thus created a deeper intrinsic drive to attend the college once they reached high school. Others like Alumni D10 and P4 had experiences that allowed them to see immediate benefits to the school versus aspirational desires that may come from a young boy still making sense of the importance of education.

Identity reflections in the system: Television influence. The final focus within this theme highlights the influence of popular culture on the semi-structured interviews. When participants were asked what factors influenced their decision to attend Morehouse, many made reference to seeing characters on TV sitcoms with HBCU sweaters and movies that took place on HBCU campuses. Importantly, when many of these movies and TV shows were on the air, many of these interview participants were in middle school and high school, where popular culture had a strong influence on their intrinsic passions. Here, the interview participants were navigating external influences by TV producers who included various motives, including encouraging students to attend

HBCUs. Alumnus D4 made several references to television shows and movies during his interview:

Different World, *Living Single*, and even *Martin* because I saw them wearing sweatshirts and shit. I knew about Delaware State because most of my mother's friends that she worked with, who were teachers, they went to Delaware State. I said, "I'm not going to go UD because I want to get out of Delaware. I hate this place. Temple, they offered me money. I'm thinking about Howard and Morehouse." She was like, "Huh?"

She did that. She's like, "Huh?" and she's like, "Are you sure?" I was like, "What do you mean am I sure?" because, at that time, my brother, he was at Howard. I was like, "Yes, I think I want to go to Howard because my brother's there, and I have blood family, close blood family, who live in, actually, DC in the district, so I'll be straight, and I'm not going to be that far away from my family. It's only two hours from my mother and my stepdad." Then she was like, "What about Morehouse?" I was like, "Yes. I saw the School Days, and I think it might be a good fit for me. Whatever, whatever, but that's what I'm looking for, and I don't care if I get money for it," which I didn't. She was like, "Why don't you think about Boston College?" There were other schools that were harassing me. There was all these other schools, but it was all about, "You got to do this pre-summer bullshit," which basically means you take a remedial class. I'm just like, "I'm not a remedial dude," and I told her. She was like, "I think they might be more competitive than Howard or Morehouse." I was like, "I respect you, but I'm just going to go to a black school," and that was it. My mind was made up. It was either between Howard and Morehouse, and I literally flipped a coin. I asked my mother. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D13 described the influence of a popular Black sitcom on his mindset toward school and grades. One of the memories that D13 shared during the interview was when he watched an episode of *The Cosby Show*, where a character was arrogantly expressing to Dr. Huxtable (Bill Cosby) that he did not care about grades. This episode translated into the alumnus's life and shifted his mindset about school and grades. Assuming he had an "A" in his Social Studies class, he confidently entered class expecting to get his good grade. However, he realized that teachers treat grades differently for different students:

All right. There's two that I could speak to directly that's still poignant to me to this day, one of which drove me while I was a teacher. I think my freshman year in high school, that year, *The Cosby Show* had an episode where Denise brought home a boyfriend who was attending Duke to talk to Heathcliff, Bill Cosby, and he questions him about the fact that the dude is wearing two different color socks and why he's doing that. The dude talks about not believing in systems and rebelling against the machine, and school, and all this kind of stuff. Heathcliff says, "Well, you must be getting all Fs in school," the dude said, "No, I'm a straight-A student. I just don't believe in grades." Around that time that episode came out, my freshman year in high school, it was progress reports time, it was first nine weeks progress reports. At that time, I had seven periods in my class, I have straight As, and it's not mediocre straight As. At that time, you had to have a 93 to have an A. I'm having 95s, 96s. I come to my seventh period class, which is my world geography class, which is social studies, which I was a social studies teacher. It's a Caucasian teacher. He was a baseball coach. I walk into class, I have a pretty good relationship with him. This is the time when Spike Lee's movie *X* is coming out, the pro-Black Movement is reinvigorating itself. You got groups like X Clan still being popular around this time. I'm in that type of mentality. You have the teacher walk into the class with him. I was going to school in a rural town in Winter Garden, Florida, which is just outside of Orlando, Florida. We still had rednecks. There was your Black group, your Gothic group, you had your southerners, you had your New Yorkers.

I'm going to class and I'm just like, "Yo, I'm about to have straight As, Mr. put that on my paper." At the end of the class, he hands it out and I have a B, I have a 92, B in the class. I look at him, like, "Really? How do I have a B in this class?" In the middle of class, I'm like, "Yo—" One of his baseball players, who used to cheat off of me, you know what I'm saying? He would cheat off of me. I was like, "Yo, he cheats off of me, I give him my work, he looks at my quiz. He has an A, and I don't have an A? You're tripping." I just let it go. My parents, they didn't really understand that, and I didn't understand the advocate for myself on those issues. That impacted me, in my teaching practice that I would always tell students like, "Listen, we can work out grades, I just need to see you working hard." You know what I'm saying? Like, "If you work hard, I'll work hard on your grades." (Alumnus D13, personal communication, 2020)

Others vaguely remembered a video they watched or a special program on television that planted the seed to attend Morehouse. This was the case for Alumnus T8 and Alumnus S3. The decision to attend Morehouse for Alumnus T8 was centered around

a combination of his mother insisting he attended an HBCU and a TV feature he watched on prominent alumni of the college like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Alumnus T8 was a first-generation college student whose father passed away prior to him attending Morehouse. He felt that attending Morehouse was the “greatest decision” of his life:

My brother had went to college here, went to a predominantly White school. Then he ended up going into the Navy. He did not finish. He ended up going into the navy. When it came time for me to go to college, my mom said, “You’re going to an HBCU. If you want me to help you, [chuckles] you’re going to an HBCU.” I was like “Okay.” In Arkansas, we have Philander Smith College, we have University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and the Arkansas Baptist. Those are the three HBCUs we have in Arkansas. Majority of students who stay in the state, who were African American, who go to HBCU, go to UAPB.

I don’t know, I was probably watching television and saw that Morehouse— Dr. King had went there, I decided to apply. I remember taking my application— I needed a counselor to write a recommendation. I had a white counselor. He was like, “Where’s Morehouse?” I was like “It’s in Atlanta.” “What kind of school is it?” “It’s a historically black college university. It’s all-male.” He was basically like, “Why do you want to go there?” I was like “Because it’s a good school.” [chuckles] I went to Morehouse sight unseen. The first time that I went to Atlanta, the first time I went to Morehouse College was when my mom brought me to freshman orientation. I was a first-generation college student. My brother, eventually while he was in the Navy, earned his college degree as well. I’m from rural Arkansas. At that point, my father had passed away, my mom was a single parent, and here I find myself at Morehouse. It was the greatest decision I ever made. [chuckles] When people ask, “Oh, where did you go to school?” I don’t mention law school, I don’t mention my master’s, I mention Morehouse. They’re like, “Where is that?” You’d get it probably too. “You mean Morehead?” I’m like “No, Morehouse College.” Then my students would like, “You didn’t go to Ivy League? You didn’t want to go to Ivy League?” Then I start listing the alumni and they’re like-- I don’t say “Spike Lee,” I say “Shelton Lee.” “Who’s that?” Then since Marvel blew up, I mention Samuel L. Jackson. They’re like “He went?” I’m like “Yes.” I just go through a thing and they’re like “Oh. Okay.” (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus S3 remembered watching a video on Morehouse and became very interested in the school. In eighth grade, he committed to himself that he would attend the all-male HBCU. Both parents were encouraging of education, but his mother particularly

supported him going to the school. It was also convenient that his sister attended school in Atlanta, which would allow him to save money on room and board:

No, actually when I came to Atlanta. This was in Chicago. My aunt was playing a graduation on a DVD. This is actually seventh grade, a little before that. My aunt was playing my graduation on a videotape. I just was like, “Damn.” It was the ceremony. She was playing it for one of her friends. It was just something I happened to see. I was like, “Yes, that’s where I got to be.” My dad always raised us like that. “Watch your eyes on the prize.” Like four years old. Just imagine that context. (Alumnus S3, personal communication, 2020)

Television was an important outlet that influenced how the interview participants perceived the college experience. Simple subliminal messages planted by producers on *The Cosby Show*, *Martin*, *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, and *A Different World* showed characters with HBCU sweaters and accessories which proved to be highly impactful when thinking about options after graduating from high school. Others saw documentaries and news broadcasts that highlighted the prominent alumni from Morehouse, which inspired many to want to attend the school. The depiction of HBCUs and Morehouse specifically in television shows and documentaries revealed that participants who graduated in the 1990s or 2000s expressed more memories related to television exposure than those who graduated in 2010s, showing that college was characterized differently in certain historical time periods.








College major themes: “Official and unofficial training to be a teacher.” This section focuses on each interview participant’s experience at Morehouse College as a young male of color. Here, we see strong human capital influences as college students are naturally looking to increase their value so that they become equipped to get a job after graduation. Harris (2016) called this reality a “university-industrial complex,” where

institutions of higher learning are not developing well-rounded thinkers but productive members of a labor force. However, Morehouse has shown through its legacy that it soundly exposes and prepares their students and leaders in any profession. This section interrogates these experiences to unpack their motivations while at Morehouse to see if there is any correlation with their decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 41 indicates the SPI Adinkra that each data sample received. One clear pattern seen is this repeated motivational implication around the idea of access to opportunities within the education profession. This means that introjected regulation influenced their motivation to pursue specific opportunities that would support their life aspirations. However, a closer investigation of their experience within their major through the qualitative data showed influence by professors and other staff members. The participants tended to adopt or reject the expectations and characteristics of that college major framed by the school, which typically led them to choosing education as a professional option.

The data samples zero in on the participants' experience of attempting to gain preservice experience to prepare them to be an educator. We also see other experiences that influenced the interview participants' sense of service and responsibility to the community. This came in the form of international experiences and exposure to religious institutions that encouraged the vocation of teaching. The international experiences offered participants a different outlook of the world and a deeper appreciation for the local challenges that their community experienced, motivating them to accept a role as a teacher. Others had clear religious conversions that aligned them with a service attitude and a mode of thinking when it came to a professional career choice.

Figure 41. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Official and Unofficial Training to Be a Teacher”*

Theme	Data Sample	Autonomous Motivation Regulator	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
Official and Unofficial training to be a Teacher	Volunteering with students as a student	Integrated Regulator 	Introjected Regulator    	P&P Tower	Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	Social Identity
				S&F Tower	People and Institutions	Access
	Pre-service teacher training at Spelman	Identified Regulator 		S&C Tower	Protection and Preparation	Security
				S&F Tower	People and Institutions	Access
	International Travel Exposure	Intrinsic Regulator 		E&M Tower	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness
				S&Q Tower	Distance and Money	Geography & Economics
	Religion Exposure			E&M Tower	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness
				S&F Tower	People and Institutions	Access

Volunteering with students as a student and preservice teacher training at Spelman College. One common trend that several alumni reflected on was their experience volunteering with students while they were attending Morehouse. For some,

these were formal opportunities through organizations, while others organically found opportunities to work with youth in Atlanta. While attending Morehouse, Alumnus C8 had an opportunity to teach seventh grade science. This was significant because his first Black male teacher was in seventh grade science. However, he detailed some of the challenges he had navigating the social and political spaces of Morehouse as a Black queer man.

Alumnus C8 was still motivated to teach once he finished his summer teaching program and was even more committed to learning the content in his major. He volunteered each year at a local elementary in Atlanta, which gave him added experience in the field of education. He applied for TFA but was not accepted. Alumnus C8 stated that he entered professional development as a teacher with a skeptical mindset. However, he admitted he learned from it, in particular how oppression, privilege, and equity lines intersect in education:

That's interesting because I'd go into all professional development skeptical, and I think it's because I've had so much professional development. Mind you, before I started teaching, granted, I didn't tell you this. I started as a bio major too, started as a bio major. I had JK Haynes. JK Hayes pulled my transcript, and it was like, "Hey, you you're doing well in English." He encouraged me to change my major to English. I took his class over, still failed it. In between my summer and junior year, I taught with Breakthrough Collaborative in Atlanta, and that opportunity, teaching seventh grade science was really profound for me, because I don't think I didn't get to it when we talk about, one of the reasons why I teach is, my seventh-grade science teacher was my first Black male teacher. Also, by coincidence, by happenstance that motherfucker is a Morehouse man, but he dropped the ball in a lot of the frame, which also frames why I teach, because if a child in the next four years, by any circumstance, reaches out to me and says, "Mr. C8, I am interested in Morehouse." I feel like I have a moral obligation to do anything and everything to make sure that that said child gets into the college. When I reached out to Larry Burney in in 2007, I got crickets. Continuously, throughout my matriculation, I got crickets, that it breaks me, honestly, because it honestly like says, "Fuck Morehouse." At the end of the day, if I really look at the— When we talk about Morehouse being a space of safety or refuge, for some

it is. For some, it can be very liberal or liberatory, but liberatory through the forms of you understanding how to navigate a profession. As a Black, queer person at Morehouse, it was very— There were parts of me that were accepted, but there were parts of me that were definitively admonished, and defiantly admonish. Now, it's a different place, but I also got so much— I got the dichotomy of what it meant to be a Black male that I don't know how I got here. Just there's so much there. When we talk about professional development, that's where we were. Me having the opportunity at the age of 20 to teach seventh grade during the summer, really was— I think about my prefrontal cortex hasn't formed yet. This is the level of responsibility and commitment that I left that summer knowing I wanted to teach. I left that summer even more so committed to the major of English. I left that summer with so much gumption about myself, and what I could do within a classroom. (Alumnus C8, personal communication, 2020)

Two alumni who both graduated in 1995 and majored in Psychology described how they also had opportunities to work with youth while at Morehouse. After being initiated into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, Alumnus S5 began tutoring at a local high school, where he started getting his first hands-on experience with being an educator. He remembered having a difficult time trying to find himself and was not clear at the end about what path he should take:

Again, growing up on the West Coast, I can say that it wasn't prevalent of the Greek organizations, but it wasn't exposed or highly exposed as it is in the South. When I got to the South and I got a chance to understand it better, the Greek organizations, and how they connected to the colleges and the service they meet in the community, I was automatically fond or intrigued by it. I'm sorry. What was this other part of your question? My Morehouse experience extended outside of the Morehouse campus because of the tutoring I would be doing at the local schools through my organization. The connection we had to the high schools and the middle schools and elementary schools, the things that we would do in that niche. That's how. This is different for everybody and it's all about your personal journey in life. Some people know right away once they hit college, they know what they want to do. I didn't. I still didn't have that guidance once I came to Morehouse Campus. Which I hit myself on the head for that because I didn't utilize my counselor at Morehouse like I should. I was just going with the flow or just asking peers what they're doing instead of tapping into what really interests me. In lack of better words, I was still trying to figure it out. (Alumnus S5, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus R5 tutored at a homeless shelter while at Morehouse, and although he remembered it was challenging, he enjoyed it and realized he was good at it:

Honestly, going back to Atlanta, my junior, senior of college, I was a tutor at a, it was like a young men's shelter that was not far, about 10 miles from campus. I was a math tutor. It wasn't just the math portion that really let me know that I had the skillset and the temperament to work with young people. I really enjoyed it. I really enjoyed having the conversation, developing a relationship, watching how these young men or listening or not listening, how they were progressing in their scenarios, or what have you. I definitely always felt that need and that want to mentor. (Alumnus R5, personal communication, 2020)

Some study participants attempted to find opportunities and access to programs that would prepare them to be a teacher. Alumnus D13 explained his frustration with not having the support and guidance from Morehouse that related to a path to the classroom:

I started to go through the process to become an educator at Morehouse. There wasn't a clearly defined path at Morehouse on what steps you need to take to become a teacher, which is a whole other issue that the college used to address, a clear path only just to become an educator. There was that issue, then once I got into the classroom, initially, it was all about just being able to make a difference and improve the lives of Black males. (Alumnus D13, personal communication, 2020)

On the other hand, Alumnus D10 took advantage of being able to cross-registrar at the local women's college Spelman to take education courses. He reflected that the chance to take education courses was not openly introduced to him:

It was interesting when you said that. I did take some classes at Spelman to get some of my teaching credentials. Again, it was so interesting for me. That's a super interesting question. I don't know how I figured that out. I know I had to navigate it. I can't remember. I think a professor did. To your point, it was not advertised. It was not something like it was just here is that path of how you become a teacher. I actually went in and did some shadowing. As part of one of the classes, you've got to go shadow a classroom.

I remember going to shadow a teacher, so I did do some of that. I remember doing it. Again, at Morehouse, I do not remember anyone telling me this is the path to become a teacher. To your point, exactly what you said, everybody else that I was with was in business. Everybody was going to be a business major, everybody

was going to be a lawyer or a doctor. Trying to go the path of being a teacher was different. It was different. I don't think anybody ever looked down on. It was never bad. It was just always surprising like, "Wow, why wouldn't you want to go do business or something else?" I would definitely say, I can't remember who the professor was, but I definitely took some classes towards becoming a teacher when I was at Morehouse. I got some of my credits there.

You've got to take classes at Spelman, so that was also the plus. I'm trying to think now that might have been my logic. I figured I could have got some credits. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus J10 also took classes toward an Educator minor while attending Morehouse. He and a friend were on Spelman's campus and heard of their education program. They inquired and learned they could take classes and started participating. They also were able to teach at the local middle school near campus. He did not remember many Morehouse students in the program and explained how it was not openly advertised to students:

Yes. I was an African American Studies major. Best friend, Hyon Herbert, he was also African American Studies minor. We were on the same track somewhat. We would spend a lot of time at Spelman and we found out about this education department that they had. Like I said, we were both doing African American Studies, so we were around some amazing teachers. Dr. Rahming, Dr. Barksdale, these were some amazing professors. We wanted to be like them, we wanted to be able to be those Black men teaching the next group of black men. I saw myself as becoming an African American history teacher at some point. I wanted to get courses in education, that actually became my minor. We went over to Spelman, spoke to the director of the program and she told us exactly what we needed to do, what classes we needed to take, so we took a few, I want to say about 30 hours or so. We were the only two. We were the only two guys in this class filled with women, and all of our professors were women. That was different too, that was an experience, because when it came down to anything dealing with sexism or anything of that nature, of course, we were asked to have an opinion. Men in education, the lack thereof, those types of things. I actually enjoyed my time at the education department at Spelman. It taught me a lot. I got a chance to learn a lot about educational psychology. I took educational psychology, orientation education, I took special education, child development 101, child development 102. Yes, there was an education coordinator at Morehouse. If you went to Morehouse and education was your minor—and thank goodness it was all in the same building for me. If Education was your minor, you have to go see and him

and he would help navigate you in regards to your internship, what schools you can go to. I taught at Benjamin E. Mays School. I think it was a middle school, Benjamin E. Mays Middle School. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

These preservice experiences and lack of experiences highly impacted the participants' long-term perception of the profession. For many of them, their early experience working with students while still attending Morehouse allowed them to discover hidden talents that would not be recognized unless in the proper circumstance. Several expressed how natural teaching came to them and how helping someone learn made them feel fulfilled. This human connection was shown to be a key factor in both participants' decision to become a teacher as well as remain a teacher.

International travel exposure and religion exposure. Other experiences that were shown to be significant as related to origins of teacher motivation through sociocultural interactions were through international trips and religious community. These interactions profoundly impacted how these particular interview participants viewed the world and their role in making it a better place. The Catholic Church was a strong influence on my own experience at Morehouse College:

Definitely at Morehouse I was highly influenced by the Black Catholic Church, and them giving me opportunities to serve. When you talk about the journalism itch, I had an even bigger service itch at Morehouse. I really just wanted to help people, especially after doing that mentoring stuff. I just felt like I needed that vocation piece. That's why I almost became a priest because my priest saw that in me and I really wanted to go into the homeless shelter every Saturday. All that stuff was really, really ingrained in me. I think that they had a huge influence in him being a Black man from Washington DC, went to Gonzaga, went to Howard, a Que. I always say that he is the one who introduced me to Afrocentricity, African centered, mind centered thought because when I walked into his church, the church was designed as the churches in Lalibela, Ethiopia. His rationale was like, "If I'm going to pick a Christian culture to base my church on, I'm going to pick the oldest Black Christian culture that there is." and that's those Ethiopian Christians. Then when you walk into the church, the picture of Jesus that was right in the middle, in the atrium was a Maasai warrior. He's like,

“That’s our depiction of Jesus Christ.” I was like, “Interesting.” You had these different things throughout the whole church that were very Afrocentric but everything was very Catholic. We had the African drums and stuff like that. He was literally a Black man who said I’m going to flip this Black Catholic thing and be as Black as possible more than the Catholic part. Keep everything Catholic, keep everything in their realms, still speak the language, still do the doctrine, but we’re going to make it Blackity Black Black. Being able to do that in such a structured, I don’t know, just a respectable manner where you can see the order in his protest. When you saw old pictures of him from the ‘70s, you saw his red, black, and green robe and his huge afro and everything. You can tell he was doing it different now through the students (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus S14 explained how converting to Islam impacted his view of the world while attending Morehouse and beyond:

As far as my identity and growth, it confirmed what I knew. It was just like more confirmation, affirmation of the supreme Black man, a Black man, woman, and child. It was like I converted to Islam at Morehouse. Yes, I used to go to the community masjid over there in the West End. Right after graduation, man, I took my cap off, put my kufi on, told my whole family, “We’re going to the masjid.” I had to go mix a lot, bro. It was intense but just throughout that journey, man, of knowing that we develop the sciences. We develop the mathematics and the sciences that created the foundations, for construction, for everything we do, for teaching, for just the whole logic, philosophy, art, just all of our contributions as Black people historically and up to then, and up to now. It was just really important for me, I always call it— Morehouse was like the Garden of Eden, the Fertile Crescent. It was like going to school in a pyramid. I just had so many conscious White and Black professors. (Q. Salem, personal communication, 2020)

While at Morehouse, Alumnus S3 was one of the students chosen to attend the Oprah Leadership Summer Program in South Africa. He described each night being mentally draining as he was in constant reflection of the moment and historical significance of the setting. One professor on the trip took him aside and told him, “I expect great things from you.” This statement resonated with Alumnus S3 after that because he became obsessed with trying to understand what made things great. His exploration took him to alumni Martin Luther King, Jr., who discussed the importance of

service leadership. He contemplated what field to work in as he had a newfound passion for international relations, but quickly came to realize the importance of making a difference locally as well:

It's actually easy. I did look at these questions before. I really did, but I do a lot of speeches on public speaking with students and stuff. One of them was the six words that changed my life, and it actually is from a Morehouse experience. I don't know if you know, in 2005, the Leadership Center did the Oprah Leadership Summer Program in South Africa. I was one of the students chosen to go over there. There was 13 of us. We were over there for about a month and a half. About five weeks in Johannesburg in Cape Town. We went over to study ethical leadership in the context of HIV and AIDS. I wasn't a part of the leadership center. I happened to take a class for my final requirement, North South relations management. It was under that leadership banner. Dr. Fluker and Dr. Knox came in, and just asked one day, "Does anybody want to go South Africa?" I just raised my hand like, "Let me see how far this goes." I was one of the ones chosen. I think everybody had applied to be chosen. Over there though, and mind you, I think this is my senior year. This is senior year. Oh no, that was a year before I graduated, and so the year that I graduated that summer I think so or after that maybe. At this point, business major, I knew from a policy class that I had taken, the way that corporate business wasn't where I was, not just passionate about, where I felt I was supposed to be. It was a thing we did on AG in that policy class. I got excited because we had to increase your holder value, blah, blah, blah. He was trying to teach us a lesson, but you get more wrapped into this zone of I was excited, because I figured out you can increase your owner value by this thing, because of the age numbers they have. I was like, "Shit, that's messed up." You go on autopilot. This is before that trip. They were doing the LPD thing, and the people coming to corporate. I just knew that wasn't my space, but I'm like, "I'm already invested. We already paid all this money." [laughs] You've got to finish it up. On that trip, we were actually in Robben Island where Nelson Mandela— I remember the day. During the trip, I actually ended up again taking a de facto leadership position. They were calling me to interview, talk about certain stuff.

When we would go to these different places, the schools or wherever we'd meet with NGOs and all that, I would end up leading a lot of the conversation. It was just because I was passionate about the conversation, especially things like that. I'm sitting out, looking out on the beach on Robben Island, right after we left Nelson Mandela's cell. Everybody's taking pictures on the other side, all the brothers memorizing the moment, memorializing, which I understand, but that was a deep trip. Every night was some drainage, for me personally. I realized everybody doesn't have that, but for me it was. I'm just in my zone. As I'm walking back on the bus, Dr. Fluker, as I'm walking on, and everybody's going in front of me, he just wished to my soul. He's like, "I expect great things from

you.” I always was there like that just.... We spoke, and I would pick him, picking me a little bit, but he didn’t say much. He just whispered it into my ear as I was going on the bus. When I tell this story in a speech, I always say after that, it was like, “What does that mean? How do you do great things? Who do great things? What does doing great things mean? How does that look? What does greatness look like? I went back to the MLK quote on, “We can all be great because we can all serve. You don’t have to have to know the quadratic equation to serve.” Now, verb agreement, you just have to have a heart full of compassion. I really saw like that service piece and I didn’t see it at the time. This is reflecting after I just happened to— My life got geared into that direction of working with the kids in Detroit, in the schools. After that, working with the Mindsus Foundation and working with students internationally, and writing books about some of the kids, and having those being read internationally. That story and all this, all this stuff happening from this place of literally just starting. Even after that, that was the biggest piece, again, after the reflection that stood out to me is not just career-wise but truly life-wise. I’ve been blessed to work in organizations that I can truly believe in the mission. Even habitat for humanity, like in the work that I do in there, the reason I’m able to do it, is because I’m able to really trust in the mission and the history and where they came from and things like that. (Alumnus S3, personal communication, 2020)

It seemed as if these international trips put life in perspective for the participants. Being exposed to the challenges of people from around the world and experiencing some of those same challenges in the United States humbled many participants to rethink how they were positioning themselves in their career. Others found refuge in the international community and were able to benefit from the global opportunities that were afforded to those who were affiliated. Alumnus D4 discussed how he used to hang out around the International Studies Department and one day was asked to apply for an international internship:

I’d study there or, whatever, just kick it, in-between classes. Donnelly Smith, if he started asking me questions. He was like, “Have you ever heard of this program?” I was like, “What’s this program?” He’s like, “It’s the Pickering Fellowship.” The Pickering Fellowship is basically if you have a 3.2 GPA, the US government State Department, they’re going to make you into a diplomat. You go to either Columbia, Georgetown or Harvard for grad school and you’re guaranteed a job because it’s hard to get into the state department as a diplomat, especially back then. You remember Clinton? He went to Columbia. They were all Pickering

fellows. I missed mine. I was supposed to get it, but I fucked it up because of one class, but it was my fault. What ended up happening was he got me a state department internship. A paid state department internship in Montevideo Uruguay. I took a semester off. It wasn't such a great timing because I really didn't have the money, but what ended up happening was I ended up getting a state department internship.

I had to go through all this crazy stuff and it was hard to get paid internships. I was paying to work in the US Embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay. It's hard to get paid internships. I did it during the fall because most people do it during the spring. Once I got there to the embassy, people were just like, "Yes, you come highly recommended from Donnelly Smith." Donnelly Old Smith from Florida, he was one of the first Blacks outside of Dr. Cole to get into a diplomatic course. He was one of the first. He used to tell me crazy stories. He gave me so many tips and he gave me like so much, but yes, he put me on. That's something like, I remember. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Exposure to new cultures created a deeper sense of community, both locally and globally. The religious conversion also gave that sense of community with added moral value to their ethical aspirations for helping those who were less fortunate financially. These areas were shown to have potential for recruitment as many were more open to the education profession after having these types of religious and international experiences.

College major themes: "Discouragement and encouragement at Morehouse.






Looking closer at the interview participants' experiences with Morehouse professors and staff, we find patterns of security, social identity, and access being possible types of motivation that are related to their interaction with their college instructors. Some approached their professors with controlled motivation to access the necessary institutions that would be available after they graduated from Morehouse. Others looked at these professors as examples of ethical and moral behavior and hoped they modeled their social identity based on their experience with the professor.

This section examines power relationships among the interview participants that reflect positive and negative memories related to their time attending Morehouse. Some alumni described nurturing teachers at Morehouse who were sensitive to a variety of external factors impacting their learning. Others acted as symbols of accountability, where they learned the importance and rationale for Morehouse's expectation of excellence. However, the difficult aspect of the analysis to determine, particularly when it comes to this life lens, is whether the people at Morehouse acted as autonomous motivational factors or controlled motivational factors in their decision to remain teachers.

I examined specific memories that conveyed how the experiences and values emphasized at Morehouse transferred within the context of being a teacher. Figure 42 shows the SPI analysis for the various data samples. The culture of Morehouse, as discussed in the introduction, emphasizes the importance of leadership and serving the community. However, the excerpts revealed a deeper aspiration to build one's human capital. For some, Morehouse was simply the launching pad to a well-paid career.

The power of empowering professors who pushed and pulled. Alumnus P7's Morehouse experience was everything he was looking to experience, particularly when it came to culture and history. He explained that his professors were multifaceted in teaching him knowledge of self and the history of Black people. Alumnus P7 felt that the type of teacher-student relationships he experienced at Morehouse resembled more of a mentor than a singular content instructor. These diverse experiences with teachers and new bodies of knowledge pushed him to realize that he was not passionate about engineering, so he changed his major to economics. Like many who choose to attend Morehouse, there is an expectation of a seamless transition into the professional career

Figure 42. Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Discouragement and Encouragement by Morehouse Faculty and Staff”

Theme	Data Sample	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications
Discouragement and Encouragement by Morehouse Faculty and Staff	Power of Empowering Professors			P&P Tower	Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	Social Identity
				S&F Tower	People and Institutions	Access
	Professors that pushed and pull			S&C Tower	Protection and Preparation	Security
				C&E Tower	Desired incomes	Compensation and Reputation
				S&C Tower	Protection and Preparation	Security
				C&E Tower	Desired incomes	Compensation and Reputation
	Dean Darden			S&C Tower	Protection and Preparation	Security
				S&F Tower	People and Institutions	Access

market with suitable financial compensation. This was Alumnus P7's expectation after graduation; however, he was not clear about the type of career he wanted to explore:

What I would say, from what I recall, you go from having no Black male teachers to almost having all Black male teachers at Morehouse. They hold you accountable in a different way. Their relationships always felt like mentorship. I felt like the relationship between the teacher and the students became a little bit more real. Maybe because I was older, I don't know what necessarily to attribute to that, but I definitely felt a stronger relationship with my college professors, which people don't normally say that even with my high school teachers. Then just the intentionality they had around teaching knowledge of yourself as a black man, and then also your Black history, and then also just— There is an air of Black excellence in achievement at Morehouse College that does something to you intrinsically. Makes you feel good to be around it. It feels good to be around this culture and this community. It feels actually so good that when you step out of it, and you go into other communities that are not doing so well, it strikes you a lot harder. Looking back on my education, the communities that I went to school in and seeing the struggles that people had academically, but then going to Morehouse, now I had a better context of all those things. Even though I went to Morehouse for engineering, end up graduating in economics, and I was going to do small business or go into just economic analysis or finances, I really didn't find my passion in what I was majoring in. I didn't have it. I didn't find it. It wasn't like my passion. I looked for work. I wasn't really motivated in looking for work. I was still figuring out what I was going to do with my degree. I had learned a lot. My volunteer experience was at Boys and Girls Club. Like I said, one of the first jobs I got out was being a paraprofessional at an elementary school over in the west side of Anville. (Alumnus P7, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D10 initially wanted to be a lawyer when he entered Morehouse. He studied political science, but after a couple of professors made him realize that he was not passionate about the subject, he changed his major to history after taking an extremely engaging class at Morehouse. This seemed to be a trend as impactful professors commonly made them think differently about their purpose and future professional careers. Alumnus D10 recalled how important of a moment it was to declare a change of major to his parents, as they were not receptive to the idea of being a History major. They were anchored in the idea of him going to Morehouse so he would be on a path to be a

lawyer, for which they felt they were making a financial investment. However, D10 fell in love with history, and even though he did not know what he wanted to do with his degree, he knew he did not want to be a lawyer:

I was political science. One of the reasons I went to Morehouse is I thought I'd be a lawyer. I was like I'm going to do poli-sci. Went into Morehouse. Tobe Johnson. I don't know if you ever had to Tobe Johnson and Dr. Davis's class. They kicked my butt. That was the first time I'd ever been smacked in the face with a class. I think I started realizing I don't really love this poli-sci thing. I liked watching Law and Order, but it really wasn't my thing. I took a history class, and I loved it. I loved everything about history. I'd say it was an important moment for me because I'll never forget the time I had to call my mother to tell her I'm switching from political science of being a lawyer to majoring in history.

I swear to you that my mother was crying, was so upset, because you're supposed to, again, going being like, "Why did you go to Morehouse? Why we're doing all this? Why they're paying the tuition that goes to Morehouse because you're going to go into law school." I was like, "I want to be a history major." What's super interesting is I had no interest of being a teacher at the time. I was like, "I was going to be a history major." That's what my mom was asking, my mom and dad. They were like, "What are you going to do?" I was like, "I want to be a history major. I really like it. I don't know what I'm going to do." Everybody, I'm sure you know, everybody says that well if you're going to be a history major, you're either going to teach or you're going to be an art director. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus S5 entered Morehouse in the fall of 1992 and reflected on how the HBCU popularity due to Spike Lee's *School Daze* movie had died down by the time he arrived. He described that the population of students were coming from more diverse economic backgrounds, including middle- and lower-class households. Alumnus S5's experience at Morehouse showed itself to be transformational, but more so after he left. While at Morehouse, he explained how he did not take enough time to explore his interests or utilize the campus counselor. He remembered failing a class of a professor to whom he was close. That professor ran into him on campus, took him aside, and told him, "Take it again." Although the professor was disappointed, he believed in Alumnus S5

and wanted him to get credit for the course. Alumnus S5 said that this was an impactful moment for him because he proved there were some people who genuinely cared and would be in his corner even if he lost. He felt that Morehouse did a great job nurturing young Black men and giving them the attention and support they deserve. However, for some, it also set them up for “false pretense,” assuming they would get that same treatment and recognition outside of Morehouse:

Prior to that, you had a group of Black young men coming off origin countries from all parts of the economic background, low, middle, and upper. You had a mixture of those types of kids coming to Morehouse, because at that time, to get at Morehouse, it was competitive, but for that time. You didn't have a lot of elitists at Morehouse at the time. You had cats during that time, for lack of better words, who were, like I said, either middle-class or lower middle-class. That provided a different landscape of Morehouse than the latter part. I feel that during that time where Morehouse, I don't want to say, is authentic, but it was at its grassroots where you had— Oh God, I don't know how to phrase it. I don't think so. I graduated in '95. I was just coming— You know that, and you have to understand that it was at that time I graduated in '95, so that's ten years after *School Daze*. That wave was just coming down. I came in the middle of the hype of *School Daze*, in the middle of it. Definitely. I don't know if you had this experience, but I just remember that the professors at Morehouse were so approachable. They would come outside the classrooms and just hang out and you would have conversations and you'd just be chatting with your professors. It didn't matter what discipline you were in, I saw it for business, psychology, biology, you just saw students, teachers, professors, had a group of students who were just chatting outside of the classroom. It was that camaraderie. They also held you accountable too as well. They held you accountable as well, like, “Hey, you better have your butt in class. Let's go.” It was that closeness. It was that intimacy that Morehouse provided. Which is similar to what Ron Brown had. That intimacy that is— It set me up for a false pretense as well. What Morehouse builds or instills in you, like, hey, that support system of Black men is nurtured and fostered inside of you as you matriculate through Morehouse, but once you leave Morehouse, you leave that thinking that every Black man or Black women understands that, and that's not the case. It sets you up for a lot but not a huge lot in the head, if that makes sense. I was taking his— He's a sociology teacher and I was taking his class. It was at the time Morehouse, where I was unfocused at the time for various reasons. He had stopped me on my way to another class. We were in the middle of the schoolyard. Mind you, this professor, he invited me over to his house for dinner at one time and I met his family. We had a bond, a connection. He stopped me, and of course, this is after I failed his class. He

looked at me and he said, “You know you failed my class.” I said, “Yes.” He said three words, “Take it again.” He just gave me this look, “Take it again,” and he walked off. The way he looked at me, it was more challenging to like, “Hey, I know you can do better. Let’s do it.” That impacted me as well. Knowing that you have somebody— He knew I was unfocused and distracted at the time. He was like, “Look, come take my class again. You need to see me.” I appreciate that. (Alumnus S5, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus T8 mentioned that he often tells his students the story of some of his challenges while attending Morehouse. He recalled a senior student at the school saying that Morehouse was like “kryptonite” for students who come in as Superman. This expressed the notion that Morehouse humbles those who come in with too much confidence. Alumnus T8 started college having to take remedial classes but, by the end, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa with honors:

I had to take remedial English. Most people on the floor are taking English comp, I’m taking Basic English. This Professor, I didn’t know better, so I went to the department chair in English— I think it was Dr. Carson at the time. A senior was coming out. He looked at me, he was upset. I don’t know what happened. He said, “Morehouse is like kryptonite. You come in here like Superman, and they make you mortal.” I went in, I was like, “Professor Carson, I got— Graduated GPA this. I missed it by a point, can you make an exception?” He’s like, “No.” I was like, “Okay.” He’s like, “You have to take Basic English.” That’s the best thing probably that happened to me because then I was like, “Okay, I have to show you now because [chuckles] you don’t think I can do this work.” I tell my students this, “Sometimes, everything is not going to— You’re going to have fail.” That was a setback, but I didn’t let it prevent me from being successful at Morehouse. I remember the first day I entered the class. He was like, “The reason you’re here is you didn’t get the basics. Basically, you’re lazy.” I was like, “What?” [chuckles] It was a laugh. I’m like, “I got to get up at eight o’clock to come here, I was like, “I’ll show you.” By the time I graduated— I graduated with honors. I was Phi Beta Kappa. I don’t think in another school, that same experience may have broken me, but at Morehouse, it just built me up into the student I was going to be. Why I chose to be a history major was Professor Ward. I remember every class, he would start off with a quote. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

Even though Morehouse did not have a formal education department, Alumnus T8 felt that he was inspired by his professors in the History Department. When he

discussed with his professors how he wanted to go to law school, they consistently encouraged him to look at other options like getting a doctorate degree. He recalled the new information he was able to learn and take with him as a teacher. These experiences at Morehouse profoundly impacted Alumnus T8's approach to the teaching profession:

My department chair— He was also my adviser, Dr. Hornsby, who passed away a few years ago, he really was focusing— Dr. Barksdale was there, Dr. [unintelligible 00:42:59], they all really focus on going and getting a master's, and getting a PhD in teaching. Anytime I said I wanted to go to law school, they were like, "You know how many Morehouse men are lawyers, as opposed to how many Morehouse men have PhDs?" It was like, "You can always get a law degree." Always pursue graduate studies and actually teach. I had good history teachers. That just encouraged me to teach even more, or want to pursue teaching. I never thought that I was going to be teaching eighth-grade middle school kids. [laughs] I always thought, "Yes, I'll be a college professor," but that's my calling, is have 13- or 14-year-olds and be able to actually teach them history, that is their history, that is the real— This is what really happened. This is how you have to look at it. Why are we— Friday, I'm reviewing seventh-grade material with them, and there's a question about the Three-fifths Compromise. I didn't learn about the Three-fifths Compromise [chuckles] in high school. I learned about the Three-fifths Compromise at Morehouse. [chuckles] I'm going to be honest. I'm teaching about the Three-fifths Compromise and then I'm trying to relate it to— I'm like, "Do you understand why they're making a Black Live Matters protest?" These protesters are saying, "For 400 years we haven't been human beings. Even when the country was founded, we was three-fifths of a person." Then to see it connect - Once they understand that, they're like, "Now I get it." Now when they're out there chanting, "We were three-fifths of a person. We weren't even a person." That's why I teach. All right. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

Upon entering Morehouse, Alumnus A9 was required to attend a summer program which would determine if he would be admitted for the fall. He remembered having to work extremely hard to get through the program but had supportive Morehouse staff and faculty who encouraged him throughout. One particular teacher who stuck out in Alumnus A9's reflection of his Morehouse was Dr. Zatlin. Dr. Zatlin had a reputation for being a rigorous teacher, yet Alumnus A9 remembered her as someone who showed a concern for more than the essay he had to write. Dr. Zatlin showed important compassion

toward Alumnus A9 that he needed in order to process the death of his brother. She referred him to the Campus Wellness Center, and he felt she was an example of a professor going above and beyond the call of duty to support students:

Yes, I was in the pre-freshman summer program. Morehouse, I actually had to go through this process to even get accepted into the college. I went to PSP for four weeks during the '96 Olympics. Right before Atlanta hosted the '96 Olympics, I had to go to PSP. Basically, I had to prove myself. Basically, it was contingent upon if I did well in the summer classes that I would be accepted into Morehouse. Dean Sterling Hudson, I give him kudos and applaud him for everything because without Dean Hudson, I'm not sure where I would be, but him giving me a shot, give me an opportunity to go through PSP and meet Dr. Roberts, who taught our English class there at my PSP. I had to prove myself. From the ground up, I had to work hard and show my dedication that I belonged at Morehouse with all these prestigious young men who came from multiple different backgrounds across the globe. Just basically trying to prove myself and knowing that I was part of a national fraternity that would be forever bonded for a lifetime. PSP, that was the game-changer right there T11. I knew that if I done well and I succeeded at PSP, I'm at the right place. Yes, so definitely. Yes, man, that's a powerful question because every Morehouse brother that you talked to they're going to tell you something that was life-changing with their experience at the greatest institution, I believe, in the world. Dr. Zatlin, she taught survey of English lit. I was a sophomore at Morehouse, February 23rd, second semester, my brother was killed in Washington, DC. Part of me said, "I don't want to come back to school," but my mom said that-- My brother and I had the same dad, but different mothers. My mom said, "You can't stay in DC, that's not going to happen. That's impossible for you to remain in DC and not go back to college and finish the journey, so got back to campus, T11." I went to class with Dr. Zatlin before my brother had passed. I was engaged, man. I loved survey of English literature, talking about these certain authors, breaking down the novels and the poems, and the short stories. It was great, but I had tuned out. I basically tuned out, man. I felt like at that point it's like, "What's my purpose? Why am I here if I got it to be traumatized and deal with this and still try to obtain a college degree?" Dr. Zatlin, she pulled me to the side one afternoon, T11, and said, "A9, we need to talk." We had a one-on-one heart-to-heart conversation and dialogue, and she referred me to the wellness center because I told her what happened to my brother. She said, "Well, there's a wellness center in Gloster Hall, and you can go talking and work with your mental health and have a counselor to talk to to express your feelings." I ended up passing Dr. Zatlin's class. That was life changing because some of our peers and colleagues and brothers that took our classes are like, "I can't stand Dr. Zatlin." She was one of the professors that said, "You have to have a 250-word essay. If you go over that 250 words, you're going to fail [chuckles]." (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

As a personal classmate, I asked Alumnus A9 if Morehouse influenced his decision to remain a teacher:

Yes, it did. I actually looked at Spelman and I was going to enroll into the educational program because Morehouse didn't offer it. I went over to Spelman and talked to the dean and the chair of the education department, but it just didn't work out as far as my timing and graduation. I just said, "You know what, I'm going to go to graduate school and go into education there." Morehouse, I knew at the end of the road, I'm like, "After I leave here, it's straight to the classroom." All of my Black male professors, well, were just some sharp, powerful individuals. I think they made learning fun for me. Some guys, sometimes they go to college and they get sidetracked and sometimes it's hard to bounce back, but my professors made learning fun for me, and it kept me engaged. I said, "You know what, if I can look at these black male professors as role models, father figures, and inspiration," I'm like, "I can do that to a young man or a young lady as well if I put my heart and dedication into it." A lot of times I think educators and people that's outside of education, they don't know how much compassion and diligence and dedication you have to be to be impactful and effective individual. Morehouse, those professors, man, they were lifetime experiences that impacted me forever. I've always been grateful and thankful for the gems, and the knowledge, and wisdom that each professor has given me. Not to take away from the female professors, but just to have strong, sharp, intelligent men just teaching me and guiding me on what's needed to be self-independent and sufficient and to one day be a ticket, not just my family, but my community, you're not going to find that anywhere else. (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

These were memories of a variety of push-and-pull power dynamics between the interview participants and the professors. For some, it was the sheer admiration for their knowledge and ability to engage them in complex ideas about themselves and society. Others expressed how professors not only humbled them to be life-long learners but also to embrace the support given outside of academic responsibilities that is intended to develop their social and emotional well-being.

Dr. Melvin Rahming and Dean Alvin Darden. In addition to several memories related to influential professors at Morehouse, some mentioned specific people who

impacted their trajectory while at Morehouse. While many interview participants had very similar experiences, others had very contrasting ones.

Dr. Melvin Rahming was a professor of English at Morehouse, and for some, the Department Chair. I along with other interview participants recalled how this particular professor left an impression with us as related to their Morehouse experience. Dean Alvin Darden was the Freshman Dean for many years at the school, and several participants mentioned him by name. This section explores power dynamics that existed between the interview participants and these two individuals and how they shaped the participants' motivation to become a teacher and remain a teacher. However, for some, there was more of an indirect reference to their impact. Alumnus E20 described how he was not ambitious leaving Morehouse, even though he had positive interactions and experiences with his college professors. He had great appreciation for his professors at Morehouse and their commitment to developing the whole student:

Oh, absolutely. I don't think anything influenced my teaching, so to speak. There were just good teachers. Actually, when I say good teachers, people that are committed. You can see their love. Not necessarily their pedagogy or their practice or how they do things, because as a child or as a teenager, you don't know what that means. You don't know consistent practice, basic stuff like commitment. I had a number of teachers that I loved for just being committed to us, and telling us the things that I wouldn't hear anywhere else. Things like, "You can go to a university PWI and they won't give you a quality type of— They won't look at you a certain way. They won't have office hours for you," that type of thing. For me, the teacher that I remember the most was Dr. Melvin Rahming. He was an English teacher. Like I said, like other Morehouse students, I don't have a lot of ambition. What I did was after I graduated, I worked as a bus driver for CTA for a long time. Probably about 10 years, from '96 to, I want to say, I started teaching. I was a bus driver. What happened was before I became a bus driver, I didn't leave with a plan to get a job. I was a sub, I was a substitute teacher. While I was a bus driver, I still had my sub credentials. I subbed a little bit every now, here and there. (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)

One of the professors who resonated with Alumnus P10 during his Morehouse experience was Dr. Melvin Rahming. Alumnus P10 remembered having somewhat of a New Jersey attitude when he approached his professor, and Dr. Rahming noticed it early when he was in his class. Alumnus P10 explained how he ended up having to do an extra year after receiving an “Incomplete” in his class, which he said in the long run helped him tremendously. He remembered tutoring in the English and Reading Department at Morehouse, and he attributed his path toward being an educator to Dr. Rahming. He also mentioned that he witnessed classmates getting bullied in college, which significantly impacted his tolerance and passion to fight against bullying once he became an educator:

Dr. Melvin Rahming, in the English department, he shaped me. Oh, look. [laughs] I did not like him at all. It was one of those where it was like, I dreaded his class, but he said to me, “You are going to be great. I’m going to see from it.” He says, “Oh, you,” His exact words to me were, “Oh, you’re the northeast attitude that everyone speaks about.” I never knew what that was. He kept saying, “I can tell where you’re from just on how you respond to me in your nonverbals.” I will look at him. To me, I didn’t have a face, and I would just look away, go sit at the door. He was like, “Yes, you’re from New York?” I was like, “No, New Jersey.” He’s like, “See, your response.” He shaped a lot. He was the first professor that literally— I knew I was going to fail his course, and I said, “Here we go. He’s going to fail me.” What did he do? He did not fail me. He gave me an incomplete. I was supposed to graduate in 2003. He says, “No, I want you to do my class over, and a lot of things that you didn’t do, I want you to do for the fall semester.” I was just like, “You mean to tell me I have to stay here for a whole—” I went. He was just like, “No, is for your good.” It actually shaped me? Came in ‘99. I was just like, “I can’t be in school for an extra year. I’m not a super graduate.” He said, “It has nothing to do with that. I need you to get— You haven’t gotten out of Morehouse what I need you to get out of. You’re still fighting against the people who are trying to help you.” Again, I told you, I tutored at Morehouse. I worked in the Reading Department and the English Department. He made sure to pave that way, so he might be partly responsible, if not largely responsible for me being an educator, and Dr. Charles in the Psychology Department. She was just one of— I was like, “Oh, who’s this lady with this— This light skinned lady,” that you will walk in her class, and again, I’m from New York and New Jersey, I’ll walk and she’s like, “Oh, you can’t tell time.” I was like, I said, “Yes, I have a watch. I know what time it is.” She said, “No, that’s not what I asked you. Go back out and when you get it, come back in.” For me. I wasn’t used to people

coming at me, but I was really going at them. I will say I got taken aback at Morehouse to shape me with how I'm inclusive now. The extreme amount of diversity that, "Oh, you're gay?" If they find out something, it was almost like, "Okay, let's not worry about that. Let's still build him up, because if this gay Black male build something that's universal and great, we all get the credit." I see it now, as an administrator, to where we have the GLAAD groups in our midst. I'm big on harassment, intimidation, and bullying. You will not bully someone, just because of what I saw. I've seen two dormmates be extremely bullied. I was just like, "Yo, how can we do this as Black men, tear down another Black man, because of one difference?" Whereas, instead of building up, are we forcing-- Again, how am I creating a continued problem without giving a solution? It was almost, "When I get older, I can't do that. I'm going to pay attention to signs. I'm going to pay attention to signs when someone's being bullied. I'm going to pay attention to the— They're just like us. Come on." (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus P10 also described how Dean Alvin Darden influenced his decision to attend Morehouse. During a college, he explained that the Dean gravitated toward him and included Alumnus P10 in his group:

These were just different things that kept going through my head, but eventually, I was like, "Well, I have to take a chance." Morehouse is what it is, and Dean Darden played a [chuckles] huge role. He, at the time, when I got on campus, it was between him, and he said, "Okay." Dr. Anne Watts, I don't know how I ended up being in their group. I wasn't a legacy. I'm not a fellow, I'm not an Oprah scholar. It was almost like, "Oh yes, come on here, you're going to be with us." One of the teachers though went to high school with my mom in South Carolina, so she moved from— It was like, "Okay, I feel connected. I have at least one person here that I know," and it sealed the deal. (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus J10 also described positive interactions with Dean Darden that influenced his mindset toward school and how he positioned his identity within it. He described coming into Morehouse not focused on his academics as he was more interested in the political events outside of campus. He explained how he wanted to attend rallies and work to "change the world." A discussion with Dean Darden inspired him to refocus his energy and bring his activism to campus. He decided to run for

freshman class president and began working on various campaigns for the next couple of years. He realized, however, that politics was not his passion and he wanted to teach. He did feel that his experience at Morehouse gave him the organizational skills to be able to impact K-12 school communities in the same way he did on campus:

I feel I came to Morehouse as like this rough rock, and it just smoothed out the edges for me. When I got there, I immediately was interested in what was happening outside of the campus as a freshman because remember, at this time I was still an activist. I was interested in what was happening outside of Morehouse. I'm talking about my early freshman year, participating in rallies and going to meetings. I wasn't really as involved in my academics as I needed to at that time. I just wanted to change the world. It wasn't until I started talking to the dean of freshman, Dean Darden, who had an everlasting impact on my life. He would tell me things like, "You need to figure out how do you bring these ideas to the campus," stuff like that. As well as friends that I had in my freshman year, my friends in my freshman year were folks who mostly were in my dorm, but then also folks who I just started connecting with, who had some of a similar perspective as me. I decided just to run for student government, for freshman class president, which had a major impact on my life because prior to that, I didn't want to hear about wearing any suits and ties, and things of that nature. I didn't really buy in completely into the whole Morehouse Man persona. Once I decided to make that run for freshman class president, certain people just started gravitating towards me. Started helping me with my message and helping me piece together who I am, at this point in my life, as a freshman. I just decided to bring my ideas to the campus. By my freshman spring semester, I already developed an identity on the campus of who I was. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

This quote speaks to how members of the Morehouse community played an important role in framing the educational experience for young males of color, whether in higher education or K-12. Dean Darden especially encouraged and responded to Alumnus J10's cultural identity and did not ask him to change himself, just his approach. However, not all of the study participants had positive memories of Dean Darden. Alumnus D4 described an interaction with the Dean when he was touring the school while still in high school; it was negative but motivating for him:

To make the long story short because I could tell stories all day and it's not even stories, it's just my life, but we ended up getting to Morehouse, and at first, I was like, "Wow, this campus is small." I just knew about *School Daze*, and I was like, "Okay." I remember this part from the movie *School Daze* and that bell and the little powerplant thing." I was like, "I remember that part from *School Daze*." It was the pastor because I was running through like a church or whatever but the pastor, he was like, "Hey, Dean Darden, why don't you just have the boys line up, and can you tell who's a Morehouse Man?" He went down. Literally, he was like, "You're a Morehouse Man." He's like, "Eh, you're Morehouse Man." Eh, you may be." "I don't know." "I don't know." "You're a Morehouse Man." Then he got to me and he just told me, he looked me dead in my face. I don't know you from the hood. If a nigga looked you dead in the face and he's saying reckless stuff to you, you know, it's go-time. He looked me dead in my face, and he was just like, "Tuck in your shirt," and then he went to the next person. From that moment, I was like, "I am getting into Morehouse, and I am going to harass this man until the end of time." (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

This friction between Alumnus D4 and Dean Darden continued as he encountered some challenges upon entering Morehouse, particularly when he was placed in remedial classes. His interaction with the Dean in high school did not help his situation, and he had to navigate getting the classes that matched his intellectual level:

Yes, he was. He tried to put me in remedial classes because he remembered me. He tried to put me in remedial classes, and he remembered me. Yes. He was like, "Oh, glad to see you made it." That's what he told me. He was like, "Yo, glad to see you made it." I was like, "I just need your signature because they're trying to put me in remedial Spanish, and I took all these Spanish classes, and they're still trying to put me in remedial Spanish, and they're trying to put me in remedial English even though my verbal SAT score was a 680." Up to the last two semesters or three semesters of high school, my English scores were trash. My English grades were trash because I wasn't taking it serious. He was like, "Are you sure? Matter of fact, I need to have this type of signature." You had to have, I shit you not, a Spanish teacher. My goodness. [silence] What was her name? It was the lady. It was the white lady. Oh my goodness. I feel so bad I don't remember her name because she helped me out so much. It wasn't Dr. [unintelligible 00:46:29] because she was my homegirl. She looked me out big time. It was the other one. Needless to say, it was the one White lady Spanish teacher who wore the glasses, and she had red hair. She went to Harvard Law School. She was like, "No, you need to be an intensive intermediate. Don't take remedial" because I told her my whole situation because I keep it a buck. She was

like, “You’re just going to waste your money, and your family doesn’t have enough money to sponsor you.” I was like, “I got no money. They’re not giving me anything. They’re only giving me money for incidentals, just to make sure I’m eating. That tuition, that’s me. That room to board, that’s me, but other stuff, they got me square biz.” She was like, “Okay.” She wrote something for me, and then there was another professor that I’m cool with to this day, Professor Capers. He wrote something for me. He was like, “No. You don’t need to be taking no damn remedial” dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Even though I got a three on my AP English, he still wanted to put me in remedial, just based off of my high school grades. They signed off, and he’s like, “Okay, I’m going to put you in there. We’ll see. I’ll see you in summer school.” I was like, “You’re a damn liar.” Of course, he never saw me in summer school, whatever, whatever. Yes, man, he was just a dickhead towards me, yo. I don’t know why. I never did anything to this dude, I never said anything to this man, but for whatever reason, he always tried to get me on some dumb shit. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

This quotation illustrates the complex relationships that different alumni had with key staff members from Morehouse. Whether in a positive or negative experience, it is clear that these particular faculty and staff members acted as powerbrokers for the interview participants, both limiting and expanding their ability to navigate Morehouse as students.

These memories showed the detailed experience of many of the interview participants and how they shaped them to eventually be teachers. However, only 16 out of 23 participants shared these significant memories, which did not necessarily become a long-lasting effect when other human capital needs became more valued. This is analyzed further in the next section, which explores the various contexts in which these interview participants found themselves after graduating from Morehouse. This seems to vary at times based on when the alumni graduated from college.










Overall, these excerpts revealed the important power dynamics that existed between students at Morehouse and their professors. How these staff members supported the participants modeled how they would eventually support students in K-12

settings. Some reflected the grace and optimism they experienced, using the professors as a reference point for their own decisions. Others developed a bar of excellence that they felt they were held to and should hold others to so they can push students to reach their full potential. This also has implications for how different type of potential teachers might approach their students, particularly if they were educated in a major that did not always emphasize the importance of the human experience.

Graduation decade themes: “Choice or chance: Teacher pathways.” The final variable under analysis, related to the life lens when the interview participants were young males of color, focuses on the year they graduated from Morehouse. I chose to include this variable because it gives a key contextualization of the factors that led to their decision to become a teacher. This is another key milestone that arises differently in the participant narratives. However, this particular point in their life story is of high significance because it became the catalyst and point of origin for their trajectory into the teaching profession.

Figure 43 shows the SPI analysis for the identified theme of “Choice of Chance: Teacher Pathways’,’ and indicates there are strong trends showing the presence of the S&Q Adinkra Tower focused on motivational implications centered around geography and economics. This powered motivation is typically a controlled motivation that negotiates various factors related to distance and money. The excerpts from this section focus on the time following the participants’ college graduation, when they were navigating choices related to a professional career.

Figure 43. Sankofian Power Adinkras for Thematic Data Related to the Theme “Choice of Chance: Teacher Pathways”

Theme	Data Sample	Special Focus	Autonomous Motivation Regulators	Controlled Motivation Regulators	SPI Towers	Power Negotiation	Motivation Implications	
90s Graduates (Clinton Years)	Chance vs. Choice	More chance than choice	Identified Regulation 	Introjected Regulation 	S&C Adinkra	Protection and Preparation	Security	
					S&Q Adinkra	Distance and Money	Geography and Economics	
	Teacher Pathway Programs	TFA on TV	Integrated Regulation 		P&P Adinkra	Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	Social Identity	
					S&F Adinkra	People and Institutions	Access	
2000s Graduates (Bush Years)	Chance vs. Choice	More chance than choice	Identified Regulation 	Introjected Regulation 	S&C Adinkra	Protection and Preparation	Security	
					S&Q Adinkra	Distance and Money	Geography and Economics	
	Teacher Pathway Programs	Convenience and Employment Dominates			Integrated Regulation 	S&C Adinkra	Protection and Preparation	Security
						S&Q Adinkra	Distance and Money	Geography and Economics
2010s Graduates (Obama Years)	Chance vs. Choice	More choice than chance	Intrinsic Regulation 	Controlled Motivation Regulators 	E&M Adinkra	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness	
					S&F Adinkra	People and Institutions	Access	
	Teacher Pathway Programs	TFA, KIPP and other heavy hitters	Integrated Regulation 		P&P Adinkra	Ethical/Moral behaviors and Relationships	Social Identity	
					C&E Adinkra	Desired Outcomes	Compensation & Reputation	

The data also showed that those alumni who graduated after 2009 expressed specific intentions to be a teacher. In fact, all of the interview participants who graduated in 2010 or after transitioned into the teaching profession through a teacher pathway program. These programs have been in existence for decades, but it is clear that the development and growth of these organizations impacted the access that Morehouse graduates had to the teaching profession. The data also showed that no interview participants graduated between 2000 and 2009 who also participated in one of these teacher pathway programs, but one alumnus who graduated in the 1990s joined the popular teacher pathway program Teach for America. This helps us understand the important influence of these teacher pathway programs on the motivation of Morehouse alumni who became teachers. In addition, this also indicated the level of access students had to these programs that could supplement the lack of a formal education program at Morehouse.

Graduates from the '90s: More chance than choice with a TFA path. Alumnus E20's narrative described how unpredictable situations can lead to paths not previously conceived. Teaching was a back-up plan for him until he found an entry point with music. Once he found that passion, he became motivated to obtain his teaching credentials so he could do it full-time:

What eventually happened is I got fired as a CTA driver. I had an accident, didn't do it correctly, didn't report it. I went back to subbing and I subbed in the class because I'm a musician as well. I subbed in a class where I was a music teacher, and it was so just fulfilling to me. I got to do music production. I got to teach how to do this technology, how to, whatever the students needed in music production. I got to teach that, and I was like, "Wow, you can have a job and do something you love doing? I went immediately after that and enrolled in National Louis, and instead of just continue subbing, I decided to get my teaching credentials at that point. Since I majored in English teacher, but it's still a love for me, because it

teaches people how to express anything. You can find talking or communication in every subject. In music, in art, whatever it is, you have to talk about it, you have to write about it. For me, it's still a love, it's not as much of a love as just teaching music, but it's still kind of a love. (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)

Upon graduating from Morehouse, Alumnus R5 considered a corporate career working in finance. He did not get into any of the graduate programs he applied to and felt the pressure of needing to get a job, and particularly going to a school where his classmates were planning their next career move well in advance. In addition to this pressure to secure a job, Alumnus R5 also felt pressure to come home as his mother fell sick to cancer in his senior year at Morehouse. He contemplated accepting a job with American Airlines doing financial work, but felt more compelled to go home where he could be close to his mother and be employed:

I thought I wanted to work on Wall Street. I thought I wanted to do something in the corporate entity. Matter of fact, I got to final interviews with American Airlines but my mom got really sick again. When you talk about that experience, my senior year, my mom has lupus. She's a lupus thriver. She hasn't had a flare-up until my senior year of college. It was right before our spring break and she got really sick and they were trying to keep it from me. When I found out I was like, okay, the heck with that. They offered a job. I just took it because I was broke and I wanted to have a job because it was that pressure. What are you doing next year? I'm going to Wall Street, I'm going to law school. I'm going to B school. I'm going to graduate school. I didn't get into any of the graduate programs that I applied to. This job was the one that—I can go to Dallas. I can work for the airlines doing financial research, whatever the hell that means. If need be, I could fly for free on standby. [chuckles] They had a lot of perks but no purpose plus mom getting sick. I was like, "No, let me go home." I may have stayed in Atlanta and may have worked a gig I hated and hopefully, God would have led me to, no, brother, this is what you should be doing. I was probably on a fast track to being unhappily employed. (Alumnus R5, personal communication, 2020)

One of the major factors, in addition to his mother being sick, was that Alumnus R5 did not have a sufficient amount of money to survive. Here once again, one sees the role of human capital in the decisions these interview participants made as related to their entry

into the teaching profession. Alumnus S14 explained how he perused a career initially that would maximize his experience and degree; however, he was encouraged to be a teacher by one of his former teachers who informed him of the need for math teachers in the public school system:

At that point from graduating from Morehouse in '98 and then coming back home to New Haven, it was about—I had experienced in the military working in the lab and I was like, “Do I want to work in the medical field, in pharmaceuticals?” I took a job in pharmaceuticals and then one of my former teachers, a Black woman said, “New Haven is hiring, and would you consider being an educator?” I was like, “You know what? Why wait? Our kids need us now.” I got certified and it was like, “Do you want to be in seventh- in middle school or high school?” I was like, “Oh, I’m getting them before they get to high school. That’s going to be a struggle. Let me prepare them. They need me.” Once that decision was made and I got into middle school, man, I started to just mold these young, impressionable pieces of clay into scholars, it was a no brainer. (Alumnus S14, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus T8 mentioned how he was learned about Teach for America by watching a documentary on television going into his senior year at Morehouse:

I think I was at home between my junior and senior year of studying at Morehouse College, and I was just watching a documentary about Teach for America on PBS. I was like, okay, this could be an option. I did the application process. Then when I graduated in '95, I got an offer to Teach for America—I believe it was in Baltimore—and I turned it down.

In a memo about Alumnus T8, I reflected on my bias as it related to Teach for America and how my opinion began to expand as I interviewed more alumni who joined the teacher pathway program:

Every time I meet an alum who was a part of Teach for America, my opinion expands about the organization and my biases are confronted head-on. I know in my heart that there are sincere people who join TFA and make a significant impact on our communities. T8 is one of those teachers who used TFA as an unintentional springboard toward becoming a life-long teacher. With Morehouse not having a formal education department at the time, I found several alumni who have narrated this experience which have led many to have varying opinions about TFA. (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus T8 described his journey as “unique” because he never planned on being a life-long teacher. He joined Teach for America and planned to teach for 2 years, then move on to graduate school. Alumnus T8 was on a track to work for the District Attorney’s office in New York and looked at teaching as something he would do temporarily before he went on to possibly teach in higher education. In addition, he mentioned a spiritual element of divine direction toward a calling that led him into the classroom:

I probably have a unique experience or similar experience to some of the people who left the classroom. I did Teach for America for two years and then I went to law school. [crosstalk] After law school, I stayed in contact with my former students. I, eventually, after law school, went and took the DA’s office. After some time at the DA’s office and circumstances, I decided to go back into the classroom. I remember at my short time in the DA’s office, I had the bar exam issued and then I went back into teaching, passed the bar exam. They were like, “Are you going to come back to the DA’s Office?” and I was like, “God’s put me back in the classroom for a reason. This must be where I am meant to be. Not in the DA’s office, but in the classroom.” I end up staying in the classroom. Interestingly is when I did Teach for America, I lived in the Bronx in New York City, but I taught in Washington Heights. After law school and the DA’s office and when I finally went back into teaching, I lived in Washington Heights in New York City, but I teach in the Bronx. Something keeps drawing me back to the Bronx in New York. The last 16 years, I’ve been in the classroom continuously. I remember one of the things I liked about law school was I was a teaching assistant in African American Studies Department at Syracuse University while I was at Syracuse Law School, College of Law. I really never left the classroom. Even when I left the classroom, I was still in education. Why do I stay? Because I think I can make a bigger difference and impact at people’s lives on this end, education-wise, as opposed to when I was an assistant district attorney where I saw former students. There’s nothing like seeing a former student or your wife’s former student come through the judicial system and trying to make sure that it works for them. It’s much easier for me, much more impactful. I have about 100 kids every year and seeing them grow and giving them the knowledge that they need so they never get involved in a judicial system. (Alumnus T8, personal communication, 2020)

This excerpt helps us understand how introjected regulation can transform into identified regulation as it relates to the origins of Alumnus T8’s motivation to remain a teacher. He initially wanted to teach based on what he saw on television, but later discovered that he

enjoyed teaching and identified with the profession more than being a lawyer. Here is where the identified regulation comes in, as the interview participant applied identified regulation to determine that he preferred to be a teacher over a lawyer.

For all the alumni highlighted in this section, unique life circumstances forced different perceptions of the teaching profession. For Alumnus E20, it was a back-up plan that he used to make extra money when needed. It transformed into a labor of love once he identified aspects of the profession that aligned with his interests. Alumnus R5 showed that he had no intentions of being a teacher prior to being offered the job after moving back to his hometown. There was also a clear influence of familiarity that these alumni expressed which allowed them to be more receptive and humbler in a role as a public school teacher. With the exception of Alumnus T8, all the others highlighted returned to their hometown, resulting in an integrated regulation of their autonomous motivation to become a teacher that was mainly centered on the theme of convenience.

Graduates from the 2000s: More chance than choice. Similar to the graduates from the 1990s, many of the interview participants had varying life circumstances that forced them to consider the teaching profession. However, some, who will be highlighted in this section, became increasingly interested in education as they worked in other career fields. For some, life circumstances illuminated the importance of teaching as well as their natural abilities to be a teacher. For example, after his employment was terminated by Spelman College, where he worked in the admission office, Alumnus C10 had to find a job to pay his bills. In addition, his grandmother passed away from cancer, and he was really trying to figure out his next move. He consulted and did other odd jobs, including selling cosmetics to women to make money. He described it as a very vulnerable time

and felt he was experiencing an important spiritual moment. A former colleague from Spelman had a sister who worked in the school system and wanted Alumnus C10 to join her school. He eventually followed up with her and got the job:

The Great Recession. I had just gotten laid off from my job from Spelman. [crosstalk]. I was kicked out. It wasn't really because of money. It was because I had a vice president that didn't like me. I was young and ambitious, and everybody loved me. She didn't like the fact that I was invited to the same arenas in which she was. That's a whole another story. Spelman was a nurturing ground for me. I studied theater there, I was looking to Glee Club, I was a music major. A lot of the old heads of Spelman, a lot of the professors and administrators that had been there, have followed my career. They had helped me. They had helped me. They helped propel my career. It was a nurturing ground for me. She didn't like them anyway, but the recession was going on at the time. Also, my maternal grandmother fell suddenly ill, and then she passed from cancer. I was just in a low spot, to be transparent with you. I was jobless, I was living with my best friend, my roommate from Morehouse, my homeboy from Nashville. I was living in his brand-new house. I had to downsize my house to live in his house. I just wasn't really feeling that. I was trying to start two businesses off the ground. I had toyed with this whole idea of having a music teacher studio, didn't really want to do it, and look where I am now. I didn't want to do it. I was toying with that. I was doing consultant work on the side. What else was I doing? I was in the middle of writing a musical that I never finished that I've got to get done. Literally, I have the map on my wall right now. I've got to finish my plot map. I was in the middle of that. I was starting a home-based business where I was selling cosmetics to women. That was interesting. I had a lot going on that I was trying to piece. Hustle was the name of my game. It was a very vulnerable time, because when they say a vulnerable moment or [unintelligible 00:44:14], going biblically, when you're in your low moment, that's when you're most vulnerable. I was really having a very spiritual time. I listened. I remember I was sitting at my desk and I was about to call some clients to push some product, because I had rent to pay, a voice came to me and said, "C10, put that down and apply for this job." I had actually been invited to work. One of my co-workers at Spelman, her sister was an AP in the school system. She had been trying to get me to work there, and I was like, "I'm not trying to work. I'm not trying to be nobody's teacher. I'm not trying to do all of that. I'm not. I'm not trying to do that. I'm an artist." She had been trying to deal, and I lost my job. She tried again. Literally, I stopped what I was doing, and I called her. I said, "Is that teacher position still open?" She said, "C10, I've been waiting for you to call me." She said, "Go online and fill it out right now." Within 30 minutes, I want to say, I don't even think it was that long, I did the application. The principal called me and said, "Come in for an interview tomorrow." (Alumnus C10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus D10 had a similar experience where he considered a variety of positions before he determined that teaching was the profession he was passionate about. Leading to his decision to become a teacher, D10 explained that he did not have a clear plan leaving Morehouse. After completing his BA degree in History, he moved back to San Diego (where he was from) and explored various options for employment.

Alumnus D10's aunt was in the banking profession and advised him to take a banking job so that he could get into a pipeline to move up in pay and responsibility. He described how he found himself as an educator in a very accidental and unintentional manner. Even knowing he had an opportunity to work in banking, he decided to explore other options and found a listing for a teacher assistant position at an alternative school for students who were not permitted to attend the traditional public school. He described the environment as very intense, yet he realized that he loved the work. Even if he considered leaving the position as a classroom teacher, he would still like to work within the realm of education. Since that first year, D10 felt he has not looked back since and continues to ride the momentum that was initiated during that first year of teaching.

When I graduated, I had no idea what I was [unintelligible 00:19:43]. It was one of those big fears I'm sure that everybody has when you graduate. Again, like you said, I got all my friends were lined up with internships. They're going to work at this firm. They're going to go do this. I had no idea what I was going to do. I went back to San Diego where I'm from and really had two offers and two opportunities that was an interesting path for me. My aunt had worked for Wells Fargo, and she was going to get me into banking. She said, "Hey, get into banking. You do X, Y, Z, you can go up the ladder." At the same time, and this, I swear it was like a crisis or something, but there was a job at a school as a teacher's assistant. Literally, they were the same pay, and I was like, "Let me go try out this teacher assistant thing. Let me see what it's about. The worst thing that can happen, I know my aunt can get me the banking job." It was non-public. Non-publics are where the students that do not fit into the school, the high extreme huge behavioral problems. I always give the example of, we would have kids that would run in a class, and I would have to be the one that would help

restrain and put them in a quiet space. That was the level of intensity. I realized I loved it. I loved everything about that school. I loved being around the kids every morning. I felt like it gave me so much energy. I couldn't imagine being in a bank or anything like that. I would say that it was definitely working at that school, the non-public schools, really, that just set me off. I really haven't looked back. It's interesting. Right now, like I said, I've gone through a little bit of part of looking at different areas, but even when I look at other areas of what else I might do, it was always something around education. I might get into consulting, or I might get into other areas, but it was definitely that experience where I was like, man, I could be hanging out with kids, moving around, doing stuff on a daily basis, and get paid to do it. I've never, I think in that, graduated '08 that was part of '09 and not looking back. I've not thought twice about any wholesale changes and any other career since then. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus T5 explained how he started to become interested in science literacy after interacting with colleagues in the field who had very limited communication skills. After graduating from Morehouse, Alumnus T5 decided to attend graduate school immediately. In addition to lab research, he was able to receive a role as a graduate assistant and teach undergraduates at the university he was attending. He eventually taught in an adjunct capacity but, upon completion, started contemplating his passion for science literacy. He reflected on how he would notice that educated scientists would still have difficulties understanding basic science concepts when explained to them. This inspired him to consider science education as a path and, after trial teaching on the college level and in middle school, he found that high school science fit his personality and pedagogy:

After graduation, I went directly to graduate school. One of the components of graduate school beyond the class work that you have to do and the research you have to do is you are like a graduate assistant. Every university has a different term for it but I was like an assistant teacher for a class. One thing that kind of lit up for me was that I found this fulfilling and rewarding. That was kind of my first time being in the classroom setting and being the one delivering the information as opposed to receiving the information in that way. Like I said, in a formal classroom setting. After grad school, is that when— Were you making that decision while you were teaching, or would you really start to think about it after

you finished the program? After I finished the program, one of the things I was trying to figure out was how does one communicate science? It's something I'm very passionate about, something I love, and I think science literacy is one of those of topics that I think is critically important for us as humans moving forward, but particular for black people. Science literacy is just— We're in a technological age right now and that's the fundamental— The science is at that foundation. I would find that as I tried to explain my basic laboratory research to people, there were so many gaps in their understanding. These are educated people, people who have gone through formal education to very high levels. There was something critically lacking. It took a couple years and I tried different heights of I taught it as an adjunct to the university level. I've taught middle school and I just found that high school was the— That was the age range. (Alumnus T5, personal communication, 2020)

This helps us understand that not all of the participants who graduated from this decade had financial pressures surrounding their entrance in the teaching profession. For Alumnus T8, there was an intrinsic drive to be a part of the science literacy movement that put an emphasis on the written and oral communication of science. However, he did admit that this passion grew while in graduate school and was pushed to the forefront based on his reflection of his experience with educators in his family.

Alumnus T8 was one of the exceptions in having a clear choice to pursue the teaching profession. The other excerpts show how big of a factor financial pressure was in the participants' decision to become a teacher. This is important to highlight because it shows the need for pathway programs that can strategically transition Black males into the teaching profession. It could even be considered that Morehouse requires all of their students to take at least one education course, as this study showed that teachers from the college come from a variety of majors.

Graduates from the 2000s: Convenience dominates. One trend among this group of interview participants was how circumstantial their decision was to become a teacher after graduating from Morehouse. While many of them were simply looking for

employment, one alumnus became a teacher because he was motivated to return home and ensure that his brother graduated. After graduating from Morehouse, Alumnus S3 decided to help out at home with his siblings as one brother was slipping into trouble while in school. He learned there was an opening at the local school and decided to apply for a teaching job in order to be closer to his brother. He initially thought he would be teaching younger kids, but since he had a business degree, they offered him an Entrepreneurship course to teach. When he showed up on the first day, he was asked to “sit in” on a high school Algebra course. Alumnus S3 did not have any prior experience teaching, but he accepted the role as he saw it to be only for 1 year. He told the school that he did not major in math, but the leadership assumed he could handle it because he graduated from Morehouse. Ironically, his brother was in the tenth grade and actually was enrolled in his math class:

I want to give a little context on why I started to kind of give that context there. As you may know, I’m one of seven of 12 children and all. My dad had passed our third year in Morehouse, so 2003, and so my youngest brother who my mom had at 42. When we graduated, he was 15, she’s 57 in Detroit, right outside of Detroit. You know, with a 15-year-old and he was kind of wilding out. She sent him to stay with my brother for a while and [unintelligible 00:06:40] different vibe. My sister out there, he ran over to them. Before I graduated, actually, she was saying, “Can you just come back for a year just to watch him, keep an eye on him, try to get him back in the right direction?” I went up, no background in education in Morehouse. I went up planning to just get a job somewhere up there, this is 2006 when I returned. Of course, it was not a good job market, and so I ended up— they were hiring at the school through a staffing agency, A Plus Staffing agency. I was like, “Well, the best way to keep an eye on him is to get a job at the school.” I just went up, they originally hired me to teach entrepreneurship and it was really— I thought it was going to be like those K-12 schools, so I thought they were going to bringing me in [chuckles] with like the second or third grade. They were like, “High school, you’re a business major, we got this entrepreneurship class you need to teach it.” I came in starting to preparing to teach that. About two weeks later, when I finally started, I went in the first day, and they were like, “Yes, somebody is in that class. Do you mind sitting in the math class?” I was like, “What do you mean?” They said, “Man,

their teacher hasn't shown up." Mind you, this is three weeks after school, I'm taking care of my brother, so he's coming home like, "Where's your homework?" "They didn't give us homework, they don't give books," is the story he's telling. It's a for-profit charter school in Inkster. When I finally started, I went in there, I mean, they showed me the elementary side before, and then the high school side. Man, it was literally weighing on me. It's like 30 minutes after class, always full, cursing. It was a different experience. Mind you, we're not that far out of high school, so I'm a little different. I started, that was high school math so 10th and 11th grade, and my brother actually happened to be one of my students, when I walked in, he was sitting right there. (Alumnus S3, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus L6 described how his girlfriend at the time recommended he pursue teaching.

He recently quit his federal job and needed to support himself. Once again, we find an alumnus who discovered his passion for teaching through difficult human capital-related events particularly connected to employment:

When I started teaching, I was single and I had just met my then girlfriend, now wife. It was actually her idea for me to go into the classroom. I had quit being a federal background investigator for the fact of sheer boredom to and starting to abuse government property, driving to rehearsals in my government car. I resigned from that. I was teaching private voice and making some money and doing gigs and performing. I was like, "I really need to be making more money." She was like, "I don't understand why you won't just go be a teacher? You're a teacher. You're always teaching. You teach in church, you teach private voice. That will do." I didn't think that I would be hired because I didn't take any type of education courses in any of the things that I did. I did a year in Ohio in a program. I ended up as a high school voice teacher, but I just didn't see myself that way. Once I got in the classroom, it was everything that I enjoyed doing. There's an element of performance to teaching. I love research, so studying to build a lesson, and plan how students will get it, and anticipate what they will understand and what they won't understand. The work itself really drugged me in. Then in addition to that, just the climate of working in urban schools is what kept me coming back. (Alumnus L6, personal communication, 2020)

This excerpt helps us see the intersectional influences that alumni from Morehouse experienced when making the decision to become a teacher. Alumnus P4 genuinely wanted to help students; however, he was very explicit about his drive for establishing employment:

It was real simple. I needed a job and I was qualified to be a teacher, so I decided to stay in the classroom so I can keep a job. I wanted to stay to make a difference. I wanted to stay to be a positive influence on students and whatnot, but at the end of the day, what it was that impacted my decision to return every year as a teacher was the need for employment and the need to impact students. It would have been very easy to leave. [laughs] (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

After working for the phone company in Atlanta following graduation, Alumnus P10 decided to go back home before attempting to go to law school at New York University. During the interim, he decided he needed to get a job and took advantage of New Jersey's alternative teacher certification route, which allowed him to get his foot in the door as a teacher:

After graduation, stayed in Atlanta. At the time— And again, I worked full-time from sophomore year, up until the time I graduated. I was the 411 operator for BellSouth. I would work eight hours a day. I don't know how I did it, go to class, make my schedule, work. Teaching for me was, I came back home after I said, "You know what, I don't want to stay in Atlanta anymore. I want something different. I'm going to come back home and then go to NYU law school." It wasn't until I got home that I said, "I need to work, I need to do something in the interim. What can I do that doesn't require me to go to school right away, do anything right away?" The New Jersey certification process, they had an alternate route, so where you have a degree, you pass your clinical, your test. If you get the promise of a job in a district that's willing to mentor you and willing to guide you, you can take your state-required courses in the evening while you're teaching during your first year. I said, "Okay, I'll do that. I'll get a teaching certificate, it'd be great." Lo and behold, I'm still doing it. So for me, it was more a matter of, "Oh, let me do it." I will say, the Alternate Route Program in New Jersey is one of the greatest assets that they have done because more Black male teachers come through that route, who don't traditionally major in education. It gives those teachers, "Okay, what's your background in? Finance? Oh, okay, you want to teach math, you want to teach marketing, you want to teach personal finance?" It allows individuals who didn't think about education a second chance to think about it now. That's something that I definitely say, it shaped who I am. (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

With the exception of Alumnus S4, the participants in this section all had employment with a non-education profession prior to becoming a teacher. They were all forced to become teachers because they needed the money, yet they all discussed falling in love

with the profession, particularly with the ability to help students who were less fortunate navigate the public school system. These indicated important factors to consider when recruiting Black males because it suggested the type of longevity they may have in the teaching profession. Alumnus S4 had no intentions of being a career teacher after his brother graduated from high school. However, he was still inspired to work with students, just not in the classroom. Alumnus D10, on the other hand, discovered a love for teaching and education and decided to make it his life career. Even after leaving the profession to become a principal, he still returned to the aspect of education that spoke to his intrinsic drive to help young males of color: teaching. While the circumstance dominated this group of interview participants, it is clear that the next group of Morehouse alumni who graduated in 2010 later showed that becoming a teacher was a very specific choice for them after graduating from Morehouse.

Graduates from the 2010s: The choice and chance: KIPP, TFA, and other neoliberal organizations. Alumnus C8 tried a variety of teacher pipelines and pathways, including TFA and Uncommon Schools, but was not accepted. He eventually was accepted into the City Year Teacher placement program and led him to teach high school in Chicago. His experience in Chicago as a young man influenced him profoundly, and he decided after that year to work strictly with early childhood grades. After hearing back from KIPP in Philadelphia, he jumped on the opportunity to teach the age with whom he felt most comfortable. After being fired from that position, he substitute-taught in Dallas and eventually landed a teaching position. Although he had to deal with challenges with White colleagues, his latest school had different issues as he described, particularly when it came to the quality of education students were receiving. He also reflected that his

experience with professional development has lifted up the obvious inequities that exist in education, particularly for children of color:

Didn't get into TFA. I didn't get into Uncommon when I applied. I didn't get any full-time teaching position, so I did City Year in Chicago. I graduated, moved to Chicago and I did City Year. The beautiful thing about City Year was, I was working with ninth graders, so I've gone from fifth— Actually at Morehouse, my freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year, I volunteered at M. Agnes Jones, and so, I worked with the elementary school students there. I've done elementary, this middle introduction, a little lower grade middle school, now to high school. Chicago, being 22, now having a real— Also, being indoctrinated under these KIPP, Uncommon models that are very White savior, very voyeuristic in a way. [crosstalk] Me having to go to Chicago and have some real tangible grapples with poverty in an intimate manner that I haven't had to do before. (Alumnus C8, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus B9 had a TFA teacher from his childhood who encouraged him to become a teacher:

Yes, my sixth-grade teacher who was actually the founder of KIPP School in East to North Carolina. He was the first teacher to actually mention or even talk about college. He was from Maine and he was a Teacher for America. He was the first that talked about it on a grander scheme for all of us. Of course, we may have all the siblings, the cousins who have gone off to school which is very rare. Many of us are first-generational college students. He sticks out with being the first one and he was actually the one encouraging me to apply to work at KIPP. I didn't think about it then, but I'll admit. (Alumnus B9, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus K6 attended graduate school at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas, where he also chose to tutor students in math. During his time there, he offered his space to a fellow Morehouse alumni classmate who was teaching at a local KIPP charter school in the city. Alumnus K6 inquired about teaching and, before he knew it, he was a full-time teacher:

I did math tutoring at TSU and then once I did about a year of that, then I was able to get a tutoring job as a teacher in a middle school which then landed me at KIPP. That's how it went. I did my grad school at TSU, man. That's how I end up transitioning into education. I was like, "Wow. I'm in grad school." Another Morehouse brother. Another Morehouse brother of mines who when I moved

here, I opened my apartment up to him and just let him know like, “Hey, if you want to stay here for a week or two, you know, until you get on your feet or whatever,” that’s how it was. He landed a job at KIPP. I was at a HISD school tutoring and so when I got down to tutoring, I was like, “Hey, your school got any positions open or whatever?” I think I’m [inaudible 00:45:04] transition to the classroom because when I was tutoring, the middle school also partnered me with another teacher. At that point, I was able to learn some things through them, and then I went on my own and went to KIPP. I wanted to do high school. I didn’t want to do middle school. (Alumnus K6, personal communication, 2020)

Disappointed and disillusioned about his options after graduation, Alumnus S9 returned to Savannah, Georgia, to reset and determine next steps related to his professional career. He decided to attend a Developmental Psychology program for 9 months after Harvard rejected his graduate school application. He also mentioned he applied to Columbia University but never heard back. After 9 months of the program, he moved back home and started attending church with his parents. After church one Sunday, a friend of the family, Ms. Avis, asked Alumnus S9 to volunteer in her class. After volunteering once, Alumnus S9 found himself there consistently supporting the students. During that time, TFA offered him an abbreviated application, and he was eventually placed in a school located in Miami, Florida:

Yes, yes. I didn’t find out, I wasn’t going to find out in time enough to know what I was going to do at graduation. I had applied to grad school at Harvard, got rejected, that was terrible. My best friend got into the same program and then— Just nothing was working out. I had applied, nothing was working out. I graduated and didn’t really know what to do. Yes, I was in this really lost period and ended up applying. I did put an application to Columbia but I never heard back. I just assumed— I know. I just kept [unintelligible 00:21:50] end up getting it. Came to New York, still didn’t want to teach, but still didn’t really know what I wanted to do. I was wrapping up my program in human development, developmental psychology. I want to be honest with you, I just wanted something to do. I wanted to go to a nice grad program. I didn’t really want to work. I was feeling like that, “Okay, let me see if I can milk this school thing for a while.” Decided to do that, got in, and I liked my experience in New York when I did the program. It was cool. I learned, I think I gained a lot of knowledge that I can apply now but still left the program, didn’t have a job. I had to go back home and was there for nine

months. While I was at home again, still not really know what I wanted to do. That just made it worse and at that time, there was this lady. I was going to church, back at church with my parents. At that time, there was one of our family friends, Ms. Avis, she was teaching in the classroom and she was like, “Can you just come volunteer because these boys just need some—” I was like, “Okay.” Literally, I had nothing to do and I was like, “Cool.” I went one day to volunteer and it turned, I stayed up there, I was up there for three months every day with her in her class. I just learned so much from her and just volunteering there. Around the same time, TFA reached back out and said that they had this abbreviated application because I had applied before and if I was interested, that I could do it again. I didn’t have anything to and so I was like, “Maybe this might be— maybe I could give this a try.” Ended up applying, got it, got into the Miami CORE and I thought I just was going to do the two years and move on, but yes, I’ve stayed ever since. [chuckles] (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

Following graduation, Alumnus P7 accepted a job as a paraprofessional at a Boys and Girls club as well as at a local elementary school. He did not have a solid plan upon leaving Morehouse, so he worked a variety of odd jobs. He described a job he took when he returned home to Delaware at a local bank that he did not enjoy. As he was working at the elementary school as a paraprofessional, he also took on a part-time position working for a nonprofit organization that did home visits to interview students about their social services. Alumnus P7’s role was to take notes at these meetings, and he learned quickly the experience of many Black boys in the public school system who did not have quality role models to inspire and guide them. This experience pushed him to pursue a full-time career as a teacher:

During Morehouse, what I was doing was mostly volunteer was mostly the Boys and Girls Club, or homeless shelter. Working with the kids, most of them, I enjoyed it. When I got out of college, where I graduated, I didn’t really have a plan of action. I just stumbled out of Morehouse with my degree and thought that was it, and that the jobs would just start falling from the sky. That’s not necessarily the case. Obviously, we all know that. I worked a couple of jobs that were not meaningful. I actually went home for a little bit, going to Delaware, trying to get on my feet and figure things out. Worked for a bank and it was depressing. Came back and I got an audition part-time work, but I had got a job for a nonprofit where I was going to people’s homes to take some notes and have

some conversations with the boys. Most of them were boys. Actually, all of them were boys. They were saying it's good to have you because most of ours are psychologists and child counselors are women, and I think a male would be good for the boys to have. I was going to these homes and having these conversations with these boys and taking notes with a psychologist and a counselor. The biggest thing was that they just didn't have any male role models. At the rule of the conversation is that they had no one to look to model themselves after, or to ask some of those questions, or answer some of those questions, just to see. That struck me as like this is really one of the crucial issues with our communities, especially with boys of color, is them trying to identify themselves, figure out who they are. (Alumnus P7, personal communication, 2020)

The memories that were shared by these participants revealed that life circumstances arising to human capital variables can have a significant impact on their motivation. This motivation is not linear and shows that it is influenced by important factors that existed prior to their identity as a teacher. Sociocultural influences from their K-12 experience sometimes followed them to Morehouse, and many discovered a new aspect of themselves they had not known before. The next section emphasizes the teacher retention variables that helped contextualize more their trajectory and decision to remain a teacher.

Teacher Retention Variable Power Analysis

The variables under analysis in this portion of the study focused on data based on the participants' time as a teacher. Similar to the Life Circumstance variable analysis, this section used the quantitative summary from the survey to form inquiry questions that interrogated the qualitative data for power dynamics that may influence the decision to remain a teacher. The "Teacher Status" variable was one of the central data points in this study as it directly correlated with the teacher's retention decision. While the goal of this study was to gather more current teachers than former teachers, it was difficult to secure former teachers for both the semi-structured interviews as well as for the survey.

Table 15 shows the number of current teachers and former teachers who completed the survey.

Table 15. *Teaching Status of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Current Teacher	45	41.3
Former Teacher	64	58.7

Note. A minimum of one full year as a public or public charter school teacher was the criteria for survey participants.

Of the 45 survey participants, I was only able to secure 10 alumni for the semi-structured interviews. One important note to make is that three of the 22 interview participants changed status from a current teacher to a former teacher by the time the interviews were conducted. This also led to multiple analytic questions: Why is it that more than half of the survey participants were former teachers? How did pressures related to finances, family, and leadership impact their decision to remain a teacher?

Table 16 indicates the range of total years an alumnus taught in the public school system. This was another important variable that may factor into why there were so few current teachers in both the interviews and the survey.

Table 16. *Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Novice Teacher (1-3 years)	20	18.3
Mid-Career Teacher (4-9 years)	50	45.9
Veteran Teacher (10+ years)	39	35.8

Nearly half of the participants in the survey had 4 to 9 total years of teaching experience when they completed this survey. However, what is more striking is how

many of the teachers (35.8%) stayed 10 or more years. This may explain why so many former teachers as a large chunk of the survey participants had several years in the profession. This led to the following inquiry questions: Why have more than a third of the survey participants taught 10 years or more? How do seasoned teachers understand the impact of professional development and young males of color on their decision to remain a teacher, compared to those who have less than 10 years of experience?

Table 17 shows additional contextual information as it relates to the location of the participants' teaching experience. Based on the data, even though only 38.5% of the survey participants were from the SE portion of the United States, more than half, 58.7%, taught in the SE region. One explanation may be the convenience of proximity, particularly finding a position in the same region where Morehouse College is located. Another interesting finding in this portion of the survey was that very few alumni taught on the West Coast of the United States. The data showed that at least two of the individuals were not from the area because only a total of three alumni from the West region.

Table 17. *Location of Teaching Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Southeast Region	64	58.7
Northeast Region	42	38.5
Midwest Region	19	17.4
Southwest Region	9	8.3
West Region	5	4.6

Note: Some survey participants indicated that they taught in multiple regions.

One possible explanation for the large number of alumni who taught in the NE and SE regions was the high need in those urban cities as well as the cities into which

teacher pathway organizations feed. This led to posing the following inquiry questions in the qualitative data analysis: Why is it that 38% of the survey participants were from the SE, but 58% had experience teaching in the SE? How does the location of where alumni teach impact their decision to remain a teacher?

The final variables related to teacher retention related to the age group in which the participants taught as well as the subject they taught. This was important because of the lack of teacher preparation that many Morehouse graduates experienced, with the exception of some early childhood courses offered at Spelman College. Table 18 indicates a smaller portion of the alumni who taught elementary school versus middle or high school. Much of the literature around BMTs has indicated that these schools choose Black men because they assume they are strong classroom managers and disciplinarians who can match the teenage students' attitude. This analysis helps us see how Black males are disproportionately filtered in the middle school and high school grades. The assumption that Black men are better equipped to handle older students because of the types of disciplinary issues that arise is problematic for their long-term retention in the profession. The data also revealed that many Morehouse graduates may enter elementary school settings because of the lack of preservice teaching training in a specific content that could have been limited if they had had any such training while at Morehouse.

Table 18. *School Grade Level of Taught Experience of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
Elementary School	45	41.3
Middle School	65	59.6
High School	60	55

Note: Some survey participants indicated that they taught in multiple Grade-Level Schools.

It also must be noted that for both of these variables, participants were able to indicate if they taught multiple school grade levels and subjects. Once again, this has implications for how these participants were prepared while at Morehouse. Because there was no specific education major, many might have had limited options for the content they could teach. Table 19 indicates that 45% of alumni taught General Education or a specialized elective course like art, music, or technology.

Table 19. *Subjects Taught as a Teacher of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants*

	N	%
English Language Arts	38	34.9
Math	39	35.8
Social Studies	40	36.7
Science	28	25.7
World Language	3	3.8
General Ed/Other Specialized Course	49	45

Note: Some survey participants indicated that they taught multiple subjects.

Another startling statistic from the data was the number of World Language teachers that Morehouse has produced based on this study. It is surprising to only have three survey participants who have taught this subject because of Morehouse's robust foreign language offerings and global travel opportunities. The following inquiry

questions were developed based on these data: Why is there such a high number of participants who taught a subject other than ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, or World Language? Why have more than half of the participants taught in High School (56%) and Middle Schools (59%) compared to 43% of those who indicated they have taught in Elementary Schools?

The following sections offer themes that were found using the variable as the contextual framework for the analysis. Within the variable analysis related to Teaching Status, the study found contrasting motivational indicators and compared the various types of motivation based on the status of the interview participants. As related to the number of years a participant taught, the analysis examined the various professional development experiences each interview participant had according to the number of years they taught. The location of participants' teaching experience was explored specifically in terms of whether the location they chose to teach was based on convenience, condition, or choice. Finally, it investigated the various certificate routes and school choices that participants made during their time as a teacher.

Teaching Status Themes: "Autonomous and Controlled Motivations"



This study's theoretical framework anchored the research in the theory of self-determination, which looks at self-motivation as it relates to being autonomous and controlled. This section contextualizes these experiences using the SPI logic model to better understand the power dynamics involving the study participants' motivation. Each section examines those data within the category of each participant's teacher status as a current teacher.

Autonomous motivated current teachers: Goal-oriented. A trend that was observed while analyzing the interview responses was the frequent mention of being goal-oriented or purpose-driven. The origins of this drive were not clear; however, there was no indication that it derived from an external force. There are possible implications in the data of introjected regulation, with some interview participants described their motivation to help students achieve using neoliberal, market-driven educational jargon related to performance indicators, standards, and test scores. Here is where we observe the blurring of human capital theory and self-determination theory. Human capital approaches to education and its neoliberal framing become internalized and integrated with their sense of contribution to society. Therefore, teachers in essence become producers and designers of human capital within their interactions with students, while having intentions to support the educational needs of society. While I originally took the stance that human capital-influenced decisions are all controlled variables, some participants indicated that the idea of human capital value is intrinsically ingrained in their actions to the point that they have become autonomous and manifesting within their teaching philosophy. This means that the original binary approach to these two theories have to be reconsidered, where human capital theory is positioned as the dominant variable, with self-determination theory acting as the dependent variable to a capitalistic society.

Alumnus K6 fits within this category of someone for whom it is difficult to determine if this motivation is autonomous or controlled. His description of his motivation revealed a goal-oriented mindset that several participants conveyed in their

interviews. The following excerpt from Alumnus K6’s interview can be viewed within the power context of the following SPI towers, as seen in Figure 44.

Figure 44. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus K6 Data Related to the Theme “Goal-Oriented”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self- Motivation	Regulation
Cause & Effect (C&E)		Nsrewa “wealth”	Desired Outcomes	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Stability & Change (S&C)		Akoban “national defense”	Protection and Preparation	Security	Autonomous Motivation	Identified Regulation

One possible conclusion was that Alumnus K6 was motivated by desired outcomes, particularly student scores on standardized tests. Because some schools have been known to give performance-based raises, it must be considered that Alumnus K6 perhaps was motivated by possible compensation or even recognition, building his reputation as an educator. In contrast to this controlled motivation, Alumnus K6 could also have had a certain amount of autonomous motivation related to his goal-oriented mindset. Because this type of motivation uses identified regulation, his motive-related protection and preparation of the students can be interpreted as a drive for security of the students’ future:



I think for me what determines a factor are the goals that I have set in place. Oftentimes, where I have been complacent, early years where I just want to learn how to teach but it’s the goals that I’ve put in perspective. I’ve held myself to a high standard to say, “Hey, listen. At some point, I want to be in the politics of education at some point.” For me, it’s just more about going through each step of the way, ensuring that I understand the process of being a teacher. Whether that’s being a teacher, being a coach, being an administrator. Go through the proper channels that gives me the experience to where I can relate to anyone else that wants to do this. I sit there at the end of each year and say, “Hey, did I accomplish

my goals? What are some other things that I want to work on while I'm being a teacher? Then when I do go back, what else do I want to achieve?" I sit down and I think through this year or every school year, and figure out what's the ceiling, and if I've achieved those goals or not. As you know, education can be—it's a lot and to even think that you achieved those goals, it's hard [crosstalk]. Yes, those goals for me are rooted around a couple of things. They put in the system data when I first started. The data that we needed to have a certain amount of students that pass. Whether it be ACT goals, SAT goals, or star-related goals in our course you teach. Sometimes I set those goals for myself to accomplish what I did—I'll do better than what I've done the year before. Those goals for me are goals in correlation with academics. Then also just the goal of how to motivate these students each and every year, because they come different, they come differently, they come different every year. Yes, again, to achieve those goals academically, in terms of test scores and things of that nature, I set those goals for myself and try to do better each year. That comes from a couple of things with professional development, things that I might implement last year, and what I want to implement this upcoming year and see if that works. I don't know like that's just where I've been for the last few years. Again, I set my goals and I try to see if I achieved them or not. Right now, I feel like I have a long way to go, so it keeps me in the classroom for sure. (Alumnus K6, personal communication, 2020)

When reflecting on what impacted his return to teaching each year, Alumnus S5 discussed his passion and drive to help students in a hands-on manner with the learning journey. He described his presence in the teaching profession as “purpose-driven,” and felt that in his role as a counselor, he would at times be used as a disciplinarian. Alumnus S5 explained that he did not have any ambitions to go into school leadership and felt that being a teacher gave him the ability to be hands-on and use his counseling strategies. In this situation, motivation seemed more autonomous. Autonomous motivation uses regulators to help with decision making which may, in this study, be integrated, identified, or intrinsic. Alumnus S5 showed that his decision to be a teacher and not a school leader seems connected to his internal drive for a profession to which he can relate. This sense of fulfillment is difficult to trace and, sometimes, difficult to communicate. However, it plays an important role for understanding the complexity of

this retention decision. The SPI Adinkra Tower under which Alumnus S5 was analyzed in Figure 45 was the E&M Adinkra that negotiates personal fulfillment and passion with the decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 45. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus S5 Data Related to the Theme “Goal-Oriented”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self-Motivation	Regulation
Structure & Function (S&F)		Funtummireku Denkyemmirek “unity among family members”	People and Institutions	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Energy & Matter (E&M)		Akofena “courageous thought and action”	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness	Autonomous Motivation	Intrinsic Regulation

However, when analyzing his motivation within the context of the S&F Adinkra, one may see that his motivation could be solely oriented around whether the institution serves a specific demographic of students. Where this does not align well is with the powered motivation of “compensation and reputation.” There is no indication that Alumnus S5 wanted any money or added recognition for his work. While this particular SPI Tower indicated an introjected regulation, I have concluded that it seems to go outside the box and into the realm of intrinsic motivation. This is why the SPI logic model is only used to probe for inquiry, not to find a concise answer. In this excerpt from Alumnus S5’s interview, he explained his “purpose-driven” approach to his profession:

One of the things that pushed me back towards getting into the classroom, and it was specific too, I want to say it wasn’t my whole experience as a school counselor, it was just this particular school site that had to utilize my position more so as a Dean, more so a counselor. Sometimes the school counselor is depending at the school site, you got to be very careful, how do they utilize you at

that position? I didn't want to be seen more as a punitive person but more so as a counselor. That deterred me and, you know what? Let me go back into the classroom. I missed being in the classroom in front of the kids. Counselor is more of an individual, I could have groups. It's cool. I might even go back to it, but I put myself into a position where I could vacillate between the both. Well, you know what? Let me add this caveat to it, is that many educators' trajectory is go from classroom, counseling, into leadership. I knew right away that I had no ambitions or aspirations to be in administration. Again, I understood my purpose was working with kids upfront. Looking at Ron Brown specifically, it gave me a place of purpose and I understood the focal point and the struggle was so obvious, I couldn't ignore it. Like, hey, we deal with young men who grew up, similar circumstances, similar adversities that you have. The only difference is that you're providing a Black face that you didn't have growing up. What glued me to Ron Brown is the population and that it had room for growth. It had room for me to develop my craft or redevelop my craft in teaching. (Alumnus S5, personal communication, 2020)

These two contrasting narratives, from participants who graduated 15 years apart, showed how difficult it is to identify the specific influences of autonomous motivation. Alumnus K6 seemed to be highly influenced by his KIPP work environment, which framed education and students outcomes within a certain neoliberal context. Alumnus S5, on the other hand, seemed to be in rebellion of what he considered a traditional progression within the education profession from teacher to counselor to principal. He was driven to use the skills he gained as a counselor in a strategic way that would develop relationships based on trust and promote academic excellence through modeling and exposing students to the complexity of the world.

Autonomous motivated current teachers: Spiritual calling. Whether they were former teachers or current teachers, a consistent number of interview participants described their motivation as being intrinsically driven by a spiritual force. This was one rare situation where the analysis was strictly done within the SPI Adinkra Tower of

Akofena, Energy and Matter. Alumnus E20 referred to this spiritual force several times in his interview as “providence”:

I hope this doesn't go outside of the realms of your research, but a lot of people that choose this profession do so with intentionality. I would say that, for me, I'm an outlier of this whole process because I believe in providence. I think that a lot of my decisions, where a lot of people have this ambition to do certain things or they plan out certain steps in their lives, I can honestly say that I've never been one with a lot of ambitions and my choices were just seemingly through happenstance. This is where I am in life right now and it all works out. I think it's providential that I'm where I am right now, and it's almost like I have no other choices. Then in that, I can also look at the choices and I can make decisions to say, “Well, I'll walk away, I'll do something else.” They probably wouldn't be fruitful, which is why I don't. Then I do have little things where I look at, “I'm needed here. I'm necessary here, and I'm going to give what I have.” (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)



Alumnus C10 also described this higher power that guided him to the teaching profession. He mentioned that his mother wanted him to be a teacher and felt it was some sort of spiritual influence since the demographic of students he was working with had special needs:

Well, for me, I will be totally honest. A lot of it is divinely inspired. I feel like I believe in living a purpose-filled life and I believe, professionally, follow your skillset, but spiritually follow what your purpose is, and for me, like I told you earlier, it was never my intention to become a teacher. Ironically, my mother wanted me to be a teacher and a writer. [chuckles] That was her ultimate career for me. I told her she was crazy, but that's what happened. You learn as you get older and as you develop. Like I said, I went to Morehouse with the intention of being a full-time performer and a director. That was what I went to college for and that was my intention, but life happens. Passions change, passions develop. For me, it was a combination. It was life. It was my career, where I was in life. It was the economy, there were a whole bunch of external factors. There was a spiritual influence that took over and then I realized I really had a knack for it. I had been doing it with my private business anyway. I was teaching private voice, private piano, private theater, so I was already doing it. It was kind of a self-challenge for me to see what it would be like to apply those same skills into a formal setting. It was a combination of things. (Alumnus C10, personal communication, 2020)

The intrinsic regulation that is used here situated these participants to make decisions that were not directly influenced by external factors, but more by a higher force that many of them described within the realm of faith or providence. This set of data was critical in understanding that some BMTs perceived their role as bigger than just a job or career. For them, it was a calling or vocation that served a divine purpose for those who were underserved in the public school system.

Autonomous motivated current teachers: Young males of color. One central focus of this study’s conceptual framework was the impact that teaching young males of color had on the interview participants’ decision to remain a teacher. Alumnus D10 reflected on the pressure BMTs experiences related to being assumed disciplinarians. In Figure 46, we can see Alumnus D10 being positioned to negotiate the type of people he wants to serve with the institutions that serve them. At the same time, we see possible implications of autonomous motivation as he attempts to negotiate the protection and preparation of this specific group of students.

Figure 46. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Alumnus D10 data related to the theme “Autonomous Motivated Current Teachers: Young Males of Color”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self- Motivation	Regulation
Structure & Function (S&F)		Funtummireku Denkyemmirek “unity among family members”	People and Institutions	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Stability & Change (S&C)		Akoben “national defense”	Protection and Preparation	Security	Autonomous Motivation	Identified Regulation

Young Black males were shown to be of high value as Alumnus D10 made an entire regional shift from the West Coast to the Midwest so that he could support more Black boys. However, he felt a sense of guilt at times when he reflected about those students in predominantly White schools who did not have Black male teachers to experience:

I think the other thing that I found very interesting when I worked in my second school, where I was actually in a teaching capacity, one of the things I think that's interesting because I've always gravitated and the reason I went from San Diego to Chicago to teach specifically is I wanted to be around more Black males. I wanted to be there because I know what my role is. What I did, what's really interesting is that, at the schools where it's predominantly White, and there are only a few Black males, I didn't see that. I think that's something that doesn't get talked about enough. There are kids who are, again, like me, growing up in an area where there's only a handful of Black male students, then there tend to be not as many teachers. That just ends up being something that those kids get an opportunity. I get pulled sometimes. I work in Chicago and I worked at a school, for example, that was 99% Black. You feel like that was an environment where you're constantly feeling like you're given that work because you're doing it and you're around those kids, and you being a Black male has a huge impact. I also do think the flip side of working at schools where it's like 80% White and only 3% Black. What do we do for those kids? That's sometimes I've always struggled with that. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

The motivation to become and remain a teacher varied among the participants who were current teachers; however, the interview data showed strong autonomous motivations. This motivation was interpreted based on their descriptions of their intrinsic drive that varied from very specific motives, such as supporting Black boys, to more ambiguous motives, such as fulfilling their purpose or divine intervention. These particular teachers are the type to whom school leaders should give great care and yet not underestimate the impact of professional development. Although there were various manifestations of autonomous motivation, many times they proved to be influenced by factors that went beyond sociocultural interaction. These types of reflections indicated

evidence of humanist intentions that went beyond the human capital dominance that permeates the education profession and reveals a self-determination that brings humanity to teaching.

Controlled motivated current teachers: Financial stability. The final motivational theme under this particular variable related to the interview participants' power negotiation with financial stability. This was another theme analyzed strictly under the C&E Adinkra Tower. This particular power dynamic emphasizes a person's focus on desired outcomes, usually for the wellness of themselves or the family for which they are responsible. The powered motivation in this case was more positioned around compensation rather than reputation. However, they impacted one another as a lack of compensation for a person's time and skill can result in a negative reputation among one's family or employer. Alumnus J10 was a prime example of a participant who fully had human capital intentions with his motivation to be a teacher. However, this is another case in which a person's human capital drive was based on sociocultural influences that over time has developed into an autonomous motivation with identified regulation.

What was striking about Alumnus J10's reflection on what motivated him to come back as a teacher each year was that he knew them in sequential order and confirmed it in the interview? What he first thought about was his context and role as an Art teacher, which prompted a different consideration of various factors. The first reason he mentioned was to have family security. Financial pressure to stay a teacher was his number one priority, and he felt it would be the tipping point as it related to whether he continued in the profession. The second factor he considered was his connection with the families at the school. Then he thought about the students he would be teaching and then

whether the school would provide professional development. Administration was considered, but was not a valued factor in the decision. In this excerpt from Alumnus J10, he described explicitly his hierarchy of motivation related to his decision to remain a teacher:





For one, I'm an art teacher. As an art teacher, I'm looking at various things. Also as a husband and a father, I'm thinking about my family. I'm thinking about those contracts helping to secure finances for the family, of course. As far as teaching, I'm also, through my thought process around the teaching part, thinking about the connections that I have with the families. The connections that I've grown, the partnerships that I've developed. Then I'm also thinking about the upcoming group of students who I'm preparing for high school. I take all of that into account. That's one of the reasons why I tend to stay with the school that I am employed with, simply because I'm developing a relationship as well as developing my craft as well. I'm at Center City Public Charter School. I think I've been a teacher in probably about four schools in my whole career. Those are some of the things that impact me, am I able to do my job well, do I have the space, do I have the materials to do my job well? Also, does this position help support me as a teacher later on? Are they giving me professional development? Because sometimes it's hard to find that type of professional development for visual art teachers. Sometimes visual art teachers are lumped in with general ed teachers, math or ELA teachers. Although there are some connections, visual art is its own discipline. As an almost fourteen-year teacher, that's one of the things I demand now from the schools that I work for, I need professional development. The tipping point, I would say definitely my family finances has to be the number one. Well, one because my family's a higher priority. It has to be, because although my talents and my skills are able to be used for my employment, my family security has to come first. All of those other things help to fuel my need to make sure that that's handled. I would say for most teachers, if you have a family that might be one of the number one factors. Now after that, I would say definitely the families. After that, I would definitely say the families, even over the administration. Administration is definitely important, but family over administration simply because administrations come and go. I've been a teacher in that school specifically about ten years. I've probably seen about six or seven principals, and I've been the same art teacher for that amount of time. The families that I've serviced, that relationship doesn't go anywhere, administrations come and go, so I would say the families overall. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

It seemed difficult to gauge the level of influence that the human capital theory and self-determination theory had on Alumnus J10. His sociocultural experience as a child and student at Morehouse established values related to family commitment that came into conflict with the economic contexts in which some BMTs find themselves. Here is the integration of both theories at work, where the identified regulation used for their autonomous motivation is negotiated with their external regulation of controlled motives to avoid financial hardships. In the ideal situation, the teacher is able to both satisfy this commitment to his family obligations while at the same time contribute to the community that extends beyond interactions with students and includes families, according to the reflections of Alumnus J10.

Teaching Status Themes: “Controlled Motivations of Former Teachers”

This portion of the analysis examines the experience of former teachers and the various factors that influenced them to leave the classroom and pursue a different career. The themes in this section were analyzed using the four different SPI Adinkra Towers, seen in Figure 47, illustrating the context for the power dynamic analysis involving interview participants who indicated they were former teachers. Importantly, the majority of alumni who indicated they were former teachers were still working in education-related fields, mainly educational leadership.

Figure 47. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Controlled Motivations of Former Teachers”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra a Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self- Motivation	Regulation
Systems & Models (S&M)		<u>Adinkrahene</u> “power and authority”	Locus of Control	Political Risks	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Cause & Effect (C&E)		<u>Nsrewa</u> “wealth”	Desired Outcomes	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Scale & Quantity (S&Q)		<u>Dame dame</u> “intelligence, planning and strategy”	Distance and Money	Geography & Economics	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Structure & Function (S&F)		<u>Funtummireku</u> <u>Denkyemmirek</u> “unity among family members”	People and Institutions	Access	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation

The factors that contributed to these specific Adinkras being emphasized live in the participants’ responses to why they decided to leave the role as a teacher. Although this study was focused mainly on retention, it is important to recognize the major variables that pushed teachers out of the profession, particularly when they have taught for several years. Those who teach beyond two years confront the retention decision multiple times and, for some, in varying life circumstances. However, consistent themes showed alignment with the culture of career trajectories for Morehouse graduates. Historically, Morehouse has prided itself on sending Black men to graduate school and preparing them to be leaders in education. This was consistent with those interviewed, as many felt obligated to go on to graduate school, typically based on pressure from their

family members or Morehouse peers. Others were thrust into school leadership or chose to position themselves in school leadership, which led to an eventual exit out of the classroom. Other external factors that /were also highlighted were challenges with adult culture in certain schools that discouraged many of the participants to seek positions that did not involve being a classroom teacher. Even though these particular excerpts reflected on these external influences by former teachers, it must be noted that some of these same external circumstances were expressed by current teachers as well. However, as shown in the last section, these teachers also expressed an explicit intrinsic motivation to teach that went beyond titles or salaries but was driven by an omnipotent force. The following excerpts suggest that meaningful conversations and guidance around career trajectories in the education professional for BMTs are crucial if schools wish to adequately retain their Black males as classroom teachers.

Administrative school leadership: Opportunities for former teachers. A common career circumstance for several of the interview participants who were former teachers was the opportunity to become educational leaders. Some pursued it actively while others were pressured, including the researcher-participant. The C&E Adinkra Tower seems to be ever-present in decisions that involve this factor because higher compensation is typically packaged with leadership roles. However, there is also a power negotiation between people and institutions, where participants realized the lack of access Black men have at the leadership table in the education profession. Alumnus L6 explained he was forced to use introjected regulation as he negotiated his controlled motivation to leave the classroom and become an instructional coach:

I really felt like I was pushed into administration. I can say God gave me a vision of running programs, but I didn't think I was going to be running a school. That wasn't what my initial thought was. In 2013, Booker T. actually closed, and I was working through my master's program. I was in an education leadership program because I really wanted to have after school programs. I ended up in a new instructional coaching role that's just— I got, just call me a good friend. I'd known she got hired as an AP, her first year and she was like, "I need an instructional coach. You need to come." I was like, "I'm a music teacher. I taught music. I taught history." She was like, "No, you understand teaching. You understand how to deal with adults and I need somebody to come here to know, to deal with people." Even in that, I still was that first year, struggling a bit with not being in a classroom, and really feeling like I wanted to make connections with kids. Then I learned that a school can't run if the adults are confused so I understand the value of building adult capacity really informs how much can be done for children and schools. (Alumnus L6, personal communication, 2020)

Although Alumnus S14 had very high SD totals in his memory path analysis, he was still motivated to leave the classroom as a teacher. He would eventually get an administrative itch and take additional courses, learning about the limited Black leadership representation which pushed him to want to impact students in a different way and become an assistant principal:

I was finishing up my administrative certification and this may speak a little bit to what I'm also into now about recruitment and retention, but there was a Black administrator in this position that I'm in now at this school, and actually I met his frat brother who was an Alpha, we used to work out at the gym, so the network connected, and I ended up getting into this high school as an algebra geometry teacher. I did that for three years all while finishing my admin cert, and I was having experiences in this school as a math teacher, but more so as a leader, and so I got to work with the other administrators who were all White except for this Black dude, and really just got to feel my way around and learn the school, and while doing that, I was like, "You know what? This itch is just not going away, I think I'm ready to take this next leap into school leadership and not only influence students but influence teachers." That's really what motivated me to help the people that will be helping the kids that I love. (Alumnus S14, personal communication, 2020)

For Alumnus P7, having BMTs in his school along with a Black male principal encouraged him to stay in the classroom but also pushed him out in order to make a

broader impact. He is passionate about fighting systemic racism through education and feels that, for Black men, the profession of being a teacher goes far beyond that actual act of teaching:

My actual reason for leaving the classroom was to figure out how to make a larger impact on a larger set of students, so I became an instructional coach in the same district that I'm teaching in now in Detroit. In my work, as an instructional coach, I'm able to support my other teachers, and mostly my white teachers on a cultural response to teaching. In that way, it's like, if I can't be the teacher for every Black student, or every student of color, I can at least support teachers that see them, and help them build better relationships, build more engaging curriculum, and understand our students better. That is, more or less, my reason for moving into the administrative space in the instructional coaching. Yes, absolutely. I think school environment is super important. I was blessed that in my school experiences that I've always had Black administration. Both of my principals are actually— Well, three of my principals, now, have all been men of color, and so their support and their leadership— Their support of me, individually, has always been unique and like a mentorship, so I think what's important— Like I said before, I started an organization to work through some of these similar things around retaining Black men in education. From what I've felt and from what other men of color, other Black men who've been teaching felt, is that a Black male principal, or Black male teachers that already been in the building, helps make the environment more conducive. That's really the theory behind why I wanted to start an organization of Black Male Educators Alliance because I was working in a building in Detroit that had more than ten Black males in the building, probably closer to fifteen, between teachers and between restorative justice practitioners. That environment in the school was just— I had never experienced that, not in Atlanta, not in Baltimore, but in this school, there were less fights. The curriculum and the school culture was centered around black liberation, but it wasn't like a standalone school. It was a public charter school within the district, but because there was so much Black male leadership, because there was so many Black males in the building, we were able to really be intentional about how we taught, how we get discipline, and just the school mission and aim. With that area, I would say, if there are more Black males in education, it actually helps keeping black men in education because you're not isolated on your own, you're not a lost voice, micro aggressions can be less, and you have an opportunity to really see education or make education what you want it to be with more recommendation. What I've noticed is that the Black male leadership aspect is very contingent about hiring more Black males, and so what you get is this— Maybe there's more of a value on yourself as a Black male educator, so those Black administrators are doing their best, like I said, to mentor you, to coach you, to create an environment that wants you to stay. Like I said, being around other Black male educators, and

other Black men in the building, made the environment feel different. (Alumnus P7, personal communication, 2020)

The varying circumstances of these alumni revealed that the pressure to become a leader can come both externally and internally. Alumnus L6 felt as if he was pushed into a role as leader based on pressure from school leadership. Alumnus S14 showed that his exposure to the lack of Black administrators inspired him to become an assistant principal after 14 years of teaching math. Others like Alumnus P7 came to the realization that his duty as an educator needed to expand beyond the reach of classroom, and the urgency to impact as many students as possible became a major priority. Another important trend among these former teachers was that they all continued to work in education positions but in a different capacity. This has implications on why BMTs who graduated from Morehouse leave the teaching profession, as some might have considered staying if there had been stability and alignment among the adult culture as well as adequate compensation for work as a teacher.

Administrative school leadership for former teachers: Adult challenges. In this section, the rise of a rare SPI Adinkra, S&M Adinkra Adinkrahene—which symbolically represents “power and authority” (Wilson, 1998) a—emerged. The participants in this section shared frustration with the school administration, which conflicted with their purpose and drive to be a teacher. Several alumni expressed being unable to impact the students in a productive way because of the pressure leadership received from upper management. This became a difficult negotiation that positioned BMTs to determine what their actual locus of control was and the types of political risks that may exist if they spoke their opinion. These particular conflicts with administration

came when professional development was required. Alumni A9 and D4 both expressed memories of challenging work environments as a result of school leadership. Alumnus D4 recalled his first school to which he was assigned in New York:

My first year of teaching was horrible. It was absolutely and positively horrible. Needless to say, I'm pretty sure we're going to expand upon that. However, I had a goal in mind because I saw things that I didn't like, and I saw things that I knew. I wasn't even thinking on a meta-level, as far as getting things done. I knew, "Listen, this kid lives in my neighborhood," or "I went through that type of situation," or "I know somebody specifically who can help this child."... For the DOE, it was that. For the DOE, well, at the school that I worked at my first year and even when I was a parent because I transitioned from being a parent to a teacher, it was a lot of facsimile semi-woke stuff, and there was no follow-up. (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus A9 expressed how the difficulty with the leadership at his school was one of the factors that eventually led to his exit out of the role of an educator:

I believe there's a lot of extensive hours that I was putting in an educator in the classroom. My last teaching position was at a high school, a DC public charter high school. I believe the experience was great, but however, it goes back to the support for the administration as well, the support wasn't there. It damaged me a little bit just being in the classroom and not getting the support that I needed to improve myself, to improve my professional development. I think I just became not interested, disinterested in being in the classroom any longer. Unfortunately, the students didn't want to see me go, and of course, wanted me to come back, but however, different circumstances just never allowed me to return to the classroom. Of course, unfortunately, if you don't pass the Praxis, you got to come out of your pockets, and that can be pretty expensive going over and over again trying to go through the preparation. Sometimes that can become discouraging for anyone. I know personally for myself; it definitely became discouraging. However, I still just did my best to stay on task and keep up with the agenda and plan accordingly to become the best teacher I possibly could while I was at the schools that I worked in. (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

Both of these participants expressed a level of frustration with school leadership based on preconceived expectations of the public school system. This also revealed what each participant valued in their experience as a teacher. Alumnus D4 showed he had a strong concern for how parents engaged with members of the school and the importance

of supporting all aspects of a student's development. Alumnus A9, on the other hand, expressed a need for administrative support with him in the classroom and involvement in the development of students. Both of these factors were also significant for other alumni, such as Alumnus P7, who expressed how his school leadership motivated him remain an educator.

Graduate school for former teachers. Another major factor that impacted many of the interview participants' teaching status was their aspirations to attend graduate school. This was consistent with the findings in the various histories of Morehouse alumni as it is a long-standing tradition to continue with graduate studies. The larger implication was the reasons individuals are motivated to get these degrees, as the presence of a C&E Adinkra implies that the interview participants used external regulation to negotiate their desired outcomes with their conditional context. The clear motivation for the following example was compensation and reputation with the interview participants; it was noticed that securing financial stability and growth were key, particularly since one was a business major and the other an economics major.

When Alumnus H11 reflected on his first couple of years of teaching, he remembered having a strong bond with the group of teachers at the school. In addition, he genuinely believed in the vision of the principal who recruited him on the staff. His original goal was to teach for 3 years and then pursue another graduate degree. It dawned on H11 in his fifth year of teaching that he had veered off his original plan. He also expressed that he felt he was not learning anything new as a teacher and was early contemplating what would be the next career decision. He decided to continue teaching because it conveniently allowed him to have a job and still pursue his doctorate degree.

Once he finished the program, he decided to transition out of the teaching role and move into school leadership. He reflected on the fact that leaders have to be strategic if they want to retain BMTs. He remembered the approaches that the principal who recruited him used to keep teachers motivated and how there was a shift in cultural priorities when the school received new leadership:

It was never a question until a certain point. I think about after year five, year six, that's when I started being like, what's next? I need to be in a program. I said I was going to be in a program already. My whole thing was like I'm going to do three years and then I'm going to get into doctoral program. It was two years after year three. I'm like, okay, I need to go get into this program. I'm not being serious. I don't want to be stuck here. The salary was increasing every year. I was moving up the pay scale, but I felt like I had stopped learning. What pushed me up a year five was actually I enrolled in my program. The doctoral program was my motivating force. Year six, I had started the doctoral program. Then as soon as I graduated in May, I had a new job in August. I didn't let too much time pass, too much grass grows under my feet before transitioning once I got the doctorate. The doctorate and going to classes helped me motivated to keep going those last four or five years. I think it's important, and I think what my first principal understood which when she left, the people who replaced her did not, is what motivates people. Oftentimes, being the only Black male in a building, you are really a leader. Providing that person with opportunities to lead, I think it's something that would motivate them. My first principal was really good at doing that. I was on every committee. She was pulling me for my advice, said, "What do you think about this? If we did this, how do you think this would affect our minority community?" She was really worried about those things. Not in a way that was offensive, but in a way that was genuine. I think it's important when we think about our African American teachers' years down the road, after they've been in the classroom for a while and that fatigue starts to set in, they start to become cynical with the whole system, that they're provided with leadership opportunities. (Alumnus H11, personal communication, 2020)

This was another example of an alumnus who was inspired to stay within the education field but not as a classroom teacher. For Alumnus H11, graduate school played the role of both retaining him in the classroom and pushing him out. The change of leadership while he was a teacher had a significant impact on H11's motivation, which pushed him to think about other ways to support students while also staying financially stable. The road

to a leadership position, he felt, went through a doctorate program, which he decided to pursue. He explained that his motivation for graduate school established a need to remain a teacher in order to remain financially stable. However, once he completed his graduate studies, he had full intentions to leave the classroom. The external influence of poor leadership and financial pressure put Alumnus H11 on a trajectory to exit the teaching profession in order to become a school principal. Here are multiple influences that are interconnected with the decision to attend graduate school, revealing the consistent need to understand the intersectional influences that impact BMTs' decisions to remain in the profession.

Working with youth outside the classroom for former teachers. The interview data also revealed that many of the participants were offered positions that allowed them to impact students outside the classroom. Here, one sees the emergence of the S&Q Adinkra Tower that places an emphasis on power dynamics related to distance and money. Many times, the controlled motivation in this type of negotiation centers around where the opportunity is located and the economic advancement that is possible. There are also cases where autonomous motivation may drive the teacher to exit out of the teaching profession, particularly if that teacher has a passion and a vision that go beyond a role in the classroom. The E&M Adinkra uses the "Akofena" symbol that represents "courageous thought and action" because it was common for interview participants to express their hesitation about leaving the teaching profession. Alumnus A9 felt he needed to expand beyond the classroom and eventually started working with the Upward Bound program, a federally funded program by the US Department of Education:

I think the eight years empowered me. It gave me a strong sense of how I can be committed and how powerful a Black male being an educator in the classroom can save a lot of lives. You never really know how many lives that you're empowering, and that you're saving, and that you've invested so much in. The classroom, I just felt like also I wanted to step outside of the classroom and see what other endeavors and what other type of career paths I could take outside of just having a one-dimensional mind state of just being an instructor in the classroom. (Alumnus A9, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus R5 left the classroom as a result of various life circumstances, such as marriage and new career opportunities, and also worked at an Upward Bound college prep program at a university:

Toughest decision because I left in the middle of a school year. [chuckles] It was a thing I just got married. My wife and my daughter had moved to Ohio. I was working in an Upward Bound Program. During the week I was a tutor and then in the summertime, I taught in the summer program. Then when a position opened up full time, I always loved that program. Upward Bound, I always loved that. A lot of my friends were in Upward Bound and I just loved what it did for people. I said, "Here's an opportunity for me to actually work in a program that I've admired from afar and at the same time, get my masters [chuckles] for free, which was also very attractive." I said, here's an opportunity for me to actually—I knew I wanted to—I was looking at higher Ed anyway. I said, "Here's an opportunity for me to get into higher Ed." Maybe in turn recruit some of my former students who come into the program. Who was another opportunity for me to be another section of the pipeline to get them into thinking about literally pursuing post-secondary Ed. That was really the motivation. It was bittersweet and here's a funny thing. You'll appreciate this. [chuckles]. I remember my first day at Bowling Green. That was the longest day of my career because it was so quiet. [chuckles] I was used to students change classes. We used to hear a locker slam or was used to hearing kids talking and running even they weren't supposed to in the hallway. I really miss that community or that ecosystem rather that was the thing I would really miss, but I said, here's an opportunity because I knew I wanted to go back and get my masters. I was like, wow, here's an opportunity. Take advantage of it because you can do this and you can still come back to teaching full time if you wish, but here's an opportunity to get your master's for your charge. Even in summer program, I was still able to teach during the summer program at Upward Bound. I never just completely stepped away from the craft of teaching. It's a different level of student did. They were in high school and plus now I had a chance to really develop them on the personal leadership side versus the academic side. (Alumnus R5, personal communication, 2020)

In the case of Alumnus D13, he had a clear plan starting in college to only teach for a certain number of years. However, he found himself returning each year because of passion to improve the lives of Black people. He had a greater aspiration that went beyond the classroom as well:

I wasn't worried about money initially. Single D13, no wife, no kids. I wasn't worried about the money. Knew that that would come, just, hey, manage your money well and you'll be fine. Like I said, in college, I realized I didn't want to retire, and I guess that was always another factor for myself. I was like, I wasn't planning on teaching an extended period of time. I figured out I was going to teach four years, four, five years, is what my plan was to teach. Initially, I ended up teaching 13 years. So, eight years past that. I figured I would teach, get that experience. I still wanted to— My ultimate goal was to open up a recreational center, so that was going to be how I was going to still be able to impact and deal with kids and educate kids through the education center. I always wanted a career impacting kids, it just wasn't going to be the classroom. The classroom was a steppingstone to that for me. So, money never factored into it, but as I continue to be in the profession, I looked at trying to become a principal, instructional coach, go and moving into the central office. All of those positions just kind of— When I investigated and come back to me, it kind of came back and saying, "You all aren't really impacting kids in these big waves that I— at least it might seem like you're doing." Really, like if you're really in it to try to help kids, for me, it's you help kids by being a teacher, everything else is, yes, you're setting up structures and framework to happen, but it still isn't really having that major impact where you can actually get with and build those longstanding relationships with students, or at least is not as possible, I can say. I didn't see a pathway to do that, so, those positions lost interest for me rather quickly. (Alumnus D13, personal communication, 2020)

In each of these cases, the alumni wanted to continue the work with developing and supporting students. This suggested that the constraints of the classroom can easily push motivated Black men out of the classroom. In addition, it also indicated how important it is for school systems to discuss career aspirations with teachers prior to them starting in the profession in order to gauge the potential longevity the teachers can have in the profession.

Years Teaching Themes: “Varying Professional Development Mindsets”




The section addresses one of the major critical race inquiries around the professional development experience of BMTs. In particular, it examines how interview participants perceived their professional development and approached their mindset toward participation. This topic illuminates an important intersection between human capital theory and self-determination theory. Human capital is positioned in this case as the actual funds of knowledge that determine a person’s value. Moreover, it delves more deeply into this because many study participants equated professional development with teacher evaluations and sometimes interpreted the experiences as mandated rather than meaningful or strategic.

As seen in Figure 48, human capital SPI Adinkras dominated many of the study participants’ memories, particularly around the power theme of “Political Risks” and “Security.” Here, we see a common power negotiation between the participants’ identified drive to develop skills that can authentically support student learning and the varying intentions of the people and institutions who limit their ultimate locus of control as it relates to teaching in public schools.

There are also some who have a strong autonomous motivation for professional development that is connected to an identified drive to protect and prepare students properly. The security of the community is at the forefront, and many feel that professional development approaches do not address the whole child—particularly their cultural, social, and emotional needs. Each of the following excerpts is contextualized based on the number of years the participant indicated he has taught on the survey. Novice teachers in this qualitative portion of the study were grouped based on teaching

3-5 years, Mid-career based on 6-9 total years, and Veteran teachers based on 10+ years of teaching experience in public school. Interrogating the participants’ perceptions of the teaching profession through the lens of their teaching experiences contextualized the factors that they expressed as impacting their decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 48. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Varying Professional Development Mindsets”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self-Motivation	Regulation
Structure & Function (S&F)		Funtummireku Denkyemmirek “unity among family members”	People and Institutions	Compensation & Reputation	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Systems & Models (S&M)		Adinkrahene “power and authority”	Locus of Control	Political Risks	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Stability & Change (S&C)		Akoben “national defense”	Protection and Preparation	Security	Autonomous Motivation	Identified Regulation

It is clear from the data display that the interview responses revealed a strong controlled motivation to participate or pursue professional development. There are some who expressed experiencing meaningful professional development, which showed a need to use identified regulation of internal motives by participants that are concerned with protecting their employment and being prepared to deliver quality instruction to students. The following sections highlight both meaningful professional development experiences as well as discouraging memories of culturally irrelevant sessions that participants reflected on during the interviews.

Meaningful PD experiences for novice, mid-career, and veteran teachers.

Alumnus D4, who was a novice teacher, had varying professional development

experiences; however, he distinctly remembered how the approach felt different when he moved out of New York public schools and into a charter school:

I got to say, when I worked for Opportunity Charter School, there was definitely follow-up because it was a charter school, and it was a small school, and it was hands-on. There's was a culturally competent group of administrators and teachers. It's really like a unicorn school, I'm not even going to lie to you. It's really like a unicorn school, and they stayed on top of it. If you wanted to do training, every Friday, we had off, theoretically. The kids would come in, and we would have to teach from start to 12:00. For the kids who didn't have— Because every kid had something to do after 12:00 on Fridays, if you had kids who were on the spectrum or kids who had some behavior issues, they get sent to their programs, or their parents will pick them up, or they get dropped off at their parents', but everybody else, you had to have something to do. It would either be in school and people from different organizations, they would form partnerships. They had squash, Girls Who Code, they had cooking classes. They didn't do martial arts, we got rid of that real quick. They had soccer. They would come in and deal with the kids from 12:00 on, from 12:00 almost to 7:00. That's what it was. If a kid didn't have anything to do, then they would find something for you to do if your parents or your family members wasn't taking you. During that time, we still had to do professional development on Fridays. That was a good thing in that they would follow up with you. Your APs or even the principal since it was a small school, they would follow up and be like, "Yo, what did you think about this? What did you think about that? How do you think this would help you? How do you think this would help your kid or a series of kids?" (Alumnus D4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus K6, who is a mid-career teacher, surprisingly had a very optimistic view of the purpose and role of professional development for teachers. He clearly recognized the importance of continuous growth and the need for teachers to learn the proven best practices in order to benefit the educational experience of students. Even when asked to describe any poor PDs he experienced, he simply described them as opportunities to learn something new:

No problem. For me, I just love and to work with kids. You can't get any better as a teacher or as an educator without professional development because you don't know— I didn't know everything. I didn't major in education. It was exciting for me to do professional development. My perspective was like, "Oh, my God, you guys are going to train me to become a better educator?" It was eye-opening

because I had the passion for kids. I had the passion for wanting to be in education. That really gave me some foundations to how to teach. That helped because I had that motivation. The system, I would say the system, the school system would provide me with professional development. It's like, "Hey, listen, you can go here. You can do this." So I'm like, "Yes, bring it on. Let me have it. Let me develop, let me grow. I'm super interested in that." For me, professional development is lovely. I like it because everything's always evolving, changes. The kids are changing, the systems are changing. So what is out there? What's new? I need to know because I have a son, I have cousins, I have family members. What is going on in this world that motivates kids to be they want to be, become educators, and I want to be a part of that because this is an ongoing process. These kids are different. They're different every year. No, man, because you take what was good for you and you never know if it's good unless you try it out. You can't say, "Oh, I disagree with this professional development and I don't implement it." You have to implement some of the things you developed or professional development or you learned to figure out if it works or not. For me, my experiences during professional development, some of the things that I've been engaged in actually works. That's just me. That's just [crosstalk]... There's standards and teaks I'll never forget. When I went to this professional development that was standards. Specifically, these standards addresses the things that kids need to learn, but I didn't understand the numbers, I didn't understand that the setup of it. This professional development took me through the specific standards and teaks that really had to be accomplished, and I just didn't know that. I don't think so for me, because I looked at professional development as a really a development. There's a lot of smart people in the world. For me to be around those individuals, to me, I looked at it as a blessing because— In Morehouse, we had the same thing as well, but to be around a lot of smart educators, this was smart people in professional development. I never could look at it as something negative because I always wanted to gain something for the betterment of myself in my education career. It's hard for me to pick out a negative narrative of professional development if you will, because I always went in there with a growth mindset, like, "Hey, listen, I need to figure out. I want to learn something that I've never learned." I'm sorry. I just never wasn't negative [crosstalk] (Alumnus K6, personal communication, 2020)

The only meaningful professional development that Alumnus S14, who was a veteran teacher, experienced was his teacher mentor during his first two years as a teacher. Alumnus S14 explained that this mentor encouraged him and, in addition, he was also a Morehouse graduate:

In my first two years, like I said man, I was blessed. My mentor in my first two years was my former high school algebra teacher, Mr. Turner, cool less, rest in peace, also a Morehouse man, so I got to tell you, man, there were some people strategically placed along the way to pull me and push me and to keep me inspired, but Mr. Turner was everything. In those first two years, he was there. He saw that I had what it took, no doubt, but he was also always there to talk to me about remaining encouraged, remaining focused on the kids, not letting the bureaucracy or what we didn't have deter me because we didn't always have the best supplies or we didn't always have the shiniest new gadgets or the TI-84 Plus graphing calculators but we did have the TI-82s. Whatever we had, I got to tell you, I tested them off, man. I literally tried to turn my first classroom into a Morehouse Mathematics Lab. That was my goal. That mentor relationship was the best. (Alumnus S14, personal communication, 2020)

The characteristics of these professional development experiences emphasized the importance of exposure to the expectations of the teaching profession. The reflections from the participants revealed the importance of consistence and convenience as related to professional learning, showing a transition of controlled motivation to autonomous motivation sessions.

Discouraging PD experiences for novice, mid-career, and veteran teachers.

In contrast to the previous section, these excerpts highlighted discouraging attitudes, mindsets, and experiences the interview participants had based on their years as a teacher. These experiences were most common; however, some participants had specific reasons why their experience with professional development was not meaningful. Alumnus P4, who left the profession as a novice teacher, described how he consistently was disengaged with the professional development given by his school. When asked about his best professional development experience, he was not able to identify one that resonated with him:

I'm going to be honest with you. I ain't got no examples at all whatsoever for professional development that stuck out at all whatsoever. I have fond memories of attending teacher professional developments, bored out of my mind, wishing it was over, looking at the watch, looking at the time. I don't know, talking to someone next to me. To be honest with you, but in terms of a formal or informal professional development, there's nothing that really stands out where— What I'm trying to say is I attended all the professional developments that I had to attend, I filled out the paperwork that said I attended it, but did I ever do a backflip and the light bulb went off and all that, ain't no fireworks, none of that. Nothing that comes to mind in the field of education that motivated me to become a teacher or to keep teaching, not from a professional development, not at all. I think that would have kept me in the field longer. I feel like it would have definitely motivated me to have a better attitude about teaching on a day-to-day basis as well. (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus C8, who is a mid-career teacher, described a very awkward moment in a professional development meeting when he expressed his views on White fragility, which resulted in future conflicts with the school leadership. This is an example of when an interview participant chose his personal view over the view of the dominant power structure which would have preferred for him not to comment on White fragility or how Black men are used as disciplinarians among White people:

We were in a meeting and she said something, and I just responded and like, “That's textbook White fragility.” All the tears just, like I couldn't deal, I couldn't, because this is just not happening right now. That's all the first semester. Come back the second semester, my principal gets fired, and then once she gets fired, there's a big old target on my back. They make my life a living hell at this point, not to say that I have— Black men always take on the role of disciplinarian in spaces, but because I am not a disciplinarian, but I am in some kind of form, so some cases and capacities. (Alumnus C8, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus E20, who is a veteran teacher, expressed great difficulty accessing quality professional development. Prior to giving his understanding of how professional development impacted his decision to remain a teacher, he described in detail the journey of some teachers in the Chicago Public School system. His interview responses revealed how many BMTs perceive professional development as part of their evaluation:

In 20 years of teaching, I've had a lot of ups and downs and a lot of layoffs. A lot of times where I subbed for even a year, two years, or something like that. When you talk about a continuous cycle of professional development opportunities, I wouldn't say that the city of Chicago really offers that for black men. I don't know about other dynamics. I know a lot of people have done well to rise up the ranks. I've had this journey where just even last year— I'm at a new school this year. Last year I was at a school, I was invited by my coworker, we started together. She's a Black woman and she's an AP, assistant principal at the school. Last year, I found myself being one of the people— they have these things in Chicago where they lay people off every year. It's a district, the way that they do budgeting, they lay a good thousand people off every year. They do this every year. My seniority at that school, I believe, because it starts over each time you get hired. Right now, my seniority in 20 years of teaching is only two months long [chuckles] as long as we've been. That's the crux of the problem where I'm at. Last year, I found out that my seniority, instead of being three years where I was at the school for three years, it was only one year. I was the person in my department, English, to be chosen to be laid off. Even amongst new teachers, there's one guy had a year in the game, another guy had two years. It turned out in a really interesting way that, I didn't even know about it, but I supposedly signed some kind of waiver saying that I release my seniority in order to have the position. I didn't pursue looking into it. I would pursue looking into it, but it worked out. I think it was providence by God. I found a job that very day. It was a connection, but the principal hired me and here I am, I'm working again, so I didn't have a need to pursue. All of those types of things have happened. To get to your question about professional development, for me, I haven't had the development that I would love to have had. My development comes in bits and pieces. I think they're doing a little better now that they initiated something in my district, that it's part of the overall process of being employed. You get to have these evaluations and so forth and then as a part of that, they develop online professional development. It's a lot better now, but for me, for years, I've been like the students falling through some cracks. (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus E20's reflection of professional development showed a perception which fit within the context of evaluations, which is problematic for any teacher who needs continued learning opportunities as a professional. Alumnus E20 felt he was able to learn some things along the way, but it has not been satisfactory to his standards.

These negative professional development memories expressed by the participants seem to be universally felt by teachers; however, the heightened awareness of their

connection to their human capital value adds a layer of complexity to their active participation within the public school system. The complexity illuminates the problematic roots of professional development as being framed as mandatory for teacher evaluation. This, for some, can cause a domino effect, where the teacher then takes a negative mindset toward the learning as being forced, impacting their engagement in the session. However, Alumnus E20 expressed how he wanted quality professional development that was culturally relevant to his context, although exposure to these types of session varied based on the politics of the school system.

Culturally relevant PD and relationship building: Mid-career and veteran teachers. Another trend in the data was the experience with culturally relevant professional development. This included professional development experiences that included strategic content related to Black children or their content as well as sessions that emphasized the education of the whole child. When Alumnus P7, who was a mid-career teacher, reflected on the impact that professional development had on his decision to remain a teacher, he explained how he did not value it early in his teaching career, as most of the training he received from the Urban Teachers program focused on classroom management, pedagogical theory, and curriculum implementation. However, when he moved to a school in Detroit, he experienced meaningful PD focused on culturally responsive teaching. This training took place in his building by his principal who was a Black man. In addition, Alumnus P7 has also searched for professional development beyond what the school offered. He described one powerful session sponsored by a group in Philadelphia who presented on a variety of topics which left him “inspired” as he described the sessions as “insightful”:

I would say my early years—I was in grad school while I was teaching, which was probably a good thing, so you could see a lot of theoretical, you could see a lot of practical side of education, the classrooms’ management, the curriculum, and all those things. I was seeing it hand in hand as I was first getting started, so I didn’t really have any real professional development that I valued early on. But when I got to Detroit, I moved into my second school, my principal had spent time around cultural response to teaching from a professional development from NYU, and their whole focus was on cultural awareness and cultural pedagogy. That was the most meaningful to me, which was just making sense of how education should look for our students, and that put the spark in my back to continue to go, and then also really to dig deeper into how can I support other teachers of color? They were unapologetically Black, I think that’s the best way to describe it. They came into the space, even though we had a Black administration with mostly White staff, and they were straight to the point, where it was like, “People were not checking their biases, the system is racist, the structure of it is racist, and in order for us to make it succeed, these teachers need to have a better understanding of Black history, Black culture, and of how the pedagogy has to match and engage with the culture of the students.” To me, that was impactful. Like you said, not sugar coating it, not trying to dance around it, calling it for what it is, making people a little uncomfortable with checking their own biases, White or Black. That to me was super impactful and engaging, and meaningful. (Alumnus P7, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus J10, a veteran teacher, also reflected on several professional developments that were impactful to his teaching practice. These sessions focused on topics related to teaching Black children, culturally relevant books, storytelling, and, most importantly, engaging art content sessions:

I’ve had a few really great PD experiences. I went to a professional development specifically about children of color. I can’t remember the name of the organization, but they had some really interesting workshops. One was about engaging students of color in the classroom. One was about culturally relevant books as far as reading time. Being intentional about the type of materials that you choose in the classroom in order to engage the students. Well, one of the things that he did, he gave all of us a mirror. When you get to your table, there’s a mirror there, so automatically, anyone that has a mirror in front of them, you’re going to look at it. You’re going to start to look at yourself. You might look at things behind you. You’re just going to play with it, you’re going to engage it. After probably about two minutes of people playing with their mirrors—he didn’t tell us to do it, we just sat down and it was there for us. Automatically, the mind gets curious. Afterwards, he asked us to put our mirrors down and he asked us, what did we see? Of course, a lot of people were like, “We see ourselves. We see

the mold that we didn't see before." People started pointing out things about their selves, pointing out things about things they see in the room. He brought it back home, telling us, the things that we see about ourselves, our students also look into the mirror and they also see those either positive or negative reflections of themselves. That automatically got people engaged. They even made me do the same activity later on. There was another professional development that I did, it was at Smithsonian Museum. They encourage art teachers to come out to some of their events that they do. The professional development coordinator, she had a shoe. She put the shoe in front of us, and this professional development was specific to story-making. Unlocking the narrator within. She put the shoe down, and she asked us to start the story of the shoe, like who wore this shoe? Where does the shoe come from? Someone started off, "This shoe comes from a boy that lives in LA." Then next person, "His mama tries to feed him every day, sometimes she's able to do it, sometimes she is not able to make ends meet." It creates this storyline that everybody gets the opportunity to participate in. At the end of the exercise, we all have some idea of the backstory, this made-up backstory that we have of this person who wore the shoe. As an adult, initially, I'm thinking like, "Okay, this is something very deep. We got this as adults, will children get this?" I took the activity back to my class and it was amazing to see the type of responses and even the emotion that came out of it, because as you're telling these stories, a lot of this is really their stories that you tell. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

When Alumnus P10, who was a veteran teacher, reflected on his PD experience, he explained that he did not receive a "robust" amount of development. The mindset around PD was more political in his opinion, particularly when it was mandated by the district. It was not until he started being exposed to PDs that focused on systemic inequities existing in education, along with workshops on data-driven strategies in education, that he started taking his development seriously. Alumnus P10 described having a limited diversity in the presenters and only experiencing two PDs that used facilitators who graduated from HBCUs. He felt that BMTs need specialized PD and facilitators need to bring more than their "expertise" to these sessions as it involves more than just research from degrees:

Honestly, looking at it now, my first year, first two years, professional development, wasn't robust. It was more or less, "We're going to give you professional development, but at the end of the day, we just want you to do it like we want you to do it." Again, that's that political venue. I didn't start to grasp professional development until I started reading books by Baruti Kafele. He was a principal in the same district that I was working in. He and I started in that same district. He started coming back to mentor. He started coming back, and now he's this big powerhouse all over the world, but for him, I started to see, "Okay, here is something that clicks with me." Again, it wasn't about students passing. Do they have the resources to passing? If they don't have the resources, why are we not getting it? Yet, the individuals on the other side of town have those same resources. For me, it was always about equity. Once I realized that, that was something that stuck out to me from hearing his professional development, from looking at data, I was like a data guru. It was almost like, you couldn't put anything in front of me and I wouldn't question to say, "Oh, great, they pass," but what's the vertical articulation for them not passing during this grade? What did we not do, and how are we changing it for the future? Those are the different things that stuck with me. I will say, I would have loved to see more professional development that catered to my culture as an African American male versus a system-wide culture. You're telling me about how things can work in a gifted and talented class with all of these extra technological resources. Back in, for me '03, '04, it wasn't like it is now. I need you to give professional development for the environment that I'm currently in, whereas, I can pull from it. A lot of the professional development that I did have, I had to pick and choose, "Well, this would work in this scenario, but these do not, it doesn't equate to my demographic of students." Again, coming from presenters who've been where I've been, I've yet to—I've had two professional development presenters who attended an HBCU. Everyone else has been Caucasian women, Caucasian men, or from a company that's utilizing or contracting services, but the presenter that they send is Caucasian. Again, I have nothing wrong with it, but how, in order to be developed, there has to be a certain level of intimacy and trust. Therefore, I'm going to trust that you're going to develop me to get to where you are, but I can't relate to you because there is a cultural barrier there, so that's one. There's a demographic barrier, there's a social class barrier, there's a gender barrier, but I'm supposed to comb through all of that and still be developed at the same time, there's internal trauma, because there are certain things that they're saying that students should have that I might not have received when I was in school. I grew up in Harlem, and then I grew up in North Jersey. I'm internalizing that trauma, and then developing it from that perspective. I think, if you're going to go this route, professional development needs to be truly a mechanism to develop the learner, but also, to understand the person who's giving that professional development, can't just be an expert in the field. It needs to go beyond words. I have to see some actionable pursuits and thoughts behind it. (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

These reflections from these alumni are important insights into how professional development should be tailored for BMTs. One of the biggest factors that multiple alumni mentioned was having experts present content that reflected their race and culture. This was shown to be an influential factor in their receptiveness and motivation to participate in the sessions. In addition, participants also emphasized the importance of recognizing the educational inequities that exist within the public school system and the culturally relevant content that is needed to engage students in discovering their personal passions and routines for learning.

Passion for teaching content for mid-career and veteran teachers. One theme within this variable analysis that continued to be expressed was the interview participants' passion for the content they taught. This variable could be key in their decision, particularly as it relates to their integrated regulation that negotiates their role with the opportunity for autonomy and convenience. The aspect of Alumnus S9's interview, who is a mid-career teacher, was his passion and love for the English language. Teaching offered him an opportunity to explore that interest and impact others along the way. While he never planned on being a teacher, he has enjoyed opportunities to contribute beyond the classroom through various leadership roles. Alumnus S9 discussed his motivation to contribute to society and felt that teaching was a way he could do that. He also mentioned the importance of his life circumstance of being in a liberal charter school and how having Black teachers and particularly a Black male principal has impacted his decision to return each year:

Yeah, I think like, it just kind of starts, I think high level, and my like, desire to be an expert in whatever it is that I want to be, because I would say, like, even now, in my nine years, I really don't know what I want to be when I grow up. And still trying to figure that out. But I think one thing that teaching has allowed me to do, is it a lot like I love English language arts. And so that's all I've ever taught. And that content just really motivates me. And I like, how it's just expansive, right. And I think there's so many connections you can make in the content that I teach as far as like not only building the academic skill set for kids, but also like allowing them to see themselves and other people in the world in the content at the same exact time. So I think that that's definitely something that why that's one reason why I keep coming back. And where I work. Now, there's just a lot of opportunities to expand that. beyond the classroom, while staying in the classroom. And I think that that's one reason why I have switched from a public school to a charter school, just because, like, I did want to stay in the classroom, but I also wanted to build like capacity outside of that, um, I think like, outside of the content, yeah, I'm only taught into communities like that with kids that look just like me. And I think that there's just something like in power, like I just really believe is education is like a liberator or it can be. And I know that in this big mess of capitalistic society that we live in, particularly people of color living in it, like, I can't fix everything, but I feel like education is like my niche to do that. And so I am committed to like figuring that out each year. And I think each year, I get clear on what that looks like, particularly on a content level, and I'm starting now a year nine, to make, I think, a more clear connection between my content and like, furthering my community, if that makes sense. AP language and composition. So, like the basically the art of rhetoric, right? And speaking and like, really getting behind that thought process? And, yeah, and so that's one thing too, that like, keeps me there as well. Like, I feel like I am not like, I feel like I don't have to be two different people or stretch too thin in order to do what I want to do. Right? I feel like teaching has given me the space to be like, who I am, as I am with people who are just like me in terms of like, you know, our experience. I think learning in this is like we're really different to right, we're so diverse and like all of that and we get to explore that and my job. Now I know that there's privilege points there. Like, you know, I work in a charter school that's pretty like liberal when it comes to like, communities of color and that kind of thing. You know, I do have a black principal, a Black male principal, I think who shares similar like ideas. So, like he gives me the space to do that. And like and I pretty much had that kind of experience throughout my entire career. So, I do name that. Like, I think that's also added to the motivation, because I've just had been really blessed to just have, like, influenced by a lot of people of color on this teaching journey. And I think that that's another thing that keeps me there. Right. So, I think there's a myth that Black teachers, like Black teachers don't exist. And I know that is true on a number scale. And I think just from my experience, you know, like, that's not necessarily true. (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus L6, who was a mid-career teacher, reflected on why he returned each year, and this reflection was centered around the relationships and impact he had on young males of color and other students. He enjoyed the fact that he was able to teach his content and expose students to relevant information. Alumnus L6 said that teaching allowed him to activate a variety of his interests such as music, research, performance, study, and planning.

Once I got in the classroom, it was everything that I enjoyed doing. There's an element of performance to teaching. I love research, so studying to build a lesson, and plan how students will get it, and anticipate what they will understand and what they won't understand. The work itself really drugged me in. (Alumnus L6, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus E20, a veteran teacher, also was drawn to the teacher profession as a result of his love and passion for music:

What eventually happened is I got fired as a CTA driver. I had an accident, didn't do it correctly, didn't report it. I went back to subbing and I subbed in the class because I'm a musician as well. I subbed in a class where I was a music teacher, and it was so just fulfilling to me. I got to do music production. I got to teach how to do this technology, how to, whatever the students needed in music production. I got to teach that, and I was like, "Wow, you can have a job and do something you love doing?" (Alumnus E20, personal communication, 2020)





Understanding a teacher's content interest and maximizing that passion seem to be underutilized approaches by public school educators. However, the ability to appeal to a teacher's interests positions them to have a large quantity of motivational reference to pull from when constraints become burdensome while navigating different public school systems. The power of music influenced both Alumnus E20 and Alumnus L4 and positioned them to discover a skill they did not realize they had. Although Alumnus S9 explored various career options while at Morehouse, it was his passion for literature and

rich experience as an English Major that continued to motivate him as an Advanced Placement English teacher.

Teaching Location Themes: “Convenience, Condition, and Choice”

In examining the varying teaching locations, I noticed that they were typically determined based on convenience, usually due to the location of their graduate school or hometown; condition, meaning as specific life circumstance brought them to a certain location where they found a teaching position; and finally, choice. The last trend has a was interesting as many of the study participants utilized teacher pathway programs that assigned them to cities that might not have been their first choice. Figure 40 shows the power themes that were interpreted in the interview data. Both autonomous and controlled motivation types were indicated in the data visualization and showed powered motivations related to geography, economics, political risks, security, health, and wellness. These themes are explored in the following sections.

Figure 49. *Sankofian Power Adinkras for Data Related to the Theme “Convenience, Condition, and Choice”*

SPI Tower “Adinkra Towers”	Adinkra Symbol	Meaning	Power Negotiation (Decisions based on...)	“Powered” Motivation	Type of Self-Motivation	Regulation
Scale & Quantity (S&Q)		Damedame “intelligence, planning and strategy”	Distance and Money	Geography and Economics	Controlled Motivation	Introjected Regulation
Systems & Models (S&M)		Adinkrahene “power and authority”	Locus of Control	Political Risks	Controlled Motivation	External Regulation
Stability & Change (S&C)		Akoben “national defense”	Protection and Preparation	Security	Autonomous Motivation	Identified Regulation
Energy & Matter (E&M)		Akofena “courageous thought and action”	Passion and Fulfillment	Health and Wellness	Autonomous Motivation	Intrinsic Regulation

Convenience: Location of graduate school. Alumnus T5, Alumnus T8, and Alumnus K6 all chose to attend graduate school after graduating from Morehouse. In the case of these alumni, there was a possible autonomous motivation that pushed them to shift careers and choose not to compromise their passion for a career that would not bring them happiness or wellness. However, for some, their decision to teach in the location of the graduate school was based on convenience of not having to move cities abruptly, along with changing careers.

What is interesting about these particular alumni is that all of them are current teachers who are not teaching in the location of their hometown. Alumnus T5 is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and found himself teaching in Boston, Massachusetts, after he became more interested in science literacy than science research. Alumnus K6 attended graduate school at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas, and would later transition into a teaching position at a local KIPP campus after a Morehouse classmate who started working there recommended him. Alumnus T8, who is from Arkansas, attended law school in New York, and after living there for several years, started to become accustomed to the community as he started to raise his own family.

Convenience: Hometown familiarity. Another common trend was alumni going back to their hometown to teach students in their community. Many originally went back home to regroup after having difficulty securing graduate school or employment. These cases aligned with the S&Q Adinkra arose with Alumnus R5, Alumnus D10, and Alumnus P10, who had to negotiate their location and do what was economically realistic. Money and the familiarity of distance were typically the deciding factors in the decision to become a teacher and was determined based on introjected regulation.

In the case of Alumnus B9, he was recruited by his former teachers to return home and become a teacher. This particular narrative also revealed that the interview participant's teaching status had changed several times over the past 10 years as he expressed that he returned to the classroom as a result of the killing of Travon Martin in Florida. Alumnus S14 was also convinced to become a teacher by a former teacher. Here, we find the possibility of introjected regulation as participants had to negotiate what their teacher said was best over what they might have been passionate about. While Alumnus K6 is currently teaching, Alumnus S14 showed he had bigger aspirations to impact the school system by being an assistant principal, even though his memories showed strong self-determination choices and events; however, they were not stronger than his final HC Adinkra, which eventually pushed him out of the classroom.

This factor of convenience showed itself to be a major motive in the majority of interviews in this study. The circumstances of convenience varied but were centered around identified values that the participants had established, based on their sociocultural interactions throughout their life. This offered an interesting entry point to consider how organizations and school systems can encourage Black men who are interested in becoming teachers to route their teaching career toward a location that offers a certain level of familiarity, whether it is the participants' hometown or it is where they attended graduate school. This can also be a predictor for why and how teachers leave the profession, particularly when circumstances present themselves to negotiate convenience or passion.

Condition and choice: Teacher pathway assignments. When looking at the location where teachers find themselves teaching, it must be mentioned that four of the

five interview participants who graduated in 2010 and 2011 used a teacher pathway program to enter the education profession. Alumnus C8 had the most turbulent journey as he applied for TFA and was waitlisted along with other programs. He was finally accepted in the City Year that assigned him to a high school in Chicago. Based on that experience, Alumnus C8 determined that he preferred working with young students in the elementary grades. Once again, one can see the presence of the S&Q Adinkra that pushed the interview participant to compromise the geography of where he worked as well as the age group of choice. This alumnus applied to a variety of schools and programs but had limited options for what he taught and who he taught. He would eventually teach in a KIPP school in Philadelphia and, after being terminated from his position, acquired a job in his home state of Texas.

Others also were at the mercy of the teacher pathway program as it related to the location of their teaching experience. Alumnus S9 was from Savannah, Georgia, but was assigned to a school in Miami, Florida, after being waitlisted as well. He eventually chose to teach in Chicago. Alumnus P7 joined the Urban Teachers program that sent him to Baltimore, Maryland, even though he was from Wilmington, Delaware. He would eventually move to Detroit and teach, where he would later become a school leader.

The fact that the youngest participants in the interview portion of this study all pursued the teaching profession through an external teacher pathway program speaks volumes on how graduates from the school are entering the teacher profession. This can also be problematic because many times applicants are put on ambiguous waiting lists and then assigned to random locations outside of their communicated preferences. For some, this can be traumatic, but for the interview participants, it seemed to enrich their

exposure and experience as teachers. Alumni C8 was able to come to the realization that he did not want to work with secondary students and was inspired to be a Black male figure within the lives of early childhood students in the public school system. For others like Alumnus S9, they were exposed to the damage being done to young males of color and were inspired to teach as long as they received an opportunity to support this targeted group of students.

Teaching subject and grade level: “Access and alternate routes.” This final section of the variable analysis looks at the alternative certification routes that the interview participants described as they navigated the public school system as teachers. This decision at times was forced based on the school system in which they were looking to work, which indicated the presence of the S&M Adinkra that pushed participants to factor in their actual locus of control within the power negotiation. Because of financial pressure, many sacrificed their own comfort to conform to the requirements of the state or charter school. One trend in the data was the presence of alternate routes for teacher certification that allowed many of these alumni to obtain a position at a school. Some were self-initiated, while others were encouraged by the interview participants’ school leadership. Certification requirements vary state to state, particularly when it comes to the subject they teach.

After working for the phone company in Atlanta following graduation, Alumnus P10, who taught English, decided to go back home before attempting to go to law school at New York University. During the interim, he decided he needed to get a job and took advantage of New Jersey’s alternative teacher certification route, which allowed him to get his foot in the door as a teacher:

After graduation, stayed in Atlanta. At the time— and again, I worked full-time from sophomore year, up until the time I graduated. I was the 411 operator for BellSouth. I would work eight hours a day. I don't know how I did it, go to class, make my schedule, work. Teaching for me was, I came back home after I said, "You know what, I don't want to stay in Atlanta anymore. I want something different. I'm going to come back home and then go to NYU law school." It wasn't until I got home that I said, "I need to work, I need to do something in the interim. What can I do that doesn't require me to go to school right away, do anything right away?" The New Jersey certification process, they had an alternate route, so where you have a degree, you pass your clinical, your test. If you get the promise of a job in a district that's willing to mentor you and willing to guide you, you can take your state-required courses in the evening while you're teaching during your first year. I said, "Okay, I'll do that. I'll get a teaching certificate, it'd be great." Lo and behold, I'm still doing it. So, for me, it was more a matter of, "Oh, let me do it." I will say, the Alternate Route Program in New Jersey is one of the greatest assets that they have done because more Black male teachers come through that route, who don't traditionally major in education. It gives those teachers, "Okay, what's your background in? Finance? Oh, okay, you want to teach math, you want to teach marketing, you want to teach personal finance?" It allows individuals who didn't think about education a second chance to think about it now. That's something that I definitely say, it shaped who I am. (Alumnus P10, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus J10, who teaches Art, was interested in pursuing his certification classes, and his school leadership supported him:

Well, that was something I wanted to do. In the midst of me doing that, I was given the position of a visual arts teacher. At that time, a lot of the certification stuff was a little loose. I was able to work as an art teacher without certification. At that time, I had my degree, but I didn't have a certification in being a visual arts teacher, because you have to take the practice too. There are various routes in order to get certified as a visual arts teacher. The principal that I had at the time, decided to put me through the AASSI program, just called House, which was a program for certifying specifically special interest teachers, like visual arts, music, theater, things like that. There were lists of classes that you had to take, a certain amount of time that you had to have been a teacher, and so I qualified for that. I was able to get certified through the House program, through AASSI. (Alumnus J10, personal communication, 2020)

It was interesting to discover that several alumni were genuinely motivated to pursue professional development to further their skills and knowledge of teaching. The drive for teacher training was rooted in their passion to deliver quality educational

experiences for students. In the case of Alumnus J10, his personal initiative in searching for art certification classes led to his school leadership to pay for his teacher certification courses. Alumnus P10 viewed his certification route as more of a necessity for him to have access to public school employment. He was not motivated to expand his personal knowledge of the profession but more wanted to secure financial stability. This is important to note as these motivations can indicate the mindset taken toward the offered professional development by the school system. Alumnus P10 was not satisfied with the initial training he was receiving but later grew in understanding the importance of professional development.

This concept of professional development acts as a crossover variable that highly influences both an individual's self-motivation and their educational interactions with young males of color. Participants in the interviews consistently expressed the lack of training centered on Black children and, more specifically, Black boys. Alumnus T5 discussed how important it was for professional development to be collaborative and allow the participants to be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and perspectives. Many described experiences that allowed them to travel outside their campus where they could totally engross themselves in the topic without the distractions of local and family issues. However, regardless of the approach or location of the professional development, it is important to emphasize that the concept of professional learning varied among the participants. Alumni like D10 and P4 were unyielding for their disdain of professional development. However, once they were questioned further about their professional development experience, particularly as it related to teacher mentorships, most described rich and fruitful experiences that anchored their perspective as a teacher. Yet these

experiences were not always shared immediately and needed to be probed out of the participants in order for them to recognize that professional development extended beyond conferences and campus training sessions. This study showed that schools could benefit if they consider both the human capital needs as well as the self-determination goals that teachers bring to the educational context. Professional development should be designed to push teachers to reflect individually as well as collaborate with others to identify approaches to implementing proven best practices.

The teacher retention variables analyzed in this section explored the many perspectives and life circumstances that alumni from Morehouse College who became teachers experienced. There is a clear intersection between the life circumstance variables and the teacher retention variables, particularly in memories following their graduation from Morehouse that pulled the participants back to their hometown in order to find employment. Here, you find that those who had positive childhood experiences in their hometown expressed a sense of pride in the fact that they were teaching students who had a similar experience as them. One participant, Alumnus S14, even expressed teaching his younger cousins and extended family when he started teaching in New Haven, Connecticut. Another clear intersection that is illuminated within the teacher retention variables narratives is the exposure to preservice learning opportunities while the participants were at Morehouse and how they opened up the door mentally to consider a career as a public school teacher.

The narratives expressed within the teacher retention variable analysis were dominated with memories that were externally influenced by factors directly related to how participants perceived their human capital value. Those memories that indicated

intrinsic characteristics of self-determination were vaguely described within the sphere of faith, spirituality, or an identified sense of purpose. Those who expressed this type of experience were current teachers, and their unique autonomous motivation was shown to impact their decision to remain a teacher. The majority of the narratives in this section indicated that these alumni had to navigate various school power dynamics, which led to various opportunities to attend graduate school, become leaders, or work with students outside of the classroom and school. The data also revealed a need to explore the power dynamics of teacher pathway programs like Teach for America which place students in various settings that influence their trajectory in the education profession. These reflections by the interview participants aligned with the overall HC average depth of 43% for current teachers and 44.2% for former teachers. This was slightly higher than the SD depth averages of 33.8% for current teachers and 37% for former teachers.

Phase 4: Autoethnographic Analysis (Qual→Quan→Qual→quan→←Qual)

The findings from Phase 4 of this study established my stance, bias, and perspective as a researcher exploring the intersectional relationship among professional development, self-motivation, and young males of color. This included the triangulation of three different sources of data generated by me as the researcher-participant. The first source was the peer interview conducted by a graduate school peer on the researcher-participant. The coding data revealed that nearly 73% of the codes for the interview related to human capital theory (Qual→Quan). This was significant as the remainder of the codes related to my experience as a young male of color. This emphasis on the human capital (Quan→Qual) led to interrogation of the social media archival data generated over an 11-year time span, during the years I was a full-time teacher.

I examined a total of 168 posts from Facebook and Instagram and found that 63% of the posts were related to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and exhaustion due to the expectations of my teaching role (Qual→quan). In addition, 22% of the posts revealed some sort of pride in my position, particularly when the researcher-participant was doing non-classroom activities. The frequency of posts decreased as the researcher-participant moved toward the end of each school year and prepared to change schools.

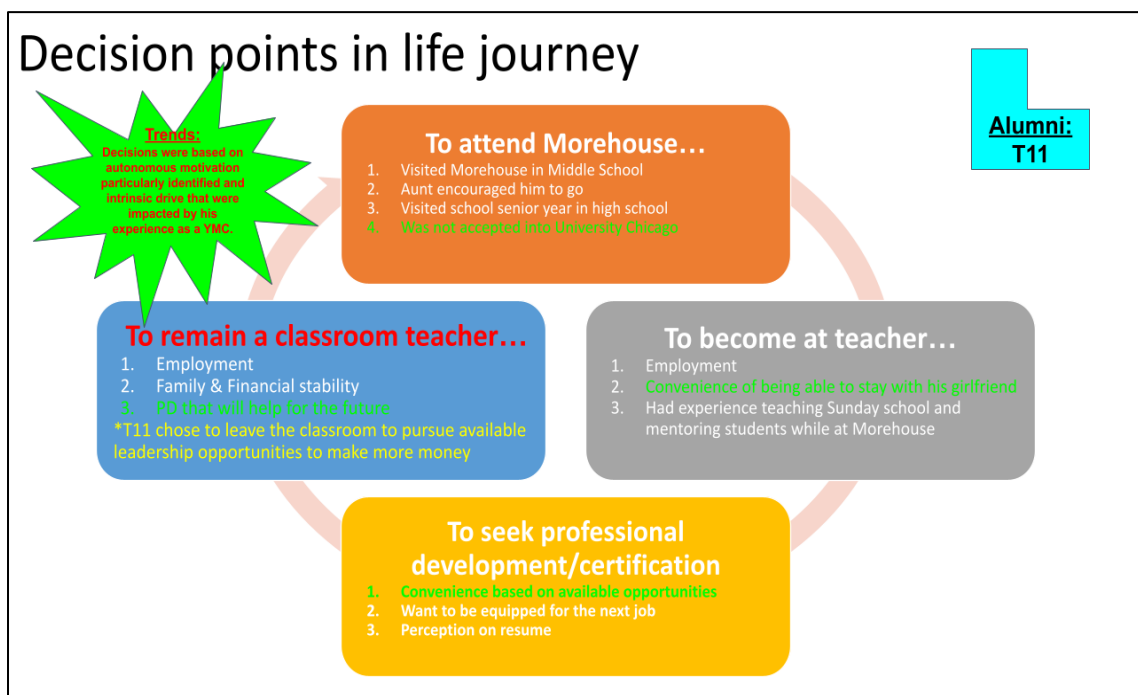
This leads to the third portion which focused on a leadership self-study that I conducted in 2019. These data showed a deeper context for the aspirations of leadership and graduate school from the social media posts (quan→←Qual). The social media posts revealed a strong opinion about my career trajectory, for which the leadership study shed light on recent thinking that I have had around future goals.

Peer Interview Interpretation

The peer interview revealed clear indications of my motives as related to remaining a teacher. My interview showed that employment and the opportunity to build professional experience for future roles were of high value. Professional development was central in my decision to remain a teacher second to salary. My response indicated that I experienced strong professional development early in my teaching career, which fueled a hunger for more in each school where I chose to work. The biggest finding from the peer interview was my tension with school growing up, which seemed to be integrated with my attitude about being a BMT. The same challenges and barriers experienced were still present when I was a teacher, and it was evident in the fact that I never mentioned the students as a driving force for me as an educator.

Because the interview revealed an overwhelming indication that human capital was the sole driver for my decision to remain a teacher, a deeper look when analyzing the social media posts also shows this trend. However, the interview also revealed some autonomous motivation related to remaining in the profession. Figure 50 shows a graphic organizer summary of the milestone decisions made by the researcher-participant. The notes in green indicate that there are strong implications for the use of integrated regulation when making decisions about remaining in the profession. This particular type of regulation highly values the factors that impact convenience and autonomy.

Figure 50. *Decision Point Summary for Researcher-Participant from Peer Interview on September 11, 2020*



Social Media Archival Data Interpretation

The social media archival data were collected by me as the researcher-participant using Facebook and Instagram during the years of 2008 to 2019. The findings showed

themes and trends based on coding and summaries of the findings in memos written after full years' worth of posts. This section describes the interpretation based on certain years and highlights human capital and self-determination themes.

In 2008, I was in my fourth year of teaching at an independent African-centered school. While this study focused on the experience of Morehouse alumni in public school, it was necessary to include this portion of the analysis in order to add context to my transition into the public charter school system. A total of 31 posts were collected that were related to my experience teaching fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students; they included 24 photos that displayed the range of experiences my students were exposed to, including trips to HBCUs like Bowie State University as well as class trips to Malcolm X Park near downtown Washington, DC. Here is an indication of my motivation related to my pedagogical approach to teaching. I felt that education should go beyond the classroom, and so I showed pride in moments when I was able to illustrate a non-traditional classroom. The use of photographs to express motivation are analyzed throughout this portion of the study and are compared to the number of non-photo posts which I made.

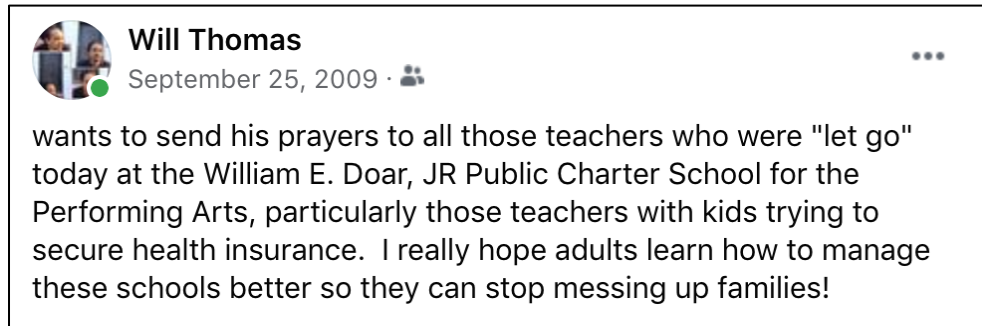
Another trend seen in many of the posts was an expression of exhaustion and frustration with student behavior. In a post on May 6, 2008, I wrote that Will Thomas "is tired. His students called him a punk, a fake teacher and a stupid African all in one day! Can we bring peace or must we always be at war with each other?" (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2008). One can also see examples of human capital theory as I mentioned in one post that I was "waiting and debating on a new job at a new school..." (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2008). Toward the end of that year's posts, I

made a transition into a public charter school, where I expressed more frustration with the “corporate America for teachers” (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2008). A post on August 28, 2008, stated that I was “trying not to lose his patience at this new school!” (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2008).

Posts from 2008 can be analyzed in three categories: status observation, critiques of setting, and teacher optimism. The optimism posts were sometimes difficult to interpret because I used sarcasm to sometimes express my positive feelings. However, the teacher optimism posts highlighted showed clear indication of no sarcasm in the writing. The social media posts from 2009 also showed me transitioning to a new public charter school. What is unique about this year was the absence of posts between the months of January and March of 2009, and only two posts from April to June. One post showed me at a Teacher of the Year Gala, and the other showed images from my graduation from George Washington University.

One possible reason for the limited number of posts in the early part of the year may have been due to friction and conflict with school administration. I showed in my 2008 posts that I not only shared thoughts about school culture but also professional moments of which I was proud. However, the theme in these posts also indicated strong human capital concerns related to a sense of self-value and employment. A total of 32 posts were collected for this year that mainly consisted of my reflection on co-workers and job security, as shown in Figure 51. What was surprising with this post was how directly I named the school as if I wanted to inform the city that this school was having issues with enrollment and paying teachers.

Figure 50. Facebook Post from Researcher-Participant on September 25, 2009



There were clear shifts in the frequency of posts based on how I felt about being a teacher. The highest frequency of posts came in 2010 when I was working at a performing arts charter school. Because I was teaching high school for the first time, I attempted to be more active on social media. While Twitter posts were not included in this study, I did start an account specifically to recognize student work and inform students of homework. After 2010, the number of posts started drastically decreasing. In 2011, I had 38 posts in 2012, four posts in 2012, seven in 2017, 10 in 2018, and three in 2019. The majority of the posts after 2012 centered on changing schools and showing followers a new setting.

The significance of the post gives context to the fact that I did not mention students as a driver in my motivation. While some moments showed I was excited and proud of my work, my early posts related to employment and human capital shed the most light on why I chose this topic to investigate.

Leadership Self-Study Interpretation

The leadership self-study took place in 2019 and focused on the race, culture, and identity of the researcher-participant. These were chosen because of their intersectional

presence in my career and family interactions. There was a deep curiosity about how people whom I trusted viewed my use of personal narratives in their interactions. In addition, I wanted to gain insight from co-workers at a school where I recently transitioned into a leadership role. However, the most significant finding from this self-study was the trend of Morehouse being ingrained within my identity. More than half of the participants in my study mentioned my affiliation with Morehouse when asked about what aspects of my identity aligned and resonated with theirs. This assignment also involved creating vision statements and a learning plan for this leadership journey. These vision statements are important in revealing motives that relate to this study. For the statements written for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024, I mentioned my intentions to create an education program at Morehouse:

At the conclusion of 2022, I have established the Morehouse Educators Association, organizing all Morehouse graduates who play a part in education. This starts the conversation of an education department at Morehouse. At this time I will have accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania to conduct research on teacher preparation programs at HBCUs (Historically Black College and Universities) for Black men...

At the conclusion of 2023, I have conducted several think tanks focused on developing education programs at HBCUs. A proposal is submitted to Morehouse College to allow students to major in education. At this time, Atlanta university schools such as Emory, Clark Atlanta or Spelman College will invite me to teach at their institution. I will have presented at UPenn's Ethnography in Education Research Forum on data from the think tanks...

At the conclusion of 2024, my daughter will have graduated from high school and starting her first year at Spelman College. My son would be starting his third-grade year in Atlanta with my wife winning several writing awards for art criticism. I will now be a founding Dean of Morehouse's new education program while at the same time launching my Post-doc studies on education programs at HBCUs. (W. Thomas, personal communication, 2019)

The next section explores the relational dynamics between researcher and study participants. This autoethnographic self-study further established the transparent intentions of this study. There was clear recognition of bias, particularly when it came to the emphasis of human capital based on my own experience.

Phase 5: Relational Dynamics Analysis (Quan→←Qual)

The relational inquiry approach in this study was important to establish the validity and transparency of the data. The relational inquiry analysis was implemented throughout the study to gauge the authenticity of the interview data. To give greater context, Table 20 shows the relational proximity levels of all the survey participants.

Table 20. Theoretical Refraction Average by Relational Proximity of Morehouse Alumni Survey Participants

	N	%
Volunteers (L5)	88	88.4
Distant College peers (L4)	5	4.6
Close College classmates (L3)	6	5.5
Community Partners (L2)	3	2.7
Professional School Colleague (L1)	6	5.5

Table 20 shows that more than half (88.4%) of the participants were volunteer alumni whom I as the researcher-participant did not know. Of the 108 alumni surveyed, only 20 had previous interactions with me in college or within my professional career. Recognizing that majority of the participants were volunteers who had no prior relationship with me as the data collector established a level of validity toward the results of the survey data. This was also consistent with the interview participants, as seen in Table 21.

Table 19. *Theoretical Refraction Average by Relational Proximity of Morehouse Alumni Interview Participants*

	Total	Current Teachers	HC Average % Depth (mode)	SD Average % Depth (mode)	Average Focal Length Magnification
Volunteers (L5)	10	6	43% (50)	38% (37.5)	80% (87.5)
Distant College Peers (L4)	4	1	50% (50)	28.1% (37.5)	81.3% (87.5)
Close College Classmates (L3)	3	1	50% (50)	29.2% (25)	79.2% (75)
Community Partners (L2)	2	0	31.3%	38%	68.8%
Professional School Colleagues (L1)	3	2	37.5%	37.5%	75%

Note: (L#) refers to the level grouping of the relational proximity.

The data showed the groupings of interview participants based on their relationship to the researcher-participant. The data were inconsistent to my original intentions of quantifying qualitative data and analyzing them within a relational context. The expectation was that the closest interview participants would offer more memories and anecdotes related to the human capital and self-determination theory. I assumed that these particular participants would feel more comfortable with the interview and view it more as a casual conversation because of their confidence in my intentions and familiarity with my work in schools.

The opposite actually occurred when the interview participants who were positioned closest to me had the lowest average focal length magnification, with Professional Colleagues averaging a magnification of 75%, while Community Partners averaged 79.2%. I interpreted that the average was low because the majority of the participants who had close relational proximity with me were a part of the pilot study of

the interview protocols. Following these pilot interviews, I re-sequenced the questions and reworded them to be more concise in order to collect consistent data within each life lens. Most of the early interviews conducted for the pilot study gathered rich data on the interview participants' experience as young males of color, but failed to get significant data related to their experience with professional development or with teaching young males of color.

One consistent practice in this study was the communication of the transparency and intentions of the study. Each participant received the questions in advance and was presented with the conceptual and theoretical framework before I engaged each alumnus in the semi-structured interview. To get a deeper perspective on the motives behind the alumnus's participation in the study, I shifted his final question to probe why the interview participant agreed to be a part of the study.

Alumnus K6, who was one of the volunteer participants, expressed how he was excited to hear about the study because he was anxious to share his story. This showed an indication of the reciprocal relational motive of affirmation and acknowledgment for Morehouse alumni who chose to be teachers:

One thing is I was really excited when I saw your e-mail because I think you were right. There was no one paying us any attention. When I saw the email I was like, "Perfect. This is good." Being in this system and being here, nobody would never hear my story. When seeing your email, I was super excited because I'm like, "Damn, somebody need to know what's going on out here for us educators as African American males that come out of Morehouse." It is looked highly upon coming out of Morehouse and be in the education. At that point, you already have an advantage. When I saw your e-mail I was like, "Holy cow. This is perfect." I never get a chance to share this story. For all I knew, I didn't think nobody else would have ever known that what's taking place for me right now.

One of the things I think that they need to be prepared for is Morehouse name itself is already going to put you— going to already have you— the spotlight is on you. The spotlight is going to be on you 100% of the time and they're going to expect excellence out of you all the way through. What that looks like is, that's going to look like putting in the work, as going to stay away from extracurricular activities, dealing with other teachers. Have a positive mind frame and growth mindset. The expectations of you are going to be high just because the standards and the people that have come out of Morehouse. They really need to be prepared to be in a situation where everything you do is going to be under the microscope. You need to be ready for that. You still can't be ready— You can try. It's going to be tough but still try to live a party life and be out and being young and live a Morehouse experience while working is going to be a little bit more difficult for you. (Alumnus K6, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus S9 expressed similar views about the non-existent narrative of BMTs:

For the interview question, one reason that I agreed to do the interview is—and you mentioned it in the opening, I feel the narrative around Black male educators is non-existent. I think that people do not really know the experience of Black male men in education. What they do know is very a single narrative story. That is very nuanced. In my experience, I've just seen and I had the blessing to work with a lot of Black men, and I think that we are also different and bring so many different things to the work. I've seen how people look at us as all bringing the same thing, managers, and I think that that has to change. Also, I just consider—and one thing I wanted to bring a different, hopefully, like perspective to that. I think I view myself as somebody who's really interested in content and once again building that relationship through students through that way. That was one reason I wanted to do the interview. (Alumnus S9, personal communication, 2020)

Alumnus P4 affirmed this belief as part of the group of interview participants who attended Morehouse with me:

I feel like our voices need to be heard. I don't even know the results of your data just yet, but I feel like Black educators all have very overlapping journeys to pedagogy into the classroom. No matter if you were in public school, private school, if you had Black teachers all your life, or if you have White teachers all your life, there's something that I'm saying clicked for you, there's something that triggered you. There's something that made you see the light bulb go off that made you say, okay, my presence needs to be in the classroom, and that's what happened for me. I wanted to be a part of the study because Morehouse College was founded in 1867 to teach former slaves to become teachers and preachers in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church. We got more preachers than we could shake a stick at, but we don't get enough credit for the educator, the line of

educators that happened from Springfield Baptist churches basement. I wanted to be a part of this study to show that if you're a Black male and you're an educator and you're in high school, you need to be looking at Morehouse because we got excellent— When you asked me the question earlier about why I went to Morehouse and everything, and I talked about how Morehouse stamps out mediocrity, like Benjamin Elijah Mays said, and how Morehouse has so many great men doing so many great things, that also applies to education, but education doesn't always come into the limelight. I wanted to participate in the study so I can add to the data that shows there's a quality sample size and critical mass of educators who are coming out of Morehouse who may have a bachelor's degree in something completely unrelated to education but mess around. We got PhDs, EDDs, and the like, and we're in the classroom, K-12 and higher ed. I wanted to participate in this study to bring awareness to Black male educators and our story and our life and our motivations. (Alumnus P4, personal communication, 2020)

The low HC and SD averages as well as the average focal length magnification forced me to analyze further the memory paths of interview participants who were associated with me as a professional colleague or a community partner. Figure 52 shows the HC and SD Adinkra memories that were recorded for the participants who had a relational proximity of 1 or 2.

Figure 52. *Memory Path Sequence for Interview Participants Who Indicated Who Had a Relational Proximity of Level 1 or Level 2*

Participant	Focal Length	HCA Depth	SDA Depth	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7	AD8
A9	62.5%	12.5%	50%	N	M	D	B	A			
J10	75%	37.5%	37.5%	W	M	D	F	B	A		
L6	75%	50%	25%	W	H	F	D	B	A		
R5	75%	50%	25%	W	M	H	F	B	A		
S5	75%	25%	50%	N	H	M	F	D	B		

The data shows consistent focal length totaling 75% for four of the five interview participants. Alumnus A9's memory path was unique not only among this group, but also when compared to the other interview participants because of his high SD

total and low HC total. The close relationship that this alumnus had with me, and the power dynamics as someone who has asked me to speak at various schools, might have come into play during the interview. In addition, the two of us graduated the same year and had the same major. This may explain the intimate memories that were shared by Alumnus A9, particularly about the deaths of his close friend from elementary school, his brother, and his father. These memories pushed the interview participant to expand on the impact of those deaths that had no connections with human capital but more with the alumnus's motivation to support young males of color through education.

The analysis of relational proximity interrogated the possible bias that may be interpreted during the data collection and data analysis. While relational dynamics were leveraged throughout the study, they did not always render the expected outcomes as related to the magnification of the theories under analysis. However, all of the relational motives were observed during the interviews, particularly with the volunteer participants. These participants' motivations were driven by their desire to be a part of a study that acknowledged the contributions of Morehouse alumni who chose to be educators as well as an affirmation that their career choice was actually valued by the research community. The revaluing of relational dynamics within the research process, along with the focus on intersectional identities revealed through the demographic data of the participants, allowed this study to gain important insight into the power dynamics that were constantly being negotiated when making the critical decision to remain a teacher.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

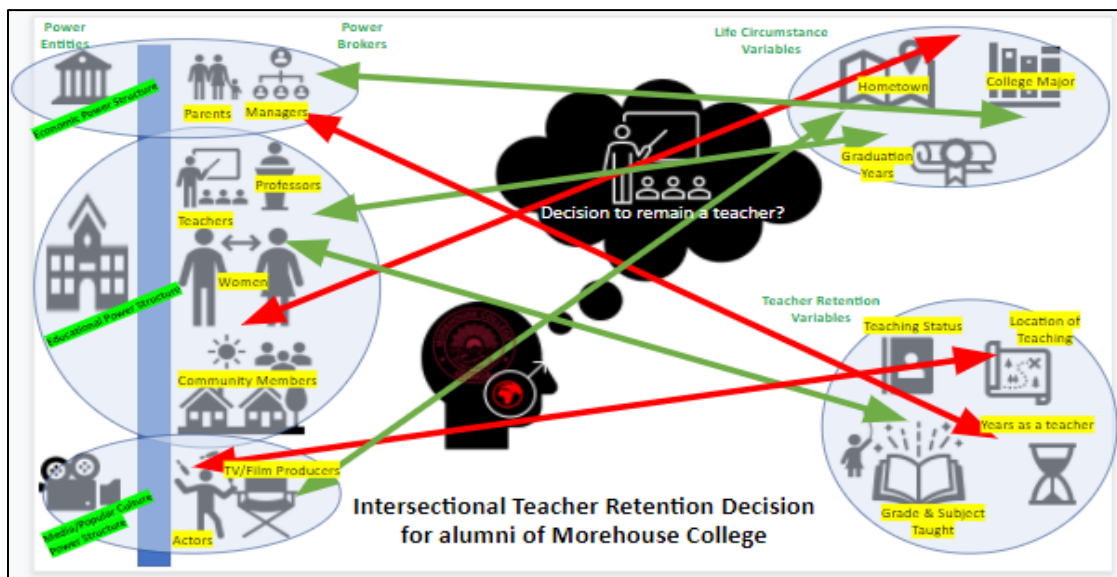
Intersectional Analysis: Conclusions on Advancing Social Justice

This study embarked on a unique journey to explore the narratives of Morehouse College alumni who became teachers in the public school system in order to unpack the contextual experience of BMTs and better understand the intersectional challenges and advantages they have confronted. The central purpose of the investigation was to make sense of the alumni's decision to remain a teacher. The relational inquiry nature of this study brought authenticity and transparency to the data collection and analysis. As the researcher-participant, I was positioned to contribute to and analyze the data, while setting up structures that would interrogate my bias and motives behind the study.

This implications section explores possible ways this study can be used as a catalyst to advance the challenges school systems have had with teacher diversity in their classrooms. There are three main areas of social justice in which I propose the study's findings can be used. The first relates to the strategic access to quality opportunities to be a successful teacher. This access comes particularly in the form of the proactive recruitment of potential BMTs, increasing the variety of professional development that emphasizes culturally relevant approaches to teaching, and creating strategic retention initiatives for BMTs that takes a genuinely holistic approach that addresses their need for self-motivation, economic stability, professional aspirations, and healthy emotional well-being. This can be difficult with the presence of multiple layers of power that influence the trajectories of this particular population of teachers.

Figure 53 shows a visual interpretation of the intersectional teacher retention decision for alumni of Morehouse College. The image shows the intersectional relationship between the two major categories of variables reached in this study: life circumstance variables and teacher retention variables. The right side of the image shows the study findings related to the multiple layers of power that exist in the decision to remain a teacher for the interview participants. “Power Entities” anchor the sociocultural experience of the participants, which position various individuals as “Power Brokers” who facilitate the negotiation of power in various situations. As a result, a complex matrix of identities are influenced by spears of domination that may or may not have wanted that person to succeed. This is why the intersectional design of this study was central in deconstructing and then integrating the life circumstance and teacher retention variables to make sense of enabling and disabling power dynamics in the decision to remain a teacher.

Figure 53. *Visual Interpretation of the Intersectional Teacher Retention Decision for Alumni of Morehouse College*



Implications on Recruitment, Development, and Retention of Black Male Teachers

This study showed that the recruitment of Black Male Teachers (BMTs) is complex, particularly when one starts to analyze the specific moments in their life history where they may consider a teaching career. The first layer addresses the number of students who have the opportunity to attend college and graduate. The teaching profession is one of the closest observed professions by the children of our society, yet we continue to have teacher shortages. This is when the Harris's (2016) notion of the "pedagogical mask" seeps into play, as teachers often indirectly frame education as their "job" during the formative years of students, with grades equating to salaries. Thus, before there is a systematic shift in strategy as it relates to recruiting BMTs, it is important to address how teachers and educational leaders revalue the relationship between teacher and student within a humanizing context that re-establishes the dignity of people from underserved communities and service to them through teaching.

The idea is that dignity is no longer designated for the upper elite (Appiah, 2006). We must allow education to be a form of liberation rather than a forced assimilation. Appiah (2006) distinguished between how the word "dignity" was viewed during the time of John Locke and how we use it today. "Dignity is still, then, as it was for Locke, an entitlement to respect. But now everyone shares that entitlement. Dignity is now human dignity: you get it just by showing up. That is what makes liberalism radical" (p. 56). Some of these underserved communities are strongly influenced by the intersectional paradigm of identity, culture, and race. These influences have a profound effect on how students view the world and learn value systems. Considering these and

other factors is critical for educators to be aware of when facilitating educational learning experiences. However, some feel as if we should not consider the diversity and funds of knowledge that are found in our pluralistic society. Minow et al. (2010) argued against developing educational instruction based on the diversity of learning styles and cultural backgrounds. The researchers focused on the insignificance of specialized schools that cater to a diverse population, explaining that:

The choice between integrated or homogenous schools may be far less significant than the creation and maintenance of schools with a strong sense of mission and commitment to all students who attend them. This is key however in that same commitment, as school cannot acknowledge the unique needs of the various learners of the school. (p. 56)

However, if there are high populations of people who are learning how to persevere through strategic systems of oppression and other populations who have distinct privileges, then we must adjust expectations and strategies when it comes to external factors that influence a child's education. Alvarado-Diaz (2015) claimed that Plato's approach to developing a society where noble falsehoods or "Myth of Metals" establish the predetermined role of people correlates with the American system of populating a productive inmate class to generate wealth and reaffirm oppressive systems of rehabilitation. This draws clear connections between how schools directly and indirectly orient and condition a population of society to fill the function of the inmate class based on their race.

This pipeline reveals that social identities affect the education of a student. The alternative to the "American Dream" that is a result of hard work and determination is the "American Nightmare" where one's rights are stripped and one's function is determined by society. While poor decisions would be the obvious cause for a person's assigned or

“predetermined” role in society as an inmate, it is actually based on how authorities interpret a person’s racial identity.

While we cannot change the entire K-12 system overnight, it must be emphasized that there is a symbiotic relationship between the student experience and the teacher experience. However small, incremental steps can be taken by school systems such as the strategic highlighting of the teaching profession early in elementary school, exposing students to the critical role education plays in the inner workings of society. This may come with allowing students to be exposed to a variety of teachers in different capacities and the lifting-up of success stories of teachers in history who have made an impact on society. There are very few organizations like the Future Teachers of America in underserved schools, and it could be a possible starting place to organize and inspire students once they get to high school. However, school systems and legislators will have to confront the ugly truths of the human capital value of teachers and the fact that they are historically underpaid and under-supported.

This study showed that colleges, particularly HBCUs that produce large numbers of Black teachers, have to evolve in their approaches to framing the importance and need of quality teachers in the public school system. In addition, the common experience of Morehouse students mentoring and tutoring students should become the norm at all undergraduate institutions, which would simultaneously encourage students to attend college and encourage college students to consider a profession like teaching in a public school as a respectable and economically stable career. The narratives of this study also indicated that career transition programs will also need to be re-evaluated and refunded.

This study showed that many teachers and former teachers did not plan to be teachers and switched careers after a shift in life circumstance or self-motivation.

Once BMTs are recruited in the system, developing them to maximize their strengths and refine their craft will also need to be a key consideration. The varying perceptions of professional development by the study participants indicated a clear disconnect between how knowledge learned from these learning experiences translates into improved student learning experiences. Various power dynamics come into play here as there is a clear mistrust of leadership by BMTs, particularly of those leaders who do not reflect their own value system, race, identity, or culture. Professional learning experiences have to be meaningful to the experience of BMTs. However, the study participants noted how much more engaging their experiences were when they focused on culturally relevant pedagogy, the contextual experience of Black children, and the specific challenges of navigating an educational space that is dominated by a historical White supremacist power structure.

These complex intersecting patterns of different power structures force the education system to recognize how they have positioned young males of color and how that positioning has simultaneously affected the role that BMTs play in various school settings. This is why a holistic approach toward the retention of BMTs must be crafted in order to address the low representation of quality BMTs in public schools. The study participants illuminated the fact that social and emotional wellness, cultural relevance, professional mobility, family security, and a healthy self-motivation are key tenets to consider when re-evaluating the techniques used to retain quality BMTs.

Conclusion and Implications for Morehouse College

The most compelling finding from this study, according to the researcher-participant, is the historical origins of teacher preparation at Morehouse College. While the school has always informed its students and the general public that it has a history of developing teachers and preachers, its actual intentions were not to highlight the profession of a public school teacher but rather the consistent pipeline of professors in higher education that Morehouse produces. However, the residual impact of this common reputation has resulted in many graduates of Morehouse men choosing to serve their community through teaching in the public school system.

This research revealed that Morehouse has used W. E. B. Du Bois's "Talented-Tenth" model passively as it related to what career trajectories for which they encourage students to prepare while attending Morehouse. Here, we find the blurring of intersectional power dynamics related to the school's efforts to prepare their students to be public school teachers. It is important to have a contextual understanding of the role of women in education and how that role intersects with Booker T. Washington's philosophy of self-help, racial solidarity, and accommodation. The racial and economic implications of Washington's movement were centered on his vocational school model that included "normal" teacher courses that prepared students to instruct newly freed enslaved African people. Even though education was a key emphasis in both Washington's and Du Bois's models, the value and position of public school education were still evolving, and structured opportunities for public school teaching became more available with its growth in different parts of the United States. However, women have

historically dominated these roles, regardless of race, which positions Black men within complex power dynamics with women. These include a dependence on women as gatekeepers to teacher pedagogy in higher education institutions like Morehouse, while at the same time, women were being devalued and positioned with limited opportunities to teach and learn subjects outside of the realm of education or “practical work.” The existence of this complex power dynamic can be seen in how Spelman Seminary (now Spelman College) was positioned to facilitate all of the teacher preparation courses for Morehouse and Spelman students, yet those women who graduated from the program earned their degree from Morehouse. This shows that the devaluing of the woman in society resulted in a long overdue formal education program at the women’s seminary and at Morehouse. However, the devaluing of women has also had a residual effect on how Black men are able to navigate the teaching profession because of the sometimes negative framing of the feminization of education and the perceived disconnection it creates with an hyper-masculine, patriarchal-dominated country.

The Position of Education in a Washington-Du Bois Context

The important fact that Morehouse’s teacher preparation program has never been independent from Spelman until recently indicates a possible origin of why the department was discontinued in the 1920s. During the early part of the 20th century, two Black leaders came to prominence as major political ideologies for Black people in America. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was a former slave whose hunger for education and community empowerment led him to expand his philosophy through education at the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers, now Tuskegee University. With his training and teaching experience at Hampton Institute, now

Hampton University, he spring boarded onto the political scene with his messages of self-determination, strategic accommodation, and the pursuit of possible racial solidarity. This naturally became popular for newly freed enslaved Black people who were stripped of an educational experience for over 400 years and wanted to become willing contributors to society while accessing their entitled freedom. Washington pushed Black people to educate themselves, organize their communities, and focus on the long game as it related to integrating into a White supremacy system that was still trying to grapple with the reality of social and cultural integration.

Washington understood this cultural, political, and social detox that the white community had to experience and, therefore, focused the Black community on building a new reality that did not wait on White leaders to accept them into the fabric of American society. However, Washington knew that the Black people of the country were starting several laps behind the many immigrants who came to America willingly. Thus, he took a stance of accommodation and accepted and even solicited White philanthropic funds to finance his vision for the Black community. This became a notable criticism of Washington, as he would be viewed by his contemporaries as a leader who did not have a sense of urgency for the political and social empowerment for Black people. Some felt that building an economically sound foundation could never be possible unless one addresses the oppressor in the language that he used to create the racial proteins that would eventually grow into the systemic racism that we experience today. Legislation was the key for some leaders. It was the early colonists who established the first Virginia laws starting in the 1630s that began making distinctions using race as an identifier. Those who opposed this as an accommodating approach to empowerment felt that Black

people would not be able to experience a process of rehumanization through economic development, but through sociopolitical systems that control who has access to economic opportunity.

This was the stance of scholar W. E. B. Du Bois, who believed that Black people should empower themselves and the community through political action and fighting for civil rights. He felt that the most urgent need in educating Black people was to teach them social systems and power dynamics that prevent them from having access to what they are entitled to. Washington felt one received the White power structures' cooperation when they saw one had an economic value, understanding that the country was birthed on capitalistic principles that dominated the immediate context. One important factor that typically is omitted from this discussion is the sociocultural context in which both Washington and Du Bois were educated. Du Bois's privileged childhood allowed him to have access to certain educational opportunities that the majority of Black people did not have. His Harvard education positioned him to see a different layer of the country's power dynamics. Du Bois is even credited for birthing the field of Sociology as he interrogated the power structures that created many of the challenges that oppressed people experienced. However, he had never experienced the power dynamics of being a slave as Washington had, and thus Du Bois had a different emphasis on routes to empowerment. Du Bois organized the Black-educated elite who had access to move into key leadership positions around the country as a way to demand change. Washington had a plan for the masses of uneducated Black people who sought to make a life that was not steered by dehumanizing treatment and chattel labor practices, but by a self-determined

will to better themselves and their family. Both attempted to address the self-determination needs of the people: one sociopolitical, the other socioeconomic.

This sets the stage for one of the most influential people in Morehouse history, John Hope, the institution's first Black president. While George Sale, who was president from 1890 to 1906, ushered in the first organized teacher preparation program for the school at the turn of the century, bringing in Ms. Bemus, it would be Hope who would eventually dissolve the department in the 1920s for reasons not specified in the documented history of Morehouse. Why? One significant historical event that took place prior to Hope taking office could point to a possible reason why this growing and popular institution chose not to place a high value on the strategic preparation of their students to be public school teachers.

According to Jones, Hope participated in the Niagara Movement meetings that took place in the summer of 1906; this was radical for a Black southern college president to attend because schools like Morehouse depended on funding from White northern philanthropists who were not always interested in the civil rights of Black people. While in West Virginia, Du Bois led a congregation of leaders from a variety of affiliations which culminated in "a kind of manifesto couched in five of the following resolutions..." (p. 83). The resolutions included a diverse demand for some of the most basic of rights of citizens such as suffrage, an end to discrimination "in public accommodations" (p. 83), the right to peacefully congregate without fear of violence or ridicule, as well as the right to have laws fairly enforced against the rich and the poor. The final resolution was the most important as it related to the trajectory of Morehouse's established education courses at the school, as Hope would adopt this philosophy when he began his leadership

at the institution: “We want our children educated.... And when we call for education, we mean real education. We believe in work. We ourselves are workers, but work is not necessarily education. Education is the development of power and ideals...” (pp. 83-84).

This important emphasis on the positionality of education as it related to the Black community is an important line in the sand between the philosophies of Washington and Du Bois. For years, Morehouse has been shown to produce the most Black males in graduate school (Brawley, 1917; Eaves, 2009; Jones, 1967) than any other institution of higher learning. While Morehouse grew in prominence and prestige, its emphasis became more disciplinary as the school continued to develop its Science and Liberal Arts focus. However, the work of developing public school teachers was viewed at the time as a vocational trade, as seen through the name of Washington’s school in Tuskegee, Alabama: “Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers.” It was also common for women at this time to lead the efforts in developing BMTs in higher education because the male professors typically pursued studies that related to industries that were not historically accessible to Black men, such as work in the field of science, politics, medicine, and law. This was clearly the case at Morehouse as both historical texts (Brawley, 1917; Jones, 1967) highlighted that students completed teacher preparation courses in conjunction with the students at Spelman College.

Jones (1967) described the fact that these Niagara Movement meetings that Hope attended clearly influenced his direction of the school as it related to the expansion of the type of courses that would be offered and discontinued. Jones explained that even though Hope believed in the ideals of Du Bois, he had to humble his political views publicly in order to secure funding from White northern benefactors:

In this last resolution, concerning education, that the ideological demarcation between Doctors DuBois and Hope, on the one hand, and Booker T. Washington, on the other, is revealed. Mr. Washington stressed mainly vocational education, oriented toward agriculture, the trades, and service to whites, while Mr. Hope emphasized the education of the whole man—liberal arts education. While the founder of Tuskegee Institute sought to accommodate Negroes to their milieu (as indicated by his famous Atlanta speech of 1895 proclaiming Negroes and whites as “separate as the fingers” in all matters social but “as united as the hand” in matters economic), Mr. Hope sought to make Negroes unhappy with the status of inequality whatsoever. He wanted to make them totally, integrally free. (Despite this ideological difference, Mr. Hope was to seek the aid of Mr. Washington in the matter of fund-raising, and the result of this act proved most beneficial.) (p. 84)

It is this philosophical view that continued to grow into the 1920s as perhaps a major factor that could have influenced the school to dissolve the teacher preparation program known at the time as the “English Preparatory Department.” The distancing of the school from vocational trade courses to the expansion of its curriculum to include a liberal arts focus was partly due to the political climate and the leaders who influenced a specific minority group among Black people, who had more privileges and resources than the masses.

Morehouse was known to take students who came with little formal education and mold them to be leaders in the community. This political view taken by the institution can be implied in the reflections about the school by Du Bois, who was forced to resign as a professor at the neighboring Atlanta University as a result of his radical political views he shared in public. According to Jones (1967), Du Bois spoke of how pleased he was with the progress of Morehouse College in an article published in the *American Mercury* in October 1924, entitled “The Dilemma of the Negro,” in which Du Bois indicated his admiration for Hope’s efforts at the school:

Morehouse changed from a white president to a colored president, but the church which owned the school took a man of scholarship and character and unusual executive ability, it gave him increased appropriations, and he is building one of the finest institutions in the whole South, white or black. In it colored people see a colored institution with colored faculty where their sons are getting sympathetic attention and first-class training, and they are beginning to yearn for more schools of that kind. (Jones, 1967, p. 109)

Revaluating Women in the Narrative of Black Male Teachers

Illuminating the role of women in the historical development of teachers at Morehouse College is crucial in understanding why the school is currently having a “reawakening” related to preparing students to be educators. The absence of a formal education program has not fully deterred students from becoming public school teachers, as shown in this study’s alumni survey. However, the absence of the program has clearly impacted career trajectories, particularly when it comes to being a teacher, as alumni are strongly influenced by the tradition of Morehouse alumni continuing on to graduate school and eventually a position teaching in higher education.

This study showed explicitly that alumni commonly use introjected regulation to determine whether they will remain a teacher. This regulation has much to do with the “Talented Tenth” model that permeates Morehouse and its students. This also comes with passive, indirect expectations that Morehouse graduates pursue careers where they play a leadership role which does not always align with being a public school teacher. Alumnus D10 explained, the decision to remain a teacher involves a heavy burden of leadership, which leads to pressure to become a principal:

This year specifically was interesting for me, because going into the school year, I’m going back into the classroom. I was actually in administration the past couple of years. I had to really think about this, right? I think before, and I can tell you more as we go through my career, but before I was definitely at the point, and I think a lot of it was being a black man coming from Morehouse. I’ve got to hit

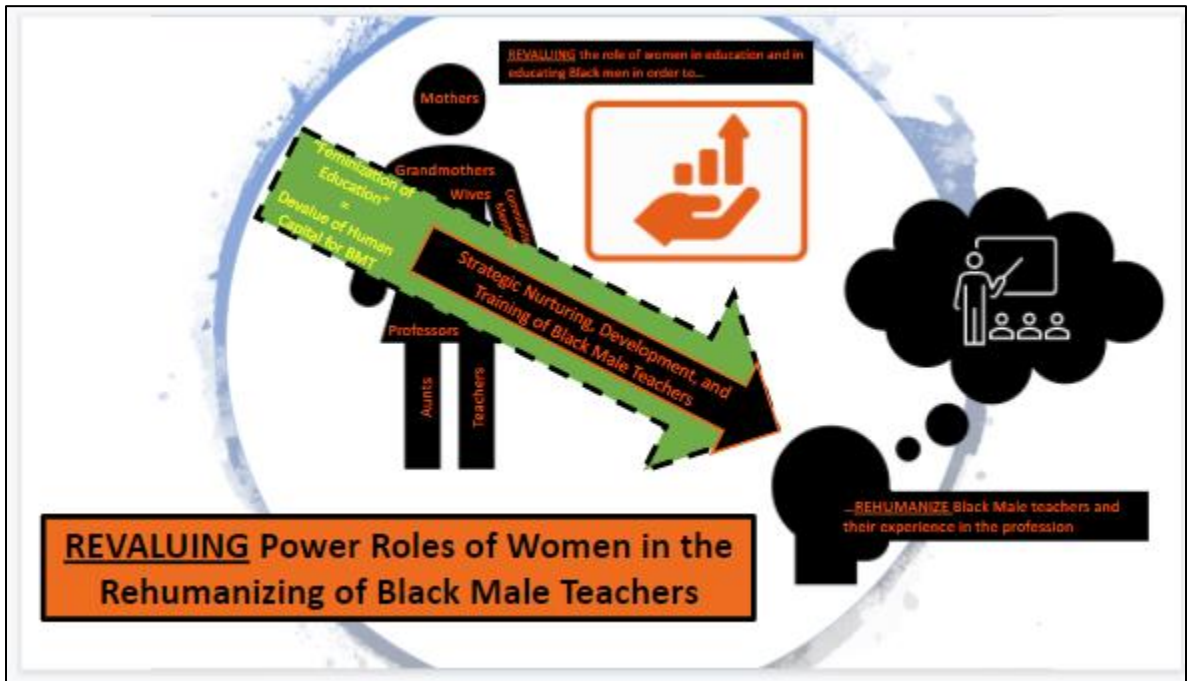
those steps, you're a teacher first, you're an assistant principal, you're a principal. This is the first time I started going back into the classroom. I would say, first and foremost, I think for me, I really honed in on this idea of having an impact on society and having an impact on the world and knowing that comes through education, and really knowing that the classroom is really one of the most important parts. My area is special education. I'll say that it is interesting because, again, I just came back from being a principal. Being a principal and going back into the classroom and having been at the principal role where I was doing 20 different things all the time. I would say a lot of it has to do with me being a Morehouse man, me being a Black male, if you've got to knock off those things. Everybody else is doing these things. You get in the classroom and you're in the classroom for a certain part of the time, you've got to get the next one. You're in a classroom for three to four years. The next step is to be assistant principal. I moved into a director role, special education. I do think, and you had mentioned before, I think there was a financial aspect, the higher you go up in admin the more you get paid, the more I could provide for my family. I would say I was at a period, especially when I left school where I was very much focused on, okay, I love a classroom, I love what I'm doing, but I also have to, being who I am, I've got to take on this next challenge. There was a point of three, four years when I was teaching that I was always looking for, okay, what is the next opportunity? Got my first teaching job, now I'm going to take maybe a teacher and a department head. I'm going to take a teacher department head plus running a football coach. Constantly trying to take these things.

It's interesting that you're doing this survey with me now because I bet if you would have done it with me five years ago, my answer would be completely different. You get to have that perspective and you get to do those things, then you get to take a step back and better see some of the things you might want to do. (Alumnus D10, personal communication, 2020)

This leads to the conversation of how human capital circumstances impact self-determination as related to remaining a teacher. The historical role of women, within a human capital context, has devalued the teaching profession for Black males and relegated the option to a default last resort when it comes to securing employment. The historical reputation of women in the profession commonly takes a negative stance in relation to the impact on male students, particularly young males of color. However, what this study has concluded is that in order for BMTs to be rehumanized within the education profession, there must be a "revaluing" of women, and in particular Black

women, in the development and ability to access the education profession. Figure 5r shows the researcher’s sense-making as it relates to the important power dynamics women hold within interactions with Black men who aspire to be public school teachers.

Figure 54. *Visual Interpretation of Intersectional Teacher Findings for the Role of Women in the Development of Black Male Teachers*



Because this study took an intersectional approach to the data analysis, I as the researcher-participant rejected the additive notion that the feminization of education is singularly defined by the devaluing of human capital for men, and in particular Black men. Instead, based on this study, I conclude that the revaluing of the role and influence of women will illuminate the strategic nurturing, development, and training effort that has historically taken place, particularly at Morehouse College. This can begin the process of rehumanizing BMTs to recognize and honor their value in bringing diversity to the teaching profession.

Positionality Reflection

My current life circumstance has positioned me uniquely as both a K-12 public charter school central office leader and a researcher studying how alumni from my alma mater, Morehouse College, made sense of self-motivation, professional development, and their experience as and with young males of color. I have been particularly interested in how these factors impact their decision to remain teachers in the public school system and what implications this has on recruitment, development, and the impact of human capital mindsets on the attrition and retention of quality BMTs in public schools. I grew up in an ethnically diverse home where I experienced the intersection of Filipino, Afro-Panamanian, and East Texas culture. From navigating the various paradigms of language, to learning how religious traditions were sacred, to expanding my taste through the habitual ritual of eating non-American cuisine, I was fully engrossed and influenced by my multicultural exposure growing up on military bases in California and Hawaii. My move to Texas during my formative years of middle school and high school forced me to confront the issue of race and its impact on my life trajectory.

Here is where one can find the origins of my critical race inquiry as it relates to teacher retention among current and former BMTs who graduated from Morehouse College. My racial reality as a Black man proved to play a central role in my life decisions and strategic positioning for various career trajectories. This is central in my motivation not only to promote humanizing methodologies but also to apply them to impact the strings of equity that are not always influenced by practitioner researchers with my background. The inquiry approach I took toward my methods directly influenced the design of my methodology as I started to approach my research the same way I would

approach my students as a teacher. However, in this case, I would have to play the role of the teacher and student, in addition to being the one generating the data that would be analyzed. Since I naturally took a culturally responsive stance toward my students, it made sense to do the same with myself as a “researcher-participant” and the other Morehouse alumni participants. Giving my students a humanizing experience as a K-12 teacher was always at the forefront of my approach to learning due to the service and community values that were implanted in me at Morehouse College. There, I was exposed to culturally relevant teaching that taught me the graphic dehumanizing history and culture toward Black people that went far beyond what I learned from my childhood books about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Therefore, the central motivation for this study is to contribute to the rehumanization of Black people through rigorous and scholarly research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alvarado-Díaz, A. (2015, December 9). *A school-to-prison pipeline in Plato's Republic? Shooting the core*. Columbia University. <https://edblogs.columbia.edu/cocic1101-059-2015-3/2015/12/09/a-school-to-prison-pipeline-in-platos-republic/>
- American Federation of Teachers. (2020, June 10). *Why Black male teachers matter*. American Federation of Teachers. <https://www.aft.org/news/why-black-male-teachers-matter>
- Appiah, K. A. (2006). Liberal /education: The United States example. In *Citizenship and education in liberal-democratic societies: Teaching for cosmopolitan values and collective identities* (1st ed., pp. 56-74). Oxford University Press.
- Atkin, A. (2010, November 15). *Peirce's theory of signs* (*Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy, Summer 2013 Edition*). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/peirce-semiotics/>
- Baptiste, I. (2001). Educating lone wolves: Pedagogical implications of human capital theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(3), 184–201. doi: 10.1177/07417130122087232
- Becker, G. S. (1994). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Bishay, A. (1996). "Teacher motivation and job satisfaction: a study employing the experience sampling method", *Journal of Undergraduate Science*, Vol. 3, pp. 147-54.
- Boys of Color Research Collaborative, Barbarin, O. A., Murry, V. M., Tolan, P., & Graham, S. (Eds.). (2016, February). *Development of boys and young men of color: Implications of developmental science for My Brother's Keeper Initiative and commentaries* (No. 3). Society for Research in Child Development. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2016.tb00084.x>
- Brawley, B. G. (1917). *History of Morehouse College: Written on the authority of the Board of Trustees*. Andesite Press.
- Bristol, T.J., & Mentor, M. (2018). Policing and Teaching: The Positioning of Black Male Teachers as Agents in the Universal Carceral Apparatus. *The Urban Review*, 50(2), 218–234. doi: 10.1007/s11256-018-0447-z.
- Brockenbrough, E. (2018). *Black men teaching in urban schools: Reassessing Black masculinity*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

- Brown, A. L. (2011). Pedagogies of experience: A case of the African American male teacher. *Teaching Education*, 22(4), 363–376. doi: 10.1080/10476210.2011.570748
- Bryan, N., & Williams, T. M. (2017). We need more than just male bodies in classrooms: Recruiting and retaining culturally relevant Black male teachers in early childhood education. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education* 38(3), 209–222. doi: 10.1080/10901027.2017.1346529
- Brydon-Miller, M. (2000). Education, research, and action: Theory and methods of Participatory Action Research. In D. L. Tolman (Ed.), *From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods (Qualitative Studies in Religion, 5)* (1st ed., pp. 76–89). New York University Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation (Practitioner Inquiry Series)* (Illustrated ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, D. J. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Davis, J. (2014). The mathematical experiences of Black males in a predominantly Black urban middle school and community. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, 2(3). doi: 10.18404/ijemst.55341
- Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 49(3), 182–185. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801>.
- Delmont, M. F. (2016). *Why busing failed: Race, media, and the national resistance to school desegregation (American Crossroads) by Matthew F. Delmont (2016–03-01)*. University of California Press.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (2017). *The talented tenth*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- DuBois, W. E. B., & Aptheker, H. (1968). *Autobiography of W.E.B. Dubois: A soliloquy on viewing my life from the last decade of its first century* (Reprint, 1997 ed.). International Publishing Co. Inc.
- Eaves, J. H. (2009). *The Morehouse mystique: Lessons to develop black men*. African American Images.

- Edwards, E. B., & Esposito, J. (2020). *Intersectional analysis as a method to analyze popular culture: Clarity in the matrix (Futures of Data Analysis in Qualitative Research)* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406294947>
- El-Mekki, S. (2018). Learning from Black Male Teachers Who Thrive. *Educational Leadership*, 75(8), 56–60.
- Feldman, M. S. (1994). Semiotic analysis. In *Strategies for interpreting qualitative data* (pp. 22–41). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412986007>
- Fine, M. (1994). *Framing Dropouts: Notes on the Politics of an Urban Public High School (SUNY Series, Teacher Empowerment and School Reform)* by Fine, Michelle published by State University of New York Press (1991) (58385th ed.). State University of New York Press.
- Foster, M. (1997). *Black Teachers on Teaching*. New Press.
- Friedman, Z. (2019, November 24). This billionaire just pledged to pay off everyone's student loan debt in the Morehouse Class of 2019. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2019/05/19/the-billionaire-just-pledged-to-pay-off-everyones-student-loan-debt-in-the-morehouse-class-of-2019/?sh=752fde751b62>
- Gist, C. D. (2018). Black educators fight back: Facing and navigating vulnerability and stress in teacher development. *The Urban Review*, 50(2), 197–217. doi:10.1007/s11256-018-0446-0
- Goings, R. B. (2015). The lion tells his side of the (counter)story: A Black male educator's autoethnographic account. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 6(1), 91–105.
- Hagemaster, J. N. (1992). Life history: A qualitative method of research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 17(9), 1122–1128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1992.tb02047.x>
- Hall, B. (1985). Creating knowledge: A monopoly? Participating research in development. Participatory Research Network Series No. 1. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 35(4), 242–243. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001848185035004008>
- Hammond, Z. L. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students* (1st ed.). Corwin.

- Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher motivation: Definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1217819. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1217819>
- Harper, S., & Davis, C. (2012). They (Don't) Care about Education: A Counternarrative on Black Male Students' Responses to Inequitable Schooling. *Educational Foundations*, 26, 103–120.
- Harris, M. (2017). *Kids These Days: The Making of Millennials* (Reprint ed.). Back Bay Books.
- Hobson, A. J., & Maxwell, B. (2016). Supporting and inhibiting the well-being of early career secondary school teachers: Extending self-determination theory. *British Educational Research Journal*, 43(1), 168–191. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3261>
- Howard, T. C. (2014). *Black male(d): Peril and promise in the education of African American males*. Teachers College Press.
- Huber, L. P. (2014). *Moving beyond ethicality: Humanizing research methodologies with undocumented students and communities*. UndocuScholars. <http://www.undocu-scholars.org/research-briefs>
- Imenda, S. (2014). Is there a conceptual difference between theoretical and conceptual frameworks? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2), 185–195. doi:10.1080/09718923.2014.11893249
- Irizarry, J. (2011). *Latinization of U.S. schools: Successful teaching and learning in shifting cultural contexts (Series in Critical Narrative)* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Jensen, K. E. (2016). Pedagogical Personalism at Morehouse College. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 36(2), 147–165. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-016-9510-y>
- John-Steiner, V., & Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 31(3), 191–206. doi: 10.1207/s15326985ep3103&4_4
- Jones, E. A. (1967). *A candle in the dark: A history of Morehouse College* (1st ed.). Judson Press.
- Koenig, M. (2021, March 16). *My brother's keeper program comes to Elmont*. Herald Community Newspapers. <https://www.liherald.com/stories/my-brothers-keeper-program-comes-to-elmont,131089?>

- Krieg, J. M. (2006). Teacher quality and attrition. *Economics of Education Review*, 25(1), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2004.09.004>
- LaBoskey, V. K. (Ed.). (2020). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices (Springer International Handbooks of Education)* (2nd ed. 2020 ed., pp. 817–870). Springer.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2019). Just what is critical race theory, and what’s it doing in a nice field like education? *Race Is ... Race Isn’t*, 7–30. doi:10.4324/9780429503504-2
- Longhurst, R. (2016). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In *Key methods in geography* (3rd ed., pp. 103–113). Sage.
- Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom* (Illustrated ed.). Beacon Press.
- Lynn, M. (2002). Critical race theory and the perspective of Black men teachers in the Los Angeles public schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35 (2), 119-130.
- Madkins, T. (2011). The Black teacher shortage: A literature review of historical and contemporary trends. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 3(80), 417–427. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41341143>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (Applied Social Research Methods)* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Maylor, U. (2009). “They do not relate to Black people like us”: Black teachers as role models or Black pupils. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802382946>
- McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233–238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622>
- McInerney, D. M., Walker, R. A., Liem, A. G. D., & Schoen, L. T. (2011). *Sociocultural theories of learning and motivation: Looking back, Looking forward (Research on Sociocultural Influences on Motivation and Learning)* (Illustrated ed., Vol. 10). Information Age Publishing.

- Minow, M., Shweder, R. A., & Markus, H. R. (2010). *Just schools: Pursuing equality in societies of difference*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Morehouse College. (2021). *Education studies: Morehouse College*. Morehouse College Website. <https://www.morehouse.edu/academics/majors/education-studies/>
- Morse, J.M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research, 40*(1), 120-123
- Mosely, M. (2018). The Black Teacher Project: How racial affinity professional development sustains Black teachers. *The Urban Review, 50*(2), 267–283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-018-0450-4>
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaie, F. (2017). Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education, 14*(3), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670>
- Nakkula, M. J., & Ravitch, S. M. (1998). *Matters of Interpretation*. Wiley.
- Nasir, N. S., & Hand, V. M. (2006). Exploring sociocultural perspectives on race, culture, and learning. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(4), 449–475. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076004449>
- National Research Council. (2013). *Next Generation Science Standards: For states, by states* [E-book]. National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/18290>
- Noonan, J. (2019). An Affinity for Learning: Teacher Identity and Powerful Professional Development. *Journal of Teacher Education, 70*(5), 526–537. doi: 10.1177/0022487118788838
- Pabon, A. (2016). Waiting for Black Superman. *Urban Education, 51*(8), 915–939. doi: 10.1177/0042085914553673
- Pabon, A. J.-M., Anderson, N. S., & Kharem, H. (2011). Minding the gap: Cultivating Black male teachers in a time of crisis in urban schools. *The Journal of Negro Education, 80*(3).
- Palmer, R. T. (2019). Onward and upward toward the light of success. In *Personal narratives of Black educational leaders* (pp. 150–157). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, M. N. C. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (1st ed.). Sage.

- Roth, G (Ed.). (2014). Teacher Motivation: Theory and Practice. In *Antecedents and Outcomes of Teachers' Autonomous Motivation: A Self-Determination Theory Analysis* (1st ed., pp. 38–51). Routledge.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2008). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness* (1st ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Schoonenboom, J., & Johnson, R. B. (2017). How to construct a mixed methods research design. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift Für Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie*, 69(S2), 107–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-017-0454-1>
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Spencer, S. R. (1955). *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's place in American life (Library of America Biography)* (1st ed.). Scott Foresman.
- Stevenson, H. C. (2014). *Promoting racial literacy in schools: Differences that make a difference*. Teachers College Press.
- Tolman, D. L., Brydon-Miller, M., & Morawski, J. (2000). *From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods (Qualitative Studies in Religion, 5)*. New York University Press.
- Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Routledge.
- Wallace, D. L., & Gagen, L. M. (2019). African American males' decisions to teach: Barriers, motivations, and supports necessary for completing a teacher preparation program. *Education and Urban Society*, 001312451984629. doi:10.1177/0013124519846294
- White, J. W., & Hungerford-Kresser, H. (2014). Character journaling through social networks. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 57(8), 642–654. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.306>
- Whiting, G. W. (2006). From at risk to at promise: Developing scholar identities among Black males. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 17(4), 222–229. <https://doi.org/10.4219/jsge-2006-407>
- Willis, B. W. (1998). *The Adinkra dictionary: A visual primer on the language of Adinkra*. Pyramid Complex.
- Wilson, D. (2015, Fall). Black male educators: Prepared to teach. *Diversity in Education*, 30-31.

Winters, J. V. (2010). Teacher Salaries and Teacher Unions: A Spatial Econometric Approach. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 747–764. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1548639>

Younas, A. (2020). Relational inquiry approach for developing deeper awareness of patient suffering. *Nursing Ethics*, 27(4), 935–945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733020912523>

ProQuest Number: 28543577

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality and completeness of this reproduction is dependent on the quality and completeness of the copy made available to ProQuest.



Distributed by ProQuest LLC (2021).

Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author unless otherwise noted.

This work may be used in accordance with the terms of the Creative Commons license or other rights statement, as indicated in the copyright statement or in the metadata associated with this work. Unless otherwise specified in the copyright statement or the metadata, all rights are reserved by the copyright holder.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code and other applicable copyright laws.

Microform Edition where available © ProQuest LLC. No reproduction or digitization of the Microform Edition is authorized without permission of ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346 USA