Teacher Efficacy and Its Influence on Classroom Management When Teaching African American Males in Grades PreK-2: A Case Study

Suzon M. Pulliam

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education
Doctorate of Education Program

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Teacher Efficacy and Its Influence on Classroom Management When Teaching African American Males in Grades PreK–2: A Case Study

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in
Educational Administration

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2018
Abstract

This qualitative, observational-case study examined teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glaser, 1998). Data was analyzed with the intent of gaining an in-depth understanding of how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when addressing the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging of African American males in grades PreK–2. Through the use of professional development, the intended goal was to discover insight on how to better assist teachers in supporting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. The researcher expected to find a relationship between classroom management and teacher efficacy, when considering the influences of various elements such as professional development, teacher bias, the availability of educational resources, and cultural awareness. Data were collected from pre-and post-professional development responses, as well as from observations. Research was conducted in a suburban Illinois school district, located on the outskirts of a major Midwestern city. The participants included 10 teachers whose classroom population consisted of five or more African American male students in grades PreK–2. Using the comparative analysis design, teacher pre-and post-professional development responses were compared to one another. Findings revealed that teachers who understood how to fulfill students’ needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, were able to identify, create, and implement appropriate classroom-management strategies, which were directly tailored to the needs and abilities of their African American male students.

Keywords: teacher efficacy, classroom management, African American males, choice theory
Dedication

I dedicate this study to the misunderstood young men who are faced with the ongoing challenges of breaking free of multiple barriers that this society has placed on them. I dedicate this work to the children who feel that they are forgotten in the blueprint of today’s world. I dedicate this journey to those hidden scholars, who are persistent and determined to have their voices heard. Lastly, I dedicate this work to the youth of today’s reality and tomorrow’s future. I hear your cry. I embrace your struggle. I believe in your desire to make a positive impact on generations to come. I write this to send a clear message that you are loved, you are strong, and you are necessary to the existence and survival of all mankind. Stay focused. Keep striving, keep believing, and keep persevering. Somebody needs you!!!
Acknowledgements

I would like to express a tremendous amount of gratitude to those who have supported me in this journey of completing the dissertation process:

First, and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the desire, wisdom, and courage to do HIS will and step out on faith to take this journey.

To my husband, who has supported and encouraged me during this process. Thank you for selflessly allowing for me to spend extended amounts of time away from “humanity”, so that I could work, writes, and study. Thank you for sacrificing your time, by going that extra mile to make sure the children were taken care of without any delay. Thank you for reminding me that I am stronger than I originally perceived the self to be, and for believing in me when I struggled to believe in the self. I love you.

To my daughter, Xiyyaire, who is a young, smart, creative, and innovative young lady. Thank you for encouraging me to keep going, knowing that I am setting an example of what you can achieve one day. Your gentle spirit is the fuel that gives me life. I look forward to you soaring and achieving great things in life. Your prayers and encouraging words are an inspiration to the soul. Thank you. Momthe loves you.

To my son, Brandon (B.J.) Jr. Thank you for giving me a reason to press on and a reason to fight for the injustices of inequality within the educational system. This journey was not about me. It was necessary for your future. Thank you for the many kisses, hugs, and prayers filled with “the blood of Jesus” several times a night, as I sat and worked hard at trying to accomplish the many assignments. Thank you and I love you.

To my mother, who embraced this journey with me, becoming the “study buddy”, along the way during this process. Thank you for keeping me on the toes with your many requests for assistance throughout your dissertation journey. Most importantly, thank you for all of your
motherly advice, kind words of wisdom and our most intimate “girlfriends/best friends” talks. Your strength and fierceness has been the key in helping me to endure and move forward, despite the situation. Mom, WE DID IT !!!! For that, thank you and I love you.

To Big Mike, thank you for being such a wonderful grandfather by taking the children on many occasions, to allow for me to have quiet time to study and write.

To my Father, Michael, thank you for your many words of encouragement throughout this process. I love you.

To my grandmother, Mae Frances Banks, who passed away during this process. I continue to feel your presence every day. I know that you are smiling down from heaven. This one is for you-Ma Frances. I love you and I miss you.

To my Aunt Raa, thank you for the stimulating conversations that encouraged me to dig deeper and think harder about the world as a whole. It is greatly appreciated.

To the best set of Doctors, this side of heaven, my dissertation committee. Thank you Dr. Weschke, Dr. Britt, and Dr. Dupey for thoroughly and selflessly preparing me for this moment. Thank you Dr. Weschke for your inspiring words of wisdom and comfort that helped to calm the soul throughout the many trials and tribulations along this adventure. It is through your guidance that helped me through some of the darkest moments.

To my wonderful family who continued to encourage me and gave me the needed strength to remain focused.

Thank you Dalyn Drown, for your untiring effort in aiming to move kids forward. I appreciate your advice as a mentor and your analytical expertise.

Thank you Ms. Patricia (Pat) Blumenburg for letting me know that God continues to put good people around me when I need it the most. You have been such a blessing and inspiration
throughout this process.

To all of the professors at Concordia University-Portland, thank you for inspiring me throughout my classes, to challenge the self to dig deeper and look beyond the surface of “life” to discover hidden treasures that God has surrounded me with.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2013), as early as elementary school, African American males’ exhibit lower educational success than any other ethnic group and gender. According to Howard, Flennbaugh, and Terry (2012), the most prevalent reason behind this problem is negative perceptions, social imagery, and stereotypes of teachers, which are affiliated with African American males. Extending as far back as the 17th century, until as recently as the 21st century, African American males have been depicted as being less intelligent, more violent, and less internally motivated than other racial groups (Howard et al., 2012). As a result, these perceptions have now established themselves, not only within the political system of the United States, but within the educational system as well. Research conducted by Monroe (2013) indicated that racialization of school discipline has been exacerbated by an implementation of procedures and guidelines that have been put in place such as the zero tolerance policy. Monroe (2013) indicated in her research that African American students, who attended schools that have adopted the zero tolerance policy or other strict discipline procedures, are more likely to receive office referrals and receive more severe penalties than their peers who are not African American. Monroe (2013) goes on to add that the national trend has exposed the problem that African American students appear to be at-risk for receiving harsher penalties for less severe behavior. Because African American male students are more likely to be perceived as being more defiant and aggressive, this has resulted in a disproportionate number of school expulsions, suspensions, and other disciplinary infractions than their non-Black peers (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 2014).
As an educator working in urban educational institutions for more than 12 years resulted in frequent first-hand experiences that illustrated how African American males are disciplined, versus their non-Black peers. Rouland, Mathews, Byrd, Meyer, and Rowley (2014) and Harradine, Coleman, and Winn (2013) revealed an existing gap in their research which specifically focuses on teacher efficacy, classroom management, and African American male students in early elementary grades. The interests are enthralled by such findings. Electing to investigate this research constitutes why this study is an effort to understand how and if teacher efficacy influences classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of the choice theory (Glaser, 1998), specifically focusing on the components of total behavior and the quality world. Additionally, to gain an in depth understanding on how teachers can better support African American males in grades PreK–2, in two contexts--social and emotional within the educational environment. For the purpose of this study, teacher efficacy relates to the level of confidence that a teacher believes he or she exhibits when teaching and/or supporting students (Bullock & Coplan, 2015). Upon the conclusion of this study, the goal was to provide research-based information that can serve as a viable tool in helping to support the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2.

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Throughout the career as an educator, the experience primarily involved working in urban, inner-city, neighborhood school. These schools were considered to be Title 1 schools, where the student population was approximately 80% African American, 15% Latino, 4% Caucasian, and 1% other. These students were considered to be from low-income families. However, the teaching staff consisted of a rather diverse population, which included both male
and female teachers from various ethnic groups such as African American, Hispanic, Asian, Caucasian, and Asian Indian. In the experience, all too often, many teachers could be heard complaining about the classroom behavior of their African American male students; in particular, while other teachers felt as though they mostly struggled with building positive relationships with this classification of students. I have heard many teachers insisting that their African American male students were extremely defiant and were either on the road to being suspended or have been suspended multiple times for not following school and classroom rules. Others have openly admitted to feeling a bit overwhelmed, underprepared, and reluctant, when working with African American male students in general.

As a teacher, the observations included how the same students for whom I have previously taught classes and who actually displayed appropriate behavior, were the same students who were now considered to be defiant and less motivated than their peers who are not African American. In result, this specific group of students were being suspended and/or expelled from school. In one particular school district located within a major city in the mid-western region of the United States, during the 2015-2016 school year at an elementary school who housed students in grades kindergarten through fifth, 15 students were suspended for exhibiting what was considered as disciplinary and defiant behavior. Of this group of students, eleven were African American males, two were African American females, and two were Hispanic-American males.

Having the opportunity to have observed first-hand the many hidden conversations that took place among school staff members, as well as having noticed a constant revolving door to students being suspended and/or expelled, specifically African American males in particular, is what triggered the interest to conduct this study. At the beginning of the school year, teachers
were complaining among each other about the number of African American males who they had on their classroom-roster. Their personal conversations were indicators that student performance expectations were low. Several teachers’ conversations centered around that the upcoming school year would be a tough year and their rosters would be filled with *bad kids* many of whom do not show signs of home training and/or do not have respect for adults. Sadly, many of the students who were new to the district this particular year were the same students whose names were listed on the roster of this specific group of teachers. Therefore, aforementioned personal comments among the teachers were based on assumptions and stereotypical perceptions, as opposed to actual information.

African American males are more likely to be over-identified as being socially defiant, than their peers, thus receiving harsher disciplinary sanctions, which often leads to multiple suspensions and/or expulsion (Cokley, Cody, Smith, Beasley, Miller, & Hurst, 2014; Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015; Howard et al., 2012). This problem has been linked to the negative imagery and stereotypes about the abilities of African American males. Starting as early as preschool, African American students are three to five times more likely to be perceived as oppositional, noncompliant, disrespectful, and mentally challenged, which can, and in some cases, have led to racial disparities in exclusionary discipline (Cokley et al., 2014). As a result of various misconceptions that continue to plague the school systems, African American students continue to lack the needed support both socially and emotionally within the educational environment (Howard, Flennaugh, & Terry, 2012; Monroe, 2012; Ford & Moore, 2013; Cokely et al., 2014).

This study examined teacher efficacy, in terms of whether teachers believed that they could support the social-emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2. Teacher-efficacy was explored in regards to its influence on classroom management, as
perceived through the lens of the choice theory. Definitions of terms such as classroom management, efficacy, and low motivation will also be defined in a separate section. Although this study focused on African American students, it did not include any students as participants. Teacher volunteers participated in pre-and post-professional-development interviews, as well as received professional development that focused on Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, that included the attributes of the quality world and total behavior (see Appendix A).

The composition of this study was organized around its conceptual framework. Chapter 2 presents teacher efficacy, African American males, classroom management, and the choice theory, specifically relating to the elements of total behavior and the quality world. Chapter three provides an in-depth description and justification/rationale of the methodology utilized for this study. Chapters four and five provide a discussion of the findings, as well as a summary of the study, followed by possible recommendations.

Throughout this investigation, various literature discussions were examined in terms of how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when addressing the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging of African American males in grades PreK–2. The intended goal was to discover new information on how various elements such as professional development, teacher bias, teacher personality, the availability of teacher and student resources, and cultural awareness and diversity, influenced how well teachers were able to support the social-emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2. This involved exploring the various components of the quality world and total behavior elements of the choice theory (Glaser, 1998); in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how meeting the basic needs of an individual influenced his or her choices and overall behavior. Although there was information that speaks to the effects of efficacy and teachers, in regards to their perceptions of
how well they believed they could support student educational growth, there continued to remain a gap in the literature that focused on how teacher efficacy influenced the ways that educators managed their classrooms when instructing African American males in grades PreK–2. Bullock, Coplan, and Bosaki (2015) have associated teacher efficacy with the concepts of perception of ability, effort and persistence. Bosaki et al. (2015) attributed motivation and emotional reactions as being key factors that influence teacher efficacy.

Choice theory (Glaser, 1998) was the primary framework around which this study centered its focus. Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, which is formally known as the control theory, claimed that all behavior has an intended purpose that seeks to fulfill an internal desire and/or need (Glaser, 2010; Irvine, 2015). When exploring choice theory (Glasser, 1998), teachers must not only focus on providing instruction for students, but must also fulfill the required social-emotional needs as well. Similar to choice theory is Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation, which also focused on both cognitive and physiological needs. Just as Glasser (1998) claimed that all humans are motivated by human needs such as survival, power, freedom, fun, and love, Maslow (1943) argued that human motivation is influenced by meeting the needs of self-actualization, self-esteem, belongingness, safety, and physiological. Both theorists agreed that human behavior is attributed to meeting a selected group of basic needs. However, the difference occurred between the two theories in regards to their overall structure. Maslow’s (1943) theory is listed in a hierarchy/pyramid form, with the growth needs listed first. The growth level consists of self-fulfillment and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Maslow (1943) claimed that the growth level was not motivated by the deprivation of meeting specific needs, but driven by the desired personal growth within a person. The last four needs are categorized as deprivation needs, which consists of food, water, shelter, love, sex, love, respect, health, and
various other characteristics (Maslow, 1943). Glasser (1998), on the other hand claimed that all human behavior is influenced by the meeting of specific needs, which are developed through the relationships that are established with others (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016).

Although there are various tenets of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), this study focused on classroom management through the lens of total behavior and the quality world. Total behavior is separated into four categories, which includes feeling, acting, thinking, and physiology. All total behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over the acting and thinking components. We can only control our feelings and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think (wglasser.com, 2016).

The quality world is considered to be the framework for all motivation. The quality world focuses on the nurturing aspects of our environment such as relationships, beliefs, events, and people (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). The quality world comprises of those things that are important to us (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). Examining classroom-management strategies through the lens of the choice theory can possibly provide teachers with the essential capabilities in better supporting the social and emotional needs of African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem of African American male students being over-identified as defiant and non-compliant was upsetting to me as an African American educator. Having found success when educating and supporting African American males academically, socially, and emotionally, the interest in conducting this research was to discover why more teachers have not done the same. Although there are many studies that focused on grades six through 12, there continued to be a pattern of limited research that focused on African American students in early elementary grades
as it related to teacher efficacy and classroom management. Therefore, it was not known if and how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. It was because of the deep interest in discovering how teachers could better support the social and emotional needs of this student population, I selected to conduct this study. In doing so, the hope was that this research could possibly lead to a decline in African American male students in grades PreK–2 being mislabelled, misperceived, and over-identified as being socially defiant and emotionally challenged.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine if teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), that specifically focused on the attributes of total behavior of the students, that addressed students’ acting and thinking abilities, and the quality world, that addressed motivation. The characteristic of acting referred to those actions that a person chooses to do in order to meet his or her quality world (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). The characteristic of thinking refers to the way in which a person thinks, which reflects how he or she reacts to his or her quality world (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). The quality world refers to the way in which a person desires to meet the five basic needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and love/belonging (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). The focus of the research conducted centered on the intent to gain an in-depth understanding of how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management. Particularly when the type and level of teacher efficacy address the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging of African American males in grades PreK–2. Additionally, the goal was to discover new information on how various elements influenced how well teachers were able to support the social-emotional development of African American students.
American males in grades PreK–2. Elements such as professional development, teacher bias, teacher personality, the availability of teacher, student resources, cultural awareness and diversity were also discussed in this study.

**Research Questions**

A qualitative investigation was conducted to explore and find answers to this problem. The investigation examined the question: How does teacher efficacy influence classroom management when educating African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). In addition, conclusions are drawn from the data.

**Research question 1.** In what ways does understanding how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when educating African American males in grades PreK–2?

**Research question 2.** How does providing professional development to educators that addressed teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, influence classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, while addressing the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community?

**Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, when providing professional development that is focused on choice theory (Glasser, 1998). The choice theory (Glasser, 1998) focused on the attributes of total behavior and the quality world. Within this study, research was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of which factors influenced teacher efficacy, thus influencing their classroom management, particularly when teaching
African American males in grades PreK–2. Efforts were to gain insight as to how educators could better support African American males in grades PreK–2, within the educational environment.

The elected group to the study was African American males in grades PreK–2 due to negative information that surrounded them in regards to their educational experiences. Research has shown that students from ethnic minority groups are more likely to encounter harsher disciplinary punishments than students of other races (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015). Studies revealed that many teachers continue to hold negative attitudes towards students from low socioeconomic households and minority backgrounds (Banks & Foley, 2013). The information acquired from this study could serve as a resource for teachers who teach and interact with African American students in grades PreK–2. Information from this research can also provide insight to educators as how to better support African American males in grades PreK–2, both socially and emotionally within the educational environment. This information reflects essential characteristics within the total behavior and quality world attributes of choice theory (Glasser, 1998) that a teacher must understand, in order to successfully address student behaviors. By providing teachers with the necessary psychosocial support and cultural awareness training, this may lead to a decrease in the misinterpretation of African American student behavior resulting from teacher bias and a lack of cultural awareness (Cokley et al., 2014). Understanding how meeting the five basic needs of choice theory influenced human behavior, which then influenced actions, thoughts, feelings, and the physical state of a person, provided insight as to the choices one makes, and how his or her relationships with others are established. This in turn may help to serve as means of support for teachers, when addressing behaviors of African American males within the educational setting.
If teachers are able to adapt, modify, and accommodate their classrooms and/or lessons in order to meet the specific needs of their students, then it is likely that these changes may produce a positive influence on African American males in grades PreK–2 within the educational environment. Incorporating these qualities into a classroom setting that serves African American males may help teachers to support the social-emotional development of their students. The long-term goal of this study was to provide teachers with the necessary tools and information, so that they can better support African American males in grades PreK–2.

Focusing on the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), with a direct concentration on the attributes of the quality world and total behavior of students, the desire was to understand if and how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. This included exploring possible factors that influenced teacher efficacy such as professional development, teacher bias, stereotypes, teacher personality, and socio-economic status. The goal of the intended investigation was to discover which classroom-management strategies were more productive in meeting the social-emotional needs of African American males, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Additionally, for teachers to provide their students with a positive educational experience the investigation included the aim to discover the specific needs of such teachers who actually serviced African American males in grades PreK–2.

In alignment with the case study design, participants were interviewed, professional development sessions were conducted between the pre-and post-professional-development interviews, as well as conducted weekly observations, and documented teachers’ responses regarding their classroom management style/strategies (see Appendix B). Close attention was paid to the interpretations of the teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom-management strategies when incorporating choice theory (Glasser, 1998) concepts. From this
point, information was collected and coded, in an effort to determine various patterns of similar strategies used. Additionally, how meeting the basic needs of the students influenced classroom-management strategies and student behavior. The information obtained from the teachers provided insight as to which strategies proved beneficial when addressing the five basic needs of the quality world, thus influencing the total behavior components of African American males in grades PreK–2.

An observational case study was selected as the research design because it allowed for me to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why specific behaviors occurred within a given setting (Creswell, 2013). In alignment with this design, the primary goal of this study was to discover new information from the research possibly to be used as a tool to assist teachers in supporting the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2 within the educational environment. Examining the research from a qualitative design, while specifically incorporating the case study method, was appropriate for this investigation because it supported the intended goal to collect, examine, and analyze information. This was done in order to draw research-based conclusions about the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Such factors of influence are related to meeting the needs of the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Additionally, the goal was to collect and identify descriptions obtained by conducting one-on-one pre-and post-professional-development interviews with multiple participants, as well as observations of the teachers’ practices, after having received professional development focusing on choice theory (see Appendix C). The primary focus of teacher interpretations included personal bias, the establishment of teacher-student relationships, patterns of student behavior and the effectiveness of classroom-management strategies. Participants
received professional development between the pre-professional development and post-professional-development interviews, specifically focusing on the total behavior and quality world components of Glasser’s (1998) choice theory. This assisted me in drawing conclusions about the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Definition of Terms**

*Efficacy:* This term is defined as the power to produce an effect (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Efficacy often influences how well a person completes a given task and/or assignment. Efficacy can also be referred to as confidence. Efficacious individuals are often confident in their ability to produce desired results.

*Teacher-efficacy:* This term is defined as the perception of teachers and abilities of teachers to produce, transform, and shape instructional performance, classroom behaviors, and student achievement (Banks et al., 2013). Efficacious teachers exhibit tenacity, persistence, cultural sensitivity, and flexibility when teaching students with academic and social-emotional challenges (Banks et al., 2013). Teacher efficacy can also be related to the amount of persistence that an individual puts forth in teaching students and managing a classroom, as well as the emotional reactions exhibited when dealing with challenging, unmotivated, or diverse groups of students and abilities (Bullock, Coplan, & Bosacki, 2015).

*Social imagery:* This term is defined as the beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes that influenced and/or shaped a person’s or a group of people understands about another person or group of people (Howard et al., 2012). Social imagery can be displayed through various forms of media such as television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, as well as through language (Howard et al., 2012).
**Classroom management:** This term is defined as the ability to supervise, organize, and control a classroom (Bullock et al., 2015, Merriam-Webster, 2016). Classroom management was connected to the ability of one being able to control and/or manage student behaviors (Bullock et al., 2015).

**Achievement:** This term is defined as the act of achieving or establishing accomplishment (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Therefore, low-achievement is the opposite of achieving or establishing a particular goal and/or accomplishment.

**Students:** This term is defined as African American male students.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations included the population of teachers used within the study. All of the participants instructed students within an elementary school setting, which includes grades PreK–2, versus teaching in a high-school or university setting. This can be considered a limitation because of types of classroom-management strategies that the participants have used, based on the cognitive levels and developmental abilities of the student population that they were servicing. Another limitation to the study was that all of the participants were women with the exception of three male participants. The district in which I conducted the research had a teacher population that was predominantly female. This was seen as a limitation because there could have been a difference between teacher efficacy and classroom management of males versus that of females.

A third limitation to the study included the personal bias in regards to classroom behavior, management, and teacher efficacy. Due to personal opinions about some of the characteristics efficacious teachers’ exhibit, this researcher was faced with the challenge of suppressing certain feelings. As an African America woman, this could be another factor that
could be construed due to being more familiar with cultural routines and/or patterns of behavior, than some of the participants in the study. Another limitation of this study was that some of the information gathered was from one 90-minute professional-development session, as opposed to several sessions. This was perceived as a limitation because this allowed for a limited amount of information to be collected during this short time frame. Lastly, a final limitation included the factor in which no children would be interviewed. All of the data and findings were those of the teachers. Therefore, data was drawn from teacher interviews and observations, rather than from the students themselves.

**Delimitations**

The study was delimited to classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American male students in grades PreK–2, in a midwestern state within the United States. Therefore, results and conclusions were not extended beyond classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Summary**

As previously stated, although there were many studies that focused on grades six through twelve, there continued to be a limited amount of research that focused on African American students in early elementary grades as it related to efficacy and classroom management. Therefore, it was not known if and how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. The purpose of the study was to determine if teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, while examining through the lens of choice theory, specifically focusing on the attributes of total behavior and the quality world. In an effort to gain an in-depth understanding, the research was guided by the question: How does teacher efficacy
influence classroom management when educating African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998)?

The choice to study African American males in grades PreK–2 was due to the negative information that surround a specific demographic group in regards to their educational experiences. Research has shown that students from ethnic minority groups are more likely to encounter harsher disciplinary punishments than students of other races (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015). The long-term goal of this study was to provide teachers with the necessary information, so that they could better support African American males in grades PreK–2 both socially and emotionally. In alignment with the case study design, teacher participants were interviewed, professional development sessions were conducted between the pre-and post-professional-development interviews, weekly observations were conducted and documented teacher responses on their classroom management style/strategies. A qualitative design and a case study research method were appropriate for this investigation because they supported the intended goal to collect, examine, and analyze information in order to draw research-based conclusions about the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, according to meeting the needs of the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Limitations to this study included the grade-levels taught by the selected participants, the gender of the participants, and researcher bias. In addition to this, all information and responses were those of the teachers and not of the students. Finally, this study was delimited to classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American male students in grades PreK–2, in a midwestern state within the United States.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

Throughout the literature, there were several themes that were believed to have had an influence on teacher efficacy and classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Themes discussed within the literature included teacher efficacy, teacher bias, teacher personality, stereotypes, professional development, teacher and student resources, and self-esteem. Some research indicated that African American males are more likely to receive harsher punishments within the academic setting, than students of other races (Dunkake & Shuchart, 2015). This included discipline referrals, and suspensions (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015). These authors agreed with Monroe (2012) and Cokley (2014) that African American males continue to struggle within the educational setting, both socially and emotionally. Dunkake and Schuchart (2015) attributed these deficiencies to a long history of African American males being the victims of mistreatment when being disciplined within the educational system.

The study examined the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management of African American males, in grades PreK–2. This included exploring the experiences of teachers, in connection to their classroom-management strategies, through the lens of the choice theory (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). The literature revealed that African American males are often the target of negative stereotypes, which influence their social-emotional development. “These educational concerns for African American boys are associated with a host of additional negative statistics and societal fears about their increased likelihood of maladaptive developmental trajectories” (Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, & Chen, p. 560, 2012). Therefore, understanding that African American males are more likely to struggle emotionally in school,
teachers must strive to find ways to accommodate the needs of African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Conceptual Framework**

Throughout this study, I sought to discover what the literature stated about the term “efficacy,” and how it influenced classroom management. Although there was information that addressed the effects of self-efficacy, there continued to remain a gap in the literature that focused on how teacher efficacy influenced the ways teachers managed their classrooms when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Glasser’s theory was the primary framework around which this study centered its focus. Originated by Glasser (1998), the primary focus of the choice theory is behavior.

Glasser’s (1998) theory is separated into five key concepts, which are reality and perception, total behavior, basic needs, comparing place, and the quality world. The elements of reality and perception claim that human beings act on what they believe to be true and/or real, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. Total behavior is separated into four categories, which are feeling, acting, thinking, and physiology. “All total behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over the acting and thinking components. We can only control our feelings and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think “(wglasser.com, 2016).

Comparing place focuses on a balance between what we want and what we perceive.

The quality world is considered to be the framework for all motivation. The quality world focuses on the nurturing aspects of our environment such as relationships, beliefs, events, and people. Lastly, Glasser (1998) claimed that all behavior is chosen, and all human behavior is linked to the meeting of five basic/core needs. These needs include survival, freedom, power, love and belonging, and fun. Survival is related to those needs that are physically necessary, such
as food, water, and shelter. Freedom refers to the ability of one having the autonomy to make personal choices in life (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015). Power deals with one having the ability to not only achieve and accomplish tasks, but to be recognized for his or her skills in completing such tasks (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015). Love and belonging involve one being able to form affectionate relationships with others, as well as the feeling of being a part of a group (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015). Love and belonging focus on the social connectedness that one makes with others around him or her. Lastly, fun is attributed to play and learning (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015). According to Glasser (1998), learning is acquired through play. When these needs are met, humans are able to build positive relationships with others and the world around them.

According to Irvine (2015), Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, which is formally known as the control theory, claimed that all behavior has an intended purpose that seeks to fulfill an internal desire and/or need. Educators should make a conscious and intentional effort to understand and accommodate the specific needs of their students (Monroe, 2013). When focusing on the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), teachers must not only focus on providing instruction for students, but must also fulfill the required social-emotional needs as well. Although there are various tenets of the choice theory, this study focused on classroom management through the lens of total behavior and the quality world.

The choice theory (Glasser, 1998) was relevant to the topic of teacher efficacy and classroom management because it focused on addressing the immediate needs of individuals. When working with diverse students, it is essential that educators make an intentional effort in understanding not only academic needs, but the social, emotional, and cultural needs of the learners as well. The goal of educators should be to educate the “total child,” in an effort to help children develop the necessary skills to be able to engage, interact, and establish positive
relationships with others within the modern society. Examining the experiences of teachers, strategies, and methods of classroom management can help to address possible areas of need when preparing, training, and offering support to teachers who engage with African American males in grades PreK–2, within the classroom setting.

Ford and Moore (2013) discussed how personality and stereotypes influence teacher efficacy and classroom management. According to Glasser (1998), all behavior is intentional and purposeful. This intentional behavior is centered on a series of components, which then influence how the behavior is established, maintained, and displayed (Glasser, 1998). Ford and Moore (2013) applied the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) perspective in examining motivation, as a result of teacher efficacy. Low motivation of African American males has been directly linked to teacher efficacy and classroom management. Teachers who embrace negative perceptions and prejudicial assumptions about African American males are less likely to present African American male students with opportunities that promote learning and emotional development (Ford & Monroe, 2013; Howard et al., 2012).

According to research conducted by Howard, Flennaugh, and Terry (2012), exposed hidden racism and negative stereotypical views of school personnel who serviced a group of African American students. Findings indicated that many of the staff members perceived their African American boys as being not only defiant, but disruptive, profane, and unintelligent, ultimately identifying them as being “unsalvageable” (Howard et al., 2012). Because of this, many of the staff members felt that these Black male students should not be given special access to programs that could possibly support their overall educational development (Howard et al., 2012). As a result of being exposed to this sort of practice within the educational environment, many African American male students have begun to feel discouraged and less motivated (Ford
and Monroe, 2013). In a study conducted by Mitchell and Stewart (2013), research revealed that African American students often perceived and internalized the perceptions of their teachers. African American males were found to have performed worse, both academically and emotionally in environments where they felt devalued or denigrated (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). Ford and Moore (2013) argued that low motivation is a result of the needs of a not being fulfilled. Relating this claim to choice theory, Glasser (1998) claimed that the lack of a person establishing meaningful relationships may negatively influence how he or she chooses to interact with others.

In alignment with the choice theory, Glasser (1998) argued that behavior is altered if one or more of an individual’s basic needs are not met. Several tenets coincided with the choice theory, which are reality and perception, total behavior, basic needs, comparing place, and the quality world. In this case, Ford and Moore (2013) claimed that low motivation is a result of the cultural, social, and academic needs of African American males, not being met. Supporting this claim, one could relate the quality world component of the choice theory to many of the social-emotional issues that occur within the classrooms of the modern society. Glasser (1998) stated that our behavior is shaped by the relationships we build with others (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). These relationships, regardless of how good or bad they are, play a significant role in we interact with others (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). This includes early academic relationships built with teachers. Glasser (1998) indicated that the ultimate goal of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) is to help individuals attain self-control and self-discipline, by understanding how internal and external factors influence human behavior (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016).
Similar to this belief, Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013) discussed teacher efficacy and classroom-management from the lens of the social learning theory (Bandura, 1961). Originated by Bandura (1961), the social learning theory claimed that behavior is a result of both internal and external factors (Banks et al., 2013). Internal factors would include self-efficacy and self-perception, while external factors include the surrounding environment and interactions among others within the immediate environment. This involves understanding human behavior through the reciprocal relationship among personal factors, external factors, and previous behaviors associated with the given situation or event. In agreement with Bandura (1961), Banks et al. (2013) claimed that the behavior of an individual results from his or her previous and current experiences, which in turn influence how he or she perceives social relationships with others.

As discussed throughout the research, there were various components and factors that educators must take into account when examining teacher efficacy and classroom management, in regards to educating African American males in grades PreK–2. While examining specific qualities through the lens of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), educators must understand that human behavior may be influenced by internal and external elements. As teachers, providing an educational experience that supports, sustains, and advances the social-emotional growth of African American males is an issue that needs to be addressed, not only on an individual level, but also on a national level as well (Dunkake & Schuurt, 2015).

**Review of Research Literature**

Much of the literature on the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) addressed the concept of behavior as it related to the choices that an individual makes. Bucher and Manning (2002) conducted a study that examined behaviors of middle school students within the classroom setting, as well as specific strategies implemented by their teachers. According
to this study, the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) claimed that humans can control their own behavior (Bucher & Manning, 2002). Glasser (1998) offered a plethora of suggestions on how teachers can provide emotional support within the classroom setting. Glasser (1998) claimed that teachers should focus on teaching students the importance of choices and responsibility. This included teaching students how to make better use of their total behavior, in an effort to meet the needs of their quality world (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016).

In doing so, teachers must investigate the needs of their students in order to discover which needs are being met. The intended goal within this theory is for students to take accountability for their actions (Bucher & Manning, 2002). Glasser’s (1998) theory can serve as a way to meet the social-emotional needs of learners within the classroom environment. In meeting the specific needs of students, Glasser (1998) claimed that the classroom behavior of students will improve (Bucher & Manning, 2002). The choice theory (Glasser, 1998) is grounded in the belief that human behavior is motivated by the meeting of what is known as the five essential needs, which are survival, power, freedom, fun, and love/belonging (Glasser, 2010).

Survival involved meeting the basic needs of water, food, shelter, safety and security (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). Power focused on the ability of an individual to make meaningful contributions toward a given goal (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). Meeting the need of fulfilling freedom allowed for one to choose his or her own direction in life/destiny (Glasser, 2010, Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). Fun referred to the need to laugh, play, and relaxes (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015, wglasser.com, 2016). The last need, which is often referred to as the core
need, is love, which has often been referred to as belonging (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). According to Glasser (1998), the health of a person is a reflection of how well his or her five basic needs have been met with the appropriate strategies (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016).

The choice theory (Glasser, 1998) explained the quality world as the way that an individual would like to meet his or her “ideal” needs (Glasser, 2010). This can be done by including elements such as people or events (Glasser, 2010). Total behavior was described as those things that humans do in order to meet their needs and their quality world; it is a way that humans choose to think (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). Total behavior involved four characteristics or choices. These components included actions, thoughts, feelings, and physiology (Glasser, 2010; Olutayo, 2012). Actions refer to what a person does to meet his or her quality world (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2010). The element of thought refers to the way in which a person thinks that drives them toward their quality world (Glasser, 2010). According to the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), the quality world motivates what a person does (Glasser, 2010). Glasser (1998) believed that elements of thoughts and actions are the most controllable components of the quality world (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com). Feelings are another element of total behavior. Feelings are influenced by how a person acts or thinks (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com). The last component is physiology, which refers to the physical state of a person (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). The physical state of a person depends on how he or she thinks, acts, and feels (Glasser, 2010). All of the physical state components work together to create total behavior, which in turn influences the quality world of a person.
According to Glasser’s (1998) theory, problems arise in human behavior when there is an unhealthy utilization of total behavior to meet the needs of the quality world (Glasser, 2010). Glasser (1998) claimed that the primary reason for a breakdown in the total behavior, thus influencing the quality world, involves the need of love and belonging (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Humans are social creatures. When the need of establishing relationships is not met, it negatively influences every other area of the total behavior, thus not allowing for the needs of the quality world to be met (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). As a result, a person is more likely to employ poor choices and/or strategies to meet his or her internal needs (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). In establishing relationships with others, according to the premise of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), we cannot control the behavior of another person (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007; Glasser, 2010). The only thing that we can do is offer information (Glasser, 2010). How and what information another person chooses to accept is out of our control (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007; Glasser, 2010). In an interview, Glasser (1998) stated, “Any attempt to control someone else’s behavior will harm the relationship between us and in doing so will harm our own mental health” (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Choice theory (Glasser, 1998) focuses on strategies to support the mental health in individuals. The emphasis is placed on relationship building, as oppose to an individual context (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007; wglassser.com, 2016). Understanding this, teachers can possibly support students by promoting healthy strategies to meet the needs of their quality world.

**Teacher bias, teacher choices, and personality.** The literature continued to reflect three factors that may influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when interacting with African American males within the classroom setting. The first claim was that teacher bias could
have an influence on the relationship between teacher efficacy and classroom management (Ford & Moore, 2013). Research supported that there is an unbalanced level of negative educational experiences that African American males encounter versus their Caucasian peers. African Americans are more likely to be perceived as less intelligent and having behavioral problems (Ford & Moore, 2013). As a result, these students are often excluded from gifted, advanced and highly-rigorous programs (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013).

Ford and Moore (2013) attributed this problem to the attitudes of educators about and toward the performance abilities of their students. These researchers claimed that many teachers often made assumptions about their students, based on personal experiences, stereotypes, and socio-economic status of their students. Supporting this claim, Anderson (2012) agreed with Fantuzzo et al. (2012) in stating that there is a distinct difference in the level of negative discrimination that Caucasian students face, versus their African American counterparts, within the educational realm. As a result, this not only influenced social development, but also affected these students within the wider society as well (Anderson, 2012). For African American students, individual strengths were overlooked due to assumptions made by teachers (Harradine et al., 2013). African American males are less likely to be referred to advance placement and honors classes (Ford & Moore, 2013). Ford (2010, 2013) reported data from the Office of Civil rights, that African American male students are almost 60% underrepresented in gifted programs.

Within their study, Howard et al. (2012) made reference to a case study related to stereotypes and the perceptions of teachers concerning the academic and behavior of their African American male students by a researcher named Ferguson (2001). Howard et al. (2012) indicated that according to Ferguson (2001), many of the staff members from an inner-city elementary school, located in the Midwestern region of the United States, expressed that “the
worse-behaved children in their school are African American and male, fight, eat candy, refuse to work, gamble, instigate, cut-class, and fondle girls (p. 90).” As a result, the teachers of these African American male students have referred to them as unsalvageable. After speaking with many of the African American students, Howard et al. (2012) reported that the findings of Ferguson (2001) contradicted those of the staff and school personnel. Ferguson (2001) stated that many of the African American male students “found it necessary to actively configure self, through two social identities, race and gender, to provide the social, psychic, and emotional resources for recouping a sense of self as competent and admirable” within an educational institution that has labeled them as being problems or failures (p. 97). Similar to that of Ferguson (2001), Howard et al. (2012) also conducted a case study that focused on how negative stereotypes and imagery of educators influence the developmental growth of African American males in both elementary and high school. The research of Ferguson (2001) and Howard et al. (2012) is essential to this study because of the strategies they either conducted or described in their studies, of gaining information through one-on-one interviews with the actual participants.

Examining this problem from the perspective of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), one could argue that practices such as these, increase the likelihood of one making negative choices, due to the lack of being able to establish relationships that support positive strategies in fulfilling the need of love and belonging. A national study conducted by the Schott Foundation for Public Education (2010) discovered that only 47% of African American males graduated from high school in 2008, and the Council of the Great City Schools (2010) study discovered that African American males over the age of eighteen accounted for about 5% of college enrollment, yet made up about 36% of the prison population in the United States (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). The findings from these studies were consistent with previously identified disparities mentioned
within the research that have exposed possible social conditions, which has affected and
influenced the under-achievement of African American male students (Mitchell & Stewart,
2013).

In agreement with this argument, Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (2015) discovered that
teacher assumptions and presuppositions about African American males not only impeded their
academic and behavioral functioning, but also negatively influenced their motivation to work
harder and strive to be successful within the school environment. A 12-week study conducted by
Graham et al. (2013) with a group of early elementary school students showed that the
perceptions of teachers about their students played a vital role in increasing or decreasing social
and motivational skills in the classroom setting. Those teachers who implemented classroom-
management strategies, which were tailored to meeting the needs of their students, saw an
increase in the positive social interaction among the African American males in the classroom.
Although one may argue that teacher assumptions and perceptions of their students may pose a
minimum influence on student learning, Glasser (1998) attested through his research that
because total behavior is comprised on the four elements, which are actions, thoughts, feelings,
and physiology, with actions and thoughts being the most dominant of the group, whatever a
person is thinking, his or her actions and feelings will follow, thus influencing their physical
state as well. In other words, if teachers hold to their negative perceptions of their students, these
assumptions will display themselves through their teaching practices, classroom-management
strategies, and their daily interaction with their students. In doing so, the need for individuals to
establish meaningful relationships may be negatively influenced.

Another study conducted by Bullock, Coplan, and Bosaki (2015) examined teacher
efficacy and its influence on classroom management in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom. The
researchers sought to discover if there was a predictive correlation among teacher personality, classroom management, self-efficacy, and teaching experience. The findings revealed that teachers who were perceived as efficacious had a more positive experience with their classroom-management strategies. Many of these teachers felt as though they were better prepared to handle classroom disruptions by intervening and redirecting negative behavior when necessary. Many of these teachers who exhibited these feelings had prior experience in working with younger students.

**Stereotypes.** According to the literature, many of the negative stereotypes and perceptions of educators resulted from various forms of racism. Caton’s (2012) study investigated how race and gender influenced African American students’ overall educational experiences both in and outside of the classroom setting. This study supported the argument that teacher bias and perceptual views influenced how the teachers within the study engaged with their students. Teachers who had less experience in working with African American students, or who seemed to have predetermined beliefs about the abilities of these students, were more likely to incorporate such feelings into their classroom management procedures and their teaching patterns (Caton, 2012). According to Monroe (2013), African American students were more likely to receive harsher punishments than their Caucasian counterparts. African American males appeared to receive more severe sanctions for less severe behavior (Monroe, 2013).

Howard, Flennaugh, and Terry (2012) further supported this argument by addressing this problem from a social imagery and pathological identity perspective. Social imagery is the perceptions and beliefs about a specific group of people (Howard et al., 2012). Howard, Flennaugh, and Terry (2012) indicated that the negative influence of social imagery has long plagued our country’s educational system, thus influencing how African American males view
themselves in relationship to their peers of other races. For years, African American males have been depicted as thugs, lazy, docile, and less intelligent when compared to their White peers (Howard et al., 2012). This type of thinking and social imagery has found its way into the classrooms, influencing how educators perceive students of color (Howard et al., 2012). “These characterizations have become entrenched in the public mind through pseudo-scientific research, literary sources of the day, cinematic outlets, and persistent caricatures” (Howard et al., 2012, p. 89). Along with this, many educational institutions have established discipline policies and procedures, which make it virtually impossible for African American males to be successful. “On the surface, disproportionate numbers can easily convey that there is something ‘wrong’ with African American males due to their inability to adapt and thrive academically and behaviorally in schools and society” (Howard et al., 2012, p. 88). This type of thinking continues to encourage negative perceptions about the potential of African American males.

An in-depth examination should be conducted in order to identify various structural conditions and provisions in schools that produce the negative images of African American males. Part of replacing negative images of African American males and restructuring a more positive type of social imagery is to examine the institutional practices, cultural routines, and perceptions of institutional practices, that create the conditions that may hinder the social-emotional growth and development of African American males (Howard et al., 2012). According to the 2009 and 2010 report of the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Schott Foundation and the Council of the Great City Schools, African American males are four times more likely to receive harsher punishment or discipline-related consequences than their Caucasian peers (Caton, 2012). Research showed that there are a disproportionate number of
African American males being punished, according to subjective school personnel judgment of what is perceived as appropriate and/or acceptable behavior within the school environment (Caton, 2012). Nationally, African American males are 2.9 times more likely to be identified as being mentally challenged than Caucasian males (Cokley et al., 2014).

According to Cokley et al., (2014), the perceptions of teachers and their reactions to the misbehavior of their students may be influenced by race (Cokely et al., 2014). Different perceptions of the same behavior can lead to racial inequalities within disciplinary procedures and practices (Cokely et al., 2014). Caucasian students who misbehave may be identified as making a mistake, while African American males may be identified as noncompliant, defiant, and oppositional (Cokely et al., 2014). Different perceptions of behavior can lead to inconsistent and unequal reactions from teachers (Cokely et al., 2014).

**Personality.** Bullock and Coplan (2015) discussed teacher personality as one of the factors that influences teacher efficacy and classroom practices. According to psychology research, “personality traits are aspects of individual difference in proclivities to exhibit enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors over time across situations” (Bullock et al., 2015, p. 175). Human personality can be divided into five categories, which are extroverted, conscientiousness, agreeable, open to experience, and neuroticism (Bullock et al., 2015). The type of personality that an individual displays can influence how he or she interacts with others. Personality traits can also influence how one perceives his or her surrounding environment and the actions of those who are within that environment. Depending on prior experiences and life events, teacher efficacy and classroom management can vary in its patterns and form. Extroverted people are perceived to be very social and friendly by others (Bullock et al., 2015). People who display conscientiousness are those who can resist spontaneous and/or brash
behavior (Bullock et al., 2015). Agreeable individuals exhibit a high level of care and empathy (Bullock et al., 2015). People who exhibit openness to experience are often very innovative and creative (Bullock et al., 2015). Lastly, people who display neuroticism are often depressed, unemotional, and negative (Bullock et al., 2015). Having an understanding of how personality may influence behavior and/or the characteristics of the quality world of an individual, may help educators meet specific needs of their students according to choice theory (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016).

As indicated in the choice theory, experiences help to shape total behavior. The two primary components of total behavior are actions and thoughts (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). One could argue that teacher personality can influence the experiences that students encounter within the educational setting. Depending on the personality of the teacher, the students may or may not be provided with the necessary and appropriate strategies to meet the needs of their quality worlds. As a result, individuals may begin to select inappropriate strategies to satisfy their quality worlds (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). This can be displayed through various forms such as stealing, having temper-tantrums, fighting, and other forms of maladaptive behavior (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016).

According to Ford and Moore, (2013) African American males are under-represented in areas such as gifted and advanced academic programs. Harradine et al., (2014) conducted research that examined the influence of the Teacher’s Observation of Potential in Students (TOPS) tool on the ability of educators to recognize the strengths of their students. This tool was used to examine at the academic abilities of children between the ages of five and nine. Teachers openly admitted that without the TOPS, they would have overlooked the academic potential of as many as 1500 of the African American students within their school population, of this number...
53% were African American males (Harradine et al., 2014). The findings from this study indicated that teacher perception, student behavior, and race might have been potential barriers that kept teachers from recognizing the potential strengths of their students (Harradine et al., 2013).

Once again, this process continues to foster the problem of African American students not having the opportunity to perform at their highest potential. When focusing on the word “urban,” many educators may connect this description to various other factors such as poverty, crime, and violence. These preconceived feelings and attitudes are often reflected in the way that educators build relationships with their students. Rather than putting forth every possible effort to ensure that students are emotionally successful within the classroom, teachers who are negatively influenced by stereotypes and other biases are less likely to establish supportive and trusting relationships with African American males. This includes, but is not limited to, providing counseling, tutoring, and various other forms of support as needed. Unfortunately, these perceptions include both low and high performing students (Banks et al., 2013). When these views are held among school personnel, it is difficult and nearly impossible for these specific students to muster up the commitment, energy, and resources to challenge those in authority and to make changes to succeed in school (Ford et al. 2013).

**Professional development and teacher efficacy.** Another area in which teacher efficacy can influence classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, focused on professional development. Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013), suggested that teacher training and professional development influenced how teachers implemented and organized their classroom strategies. These researchers implied that teachers with less training often felt unprepared as how to interact with students of color, as well as how to successfully manage a
classroom that is conducive to teaching and learning. New and inexperienced teachers were more likely to work in urban settings where there are a higher number of African American students. “To state the obvious, teacher experience, except in rare circumstances, adversely influenced the quality of instruction given to and received by African American males, contributing to their low achievement and underachievement” (Ford & Moore, 2013, p. 405). In examining the trends of teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and classroom management, there seems to be a sustained pattern. Teacher self-efficacy appears to increase during the pre-service years, suggesting that as student teachers acquire more experiences, teachers are becoming increasingly skilled and capable of handling teaching related tasks, which in turn influences their classroom management (Bullock et al., 2015).

Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013) argued that administrators must focus on providing teachers with the necessary training that will better prepare them to engage and interact with diverse groups of students. Connecting this concept with choice theory, Glasser (1998) stated that in order for teachers to establish meaningful relationships with their students, teachers must first understand the components that influence behavior, as well as become familiar with strategies that will fulfill the needs of their students according to choice theory. In doing so, teachers may be able to encourage students to make better choices within their total behavior, in meeting the needs of their quality world.

**Cultural diversity and awareness.** Teacher training must also focus on preparing teachers how to successfully and productively build positive relationships within a diverse class setting (Bullock et al., 2015; Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). The literature indicated that there is an obvious need for teachers to receive training that focuses on multicultural awareness (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). This included educating these individuals on how to manage a classroom that is
respectful and sensitive to the cultural qualities of the students they are teaching. Teachers may enter into the teaching profession with limited knowledge of how to create a productive classroom environment that is sensitive to the cultural needs of the learners who are there to receive a good education. Additionally, these teachers may lack the fundamental skill necessities that prepare them to address the psychological, cultural, cognitive and emotional qualities and needs of their students. African American homes embrace high levels of movement, and various sources of stimulation, such as music, dancing, and dialogue (Rouland et al., 2014). However, traditional American classrooms are characterized by limited movement and more structured learning (Rouland, et al., 2014, p. 186). “Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness are essential for recognizing and responding to student strengths” (Coleman, Harradine, & Winn, 2013). Understanding how cultural dynamics influence behavior may provide insight as how teachers can better support the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2.

Teachers possessing a working knowledge on how cultural dynamics influence behavior may be better able to adapt their classroom routines in a way that fosters emotional support and/or growth for their students. Addressing the specific needs of African American males, which supports the choice theory, teachers must also understand the cognitive development patterns of males, as well as outside influences, which may support or impede specific behavior (Harradine et al., 2013). Monroe (2013) believed that the over-representation of African American males referred for disciplinary measures is a result of teachers not understanding how to teach and form positive relationships with children of color.
Britt (2013), who examined teacher-student relationships and student achievement, suggested that the establishment of trust between teachers and students was essential to create and sustain learning communities.

Britt (2013) continued his discussion on how the establishment of productive teacher-student relationships is attained through the process of shared decision-making between both teachers and students. This concept is directly connected to the element of freedom, which is one of the core needs of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). According to Glasser (1998), freedom involves a person being afforded the opportunity to choose his or her own destiny, thus employs his right to shape the characteristics of his or her quality world (Glasser, 2010). This includes understanding and recognizing how external and internal factors influence behavior.

**Internal factors.** Internal factors such as self-efficacy and motivation are key factors that are connected to social-emotional development. Glasser (1998) stated that our actions, thoughts, feelings, and physical state are a reflection of how well the needs of our quality world are being met. According to the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), the elements that make up our quality world differs from person to person (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016). The quality world is the way in which we want to meet the five basic needs (Glasser, 2010). Because total behavior is the way in which we choose to think, teachers have a significant influence in how well these needs are being met. Within their research, Mitchell and Stewart (2013) indicated that when African American students internalized the negative assumptions and expectations of their teachers about their intellectual abilities and potential, it resulted in negative social classroom performance and educational outcomes (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). One may argue that motivation and efficacy comes from within, however, Glasser (1998) also counter-argued that relationships are not
established if one or more of the total behavior elements are not being met (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007; Glasser, 2010).

**External factors.** External elements such as socio-economic status, parental support, and a plethora of other issues can influence how a student performs in the classroom. Families who reside in poverty-stricken areas are often challenged meeting the immediate, or what Glasser (1998) referred to as the “survival” needs of their quality world. This included necessities such as food, shelter, safety, and the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015; Irvine, 2015). According to the choice theory, if any one of the five basic needs is not being met, it influences the total behavior of a person (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007; Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). Ford and Moore (2013) argued that urban school factors are also to blame for poor social-emotional outcomes for African American males. Keeping this in mind, educators should be cognizant of these factors when structuring and organizing their classroom management procedures.

**Psychological factors.** The psychological development of boys is also a concept worth noting. According to Piaget’s (1896) theory of cognitive development, children go through various cognitive phases in which they develop mentally. During these phases, children acquire elements of cognition such as understanding schemas, object permanence, symbolism, and abstract thinking. Depending on what stage the child is in, as it relates to the developmental phases, determines his or her ability to be able to rationalize behavior. This is especially important when considering and determining discipline procedures within the classroom environment. For years, African American students have continued to be negatively impacted by unequal discipline exclusionary procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, over-representation in special education, alternative learning placements and the removal from the
general education setting as a whole (Cokley et al., 2014). These methods are usually based on a universal strategic design that does not take into account the cultural, behavioral, and academic needs of African American males (Cokely et al., 2014).

Teachers should make an intentional effort in examining the causal factors of student behavior, rather than assuming that the child is purposely being defiant. “Notably, classroom contexts where African American children are not unduly penalized, but thrive socially and academically, are often characterized by an ethic of care, culturally-relevant disciplinary techniques, and firm expectations” (Monroe, 2013, p. 187). This means that educators should make an intentional effort to become knowledgeable of the cultural aspects of their students, which helps to foster the social-emotional growth within the classroom. Previous researchers have noted that teachers who are successful disciplinarians of Black children frequently share and/or deliberately build on the cultural backgrounds of the young people in their charge (Monroe, 2013).

This claim directly connected to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). According to Glasser (1998), one of the core elements that influence human behavior and the choices that people make involves the establishment of relationships. Glasser (1998) claimed that when meaningful relationships are not established, a person may seek negative or harmful ways to fulfill this need. This in turn involves total behavior, which is the way a person chooses to think. Problems arise when there is an unhealthy use of total behavior to meet the needs of the quality world of a person (Glasser, 2010; wglasser.com, 2016).

**Teacher and student resources.** Available resources for both teachers and students have influenced teacher efficacy and classroom management. Research depicted that school districts who afforded their teachers fewer resources were more likely to see a decrease in student
emotional development (Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Fantuzzo et al. (2012) argued that teacher efficacy and classroom management are influenced by the availability of teacher and student resources. These researchers claimed that educational institutions must understand the importance of allocating funds appropriately. Providing such resources allows for African American males to receive the necessary social-emotional support that they need in order to be successful within the classroom setting.

In order for teachers to productively educate students within the classroom, they need the appropriate tools and resources to promote change. This includes, but is not limited to, intervention programs, specialized services, technology, support group resources, and behavior charts.

It is important for school personnel and leadership to understand the value behind strategically providing resources according to the needs of their teacher and student populations. “Recognizing that place matters and that service agencies will be most effective if they direct their service dollars, expertise, and collaborative effort to areas with greatest needs” (Fantuzzo et al., 2012, p. 565). In doing so, agencies can form partnerships with schools in order to create innovative and creative ways to provide and sustain necessary resources within the educational setting.

**Self-esteem and self-efficacy.** When denied access to appropriate resources, many African American boys begin to display a lack of motivation. Teachers have the responsibility to provide a learning environment that accommodates student learning. Relating back to the “quality world” component in Glasser’s (1998) theory, behavior is a response to the building of relationships, life events, and nurturing experiences (wglasser.com, 2016). The research suggested that efficacious teachers incorporate nurturing strategies in their daily management
practices. If that is the case, then efficacious teachers of African American males in grades PreK–2 are more likely to provide the five basic needs that Glasser (1998) discussed within choice theory. This argument connected with Bandura’s (1961) social learning theory believes that motivation influences one’s ability to self-regulate, self-organize, and self-reflect. However, the social cognitive theory’s primary focus is more on external factors, as oppose to human behavior and choice.

All of these elements are a result of learning. This learning can be connected to both teachers and students. In regards to self-efficacy, when an individual feels more confident in his or her ability to successfully complete a task, she or he will more than likely continue to choose that specific task. In regard to the teaching and learning process, teachers who feel more confident in teaching African American males are more likely to display an attitude of persistence and/or determination (Bullock et al., 2015). If motivation, learning, and choice are a result of one’s experiences, relationships, and perceptions, then teachers have the ability to influence the internal factors through the educational encounters with their students.

Review of Methodological Literature

There are a variety of methods that were utilized within the literature. For example, using a qualitative approach, Rouland, Mathews, Byrd, Meyer, and Rowley (2014) explored the relationship among classroom management, classroom culture, and behavior outcomes in a group of African American elementary students. Rouland et al. (2014) and her fellow researchers explored the influence of teachers incorporating cultural aspects into their daily classroom routines. In this case, teachers from a school whose student population were predominately African American began to address learning and classroom management from a more cultural standpoint. Teachers attended professional development, which focused on cultural sensitivity
and diversity. Rouland et al. (2014) and her fellow researchers conducted interviews and observations to get a first-hand account on how well this practice worked within the classroom. Findings indicated that not only did teacher efficacy improve, but the social-emotional development of the students improved as well. Conducting observations and teacher interviews allowed for Rouland et al. (2014) and her peers to capture not only the authentic responses from the teachers involved, but the researchers were also able to witness actual experiences within the classroom as they evolved.

Using a qualitative research design, Dunkake and Schuchart (2015) explored patterns, themes, and relationships among stereotypes of social-classes, teacher characteristics, and disciplinary practices. Dunkake and Schuchart distributed to teachers various photographs of students participating in various forms of maladaptive behavior. From a given list, teachers were asked to use adjectives describing their behavior. From this, participants were given questionnaires based on social class, family characteristics, and stereotypes. Once the researchers collected the information, they analyzed and coded the data to identify specific patterns. Findings indicated that students, who appeared in the photographs as performing disciplinary actions, were assumed to be from the lower-class (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2014). Another significant finding revealed that children of color were also under-represented in being identified as a part of the upper socio-economic class (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2014).

Bullock et al., (2015) utilized a quantitative approach. The team of researchers used questionnaires and surveys that obtained information from their study, which focused on teacher efficacy and classroom management perceptions. This team of researchers examined if the years of experience influenced teacher efficacy from 395 Preschool and Kindergarten teachers. Findings indicated that teachers, who had more experience within classroom settings, were more
comfortable in working with children of color (Bullock et al., 2015). The teacher participants who had more experience also displayed a willingness to incorporate flexibility and the ability to adapt in regard to classroom management and discipline (Bullock et al., 2015). Bullock et al. (2015) coded the data from the surveys and separated them into categories according to various themes. Once themes were established, the team of researchers gathered numerical data by calculating and interpreting the confidence level of their information, describing inter-correlations and relationships between teacher experience and teacher efficacy (Bullock et al., 2015). This strategy was appropriate for their study because of the large number of participants who participated in their study. Gathering the information as such, allowed for Bullock et al. (2015) to more accurately analyze their data, thus adding validation to their research.

Other researchers such as Graham et al. (2014) utilized a mixed-method approach, resulted in findings that revealed an increase in social and motivational skills of a group of students whose teachers were more cooperative and academically persistent. This team of researchers conducted a 12-week, 32-lesson studies, which were aimed at providing a group of kindergarten through 5th-grade students with various intervention strategies that were intended to decrease their “assumed” aggressive behavior (Graham et al., 2014). Graham et al. (2014) closely examined motivation and its relationship to behavior and the choices that an individual makes. Data were collected from a series of trials, which included dependent and independent variables. Graham et al. (2014) analyzed the data into three parts. Students and teachers completed a pre-and post-test concerning various elements of their behavior. The second part of the study included a laboratory task, where reactions to simulated risk taking were implemented (Graham et al., 2014). The third part of the study included student grades and teacher comments that were being recorded and analyzed (Graham et al., 2014). In analyzing and examining the
methodological literature, researchers, such as those previously mentioned, utilized a wide variety of methods to collect various forms, levels, and types of information. When attempting to conduct a study with larger groups, surveys and questionnaires were utilized. When attempting to conduct a study that examined the relationship between two variables, quantitative research was implemented.

**Review of Methodological Issues**

Although there was a consistent pattern of methods utilized within the literature, there continues to be a gap in the research pertaining to the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management, when teaching African American males. For example, Rouland et al. (2014) discussed how teacher efficacy influences how teachers are able to productively engage with African American males within the classroom environment. Rouland et al., (2014) failed to provide detailed information about African American boys, in isolation from girls.

Other issues within the literature included various studies explaining concepts and how they related to several theoretical frameworks. However, the researchers failed to provide a rationale as to why they rejected the other frameworks. For example, Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013) discussed Bandura’s (1961) theory of social learning development. However, they failed to explain how this theory was relative to their research in a way in which the reader could openly identify it. In conducting qualitative research, such as a case study, it is important for the researcher to not just look for events that have happened, but to thoroughly analyze data in order to discover new information that has derived from the research itself. For example, Monroe (2012) conducted a case study about discipline and diversity practices of a school located in a high poverty area in the southern part of the United States. Here, Monroe (2012) selected a group of teachers according to recommendations from the principal of the school.
From this, each participant was interviewed, in an effort to collect information through individual experiences pertaining to the perceptions and interpretations of classroom discipline practices. Upon completion of this study, Monroe (2012) disclosed key factors that were believed to influence the teaching and learning process as a whole. First, results from the study revealed that teachers who interacted with other ethnic groups on a daily basis, were more likely to demonstrate flexibility within their classroom, as well as had put forth additional effort in incorporating a classroom atmosphere that embraced cultural awareness (Monroe, 2012). Secondly, Monroe (2012) indicated that “the findings bring new perspectives to equity debates regarding school discipline” (Monroe, 2012). Research from this study revealed that the percentage of disciplinary actions towards African American children were much higher than that of Caucasian students (Monroe, 2012). Through her research, Monroe (2012) continued to collect, analyze, and interpret the information from the participants, she was able to draw new conclusions from her research.

As a researcher, utilizing the appropriate research design was key to the validation process of the study. According to Creswell (2013) in conducting a case study, data collection was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why a particular event was occurring (p. 120). In doing so, researchers such as Monroe (2012), Ford and Moore (2013), Mitchell and Stewart (2013), Howard et al. (2012), Bullock and Coplan (2015), and Dunkake and Schuchart (2015) all conducted studies that supported findings similar to the data collected from this study. The indication of a good case study involves the researcher gathering data from various sources, in an effort to validate the research (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). Overall, the description of the methodological approaches that were utilized within these studies added to the richness validity, and detail of their research as a whole.
Synthesis of Research Findings

Throughout the literature, I discovered that the findings were either identical to one another, or closely similar in theory. Various authors such as Monroe (2012), Banks et al. (2013), Dunkake and Schuchart, (2015), Howard et al., (2012), and Bullock, Coplan, and Bosaki, (2015), supported the claim that stereotypes, biases, and personality of teachers and school-related personnel significantly influence teacher efficacy, which then influences classroom management. Howard et al. (2012) discussed this concept as social imagery. According to these researchers, social imagery has played a vital role in how teachers establish and maintain relationships with their students within the classroom setting. In addition to this, social imagery has strongly influenced and shaped how generations of teachers and school-related staff perceive the intellectual and social abilities of African American males within the educational setting (Howard et al., 2012). Some of the researchers investigated and examined the concepts of social imagery and stereotypes from various theoretical framework perspectives. Mitchell and Stewart (2013), and Caton (2012) explored teacher bias and perceptions from the lens of the critical race theory. Critical race theory (Bell, 1992) focused on components such as racism, sexism, and unfair treatment of a group of people (Caton, 2012). In this case, Caton (2012), Mitchell and Stewart (2013) investigated the achievement rate of African American males, in comparison to their Caucasian peers, when exploring disciplinary procedures within the school setting. Much of the research supported the claim that African American males were more likely to receive harsher punishments, which may lead to suspensions and expulsions, than their Caucasian peers (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). Caton (2012) further supported this theory by examining how African American males are perceived as being more defiant, lazy, and less intelligent than their
Caucasian peers. Due to excessive punitive disciplinary practices within educational institutions, the drop-out rate of African American males continues to increase (Caton, 2012).

Cokely et al. (2014), Bullock and Coplan (2015), Banks et al. (2013), and Rouland et al. (2014) claimed in their studies that professional development and teacher training has an influence on teacher efficacy and classroom management. Research from these studies indicated that teachers lack the necessary training to be able to understand and establish positive relationships with African American male students. Many teacher-training programs fail to provide teachers with the necessary multiculturalism training that is needed in the classroom setting (Cokley et al., 2014; Rouland et al., 2014). Payne (2005) stressed the importance of educators being able to examine and identify factors that may influence classroom management effectiveness, such as poverty and socio-economic status. Payne (2005) explained that in order for teachers to better educate African American children in the classroom setting, they must make an intentional effort to explore the individual identities of their students. Additionally, African American males, in particular, have specific needs that must be addressed. Due to the various barriers that have a negative influence on African American males in grades PreK–2, teachers must strive to look beyond the traditional educational structure, in an effort to explore and implement strategies that are beneficial to the social-emotional growth of African American males (Wynn, 2007).

Rouland et al. (2014) and Bullock et al. (2015) supported the argument that teacher experience within diverse and multi-cultural settings also have an influence on teacher efficacy and classroom management when teaching African American students. What may seem as offensive to one culture may be acceptable in another. Due to the fact that many educators are lacking the awareness of cultural attributes, more and more African American males are
perceived as defiant and aggressive (Monroe, 2013). Rouland et al. (2014) argued that in order to create a classroom that is sensitive to the cultural needs of students, teachers must make an intentional effort in becoming familiar with the cultural norms of the student population they are servicing. “African American homes tend to be characterized by high levels of movement, multiple and simultaneous sources of sensory stimulation and communalistic orientation that values group over individual effort” (Rouland et al., 2014, p. 186). American classrooms on the other hand are more structured and encourage limited movement. These settings also place more emphasis on the individual effort, versus the group effort (Rouland et al., 2014).

In terms of teacher efficacy, educators who have had previous experiences in working with diverse groups of students often felt more comfortable and confident in their ability to educate African American males (Breeman, Wubbles, van Lier, Verhulst, van der Ende, Maras, Hopman & Tick, 2014). On the other hand, novice and/ or inexperienced teachers possessed a sense of intimidation and uncertainty in their ability to relate to, as well as (effectively) meet the need of African American children (Breeman et al., 2014). Because relationships are important for the adjustment of children within the classroom setting, it is important for teachers to recognize their roles, not only as authority figures, but shared partners in facilitating positive interactions between themselves and their students (Breeman et al., 2014). Banks et al., (2013) called for the development of programs that support and promote teachers to acknowledge the cultural norms and gender-specific qualities and characteristics of African American children. Another factor that Cokely, (2014), and Maras et al., (2014) discussed was the availability of resources for both teachers and students.

In many urban and low-socio-economic school districts, African American males, as well as their teachers, lack the necessary resources to address specific social-emotional needs
(Cokley et al., 2014; Maras et al., 2014). Many students do not receive the appropriate support to assist with academic and social-emotional development (Cokely et al., 2014; Maras et al., 2014). In result, rather than diagnosing and addressing discipline problems correctly, African American males were often misdiagnosed as defiant, and/or possibly having a behavior disorder (Cokley et al., 2014). This perception leads to the students not receiving the appropriate support and help needed in order to thrive within the classroom (Cody, Smith, Beasley, Miller, & Hurst, 2014).

Additional research also suggested that African American males are more likely to be deprived of necessary resources (Cody et al., 2014). Teacher perception, personality, experience, or lack of experience, and level of professional knowledge, are all key components that influence this type of behavior (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015).

Similarities that existed within studies conducted by Caton (2012), Howard et al. (2012), Monroe (2012), and Cokely, Cody, Smith, Beasley, Miller, and Hurst (2014), highlighted that there is a common concern of racism, stereotypes, and bias, which have a negative influence on social-emotional growth of African American males. All of these researchers supported claims that suggested teacher efficacy is a major factor in an educator’s ability to successfully manage a classroom that is conducive to learning. Many of the researchers such as Banks et al. (2013), Monroe (2013), and Rouland et al. (2014) suggested that other factors such as teacher training and available resources contributed to teacher efficacy and classroom management. Teacher training included not only content-area knowledge, but professional development that placed a heavy emphasis on teachers having the ability to understand how cultural characteristics influenced the social-emotional growth of African American male students. By understanding how teacher efficacy influences classroom management, educators may be able to provide
educational experiences that allow for African American males to productively interact and participate within the classroom environment.

The differences that were indicated within the literature involved the theoretical perspectives authors expressed throughout their research. Mitchell and Stewart (2013) and Caton (2012) all addressed the influence of teacher efficacy and classroom management from the critical race theory perspective, which suggested that racism and sexism played a vital role in influencing how teachers interact with their students. Ford and Moore (2013) examined teacher efficacy from the perspective of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Their findings demonstrated that all behavior was intentional and that misbehavior and/or maladaptive behavior was a result of one or more basic needs of students not being met. Similar to this theory, Banks et al. (2013) applied a social cognitive perspective to their research. In their findings, they concluded that behavior was a result of both internal and external influences. The researchers argued that behavior was shaped according to an individual’s experiences with others and his or her immediate environment. The social cognitive theory is slightly different from the choice theory. The social learning theory (Bandura, 1961) focuses on both internal and external factors, whereas the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) focuses on the internal influences as primary factors of behavior.

**Critique of Previous Research**

In examining the research, there were common patterns that were evident across the literature. The majority of the research suggested that there was a correlation between teacher efficacy and classroom management, especially when teaching children of color. Recent research also indicated that there was a hidden component of negative influences, which influenced how teachers perceived, interacted with, and taught their students. Mitchell and Stewart (2013), Ford
and Moore (2012), and Howard et al. (2012) all directly stated that teacher efficacy was influenced by racism and sexism, while Dunkake and Schuchart (2015), Caton (2012), and Fantuzzo et al. (2012), indicated this perception through the suggestions within their studies.

Most of the researchers who presented their claims provided a variety of components that thoroughly supported their rationales. Wynn (2007) and Payne (2005) suggested that teachers lacked the ability to be able to relate and respond appropriately to their students. Both authors explored teacher efficacy by examining the actions of not only teachers, but parents, employers, policymakers, and other service providers. Emphasis was placed on a more community-based problem-solving approach, in addition to characteristics that were considered included poverty, parental involvement, and community mindsets and norms. On the other hand, Howard et al. (2012), Bullock et al. (2015), Graham et al. (2015), Ford and Moore (2013), and Mitchell and Stewart (2013), included the element of personality within their investigations. Many of these studies argued that the type of personality that an educator possessed had an influence on how well he or she established relationships with others.

The authors suggested that each personality trait altered or influenced a person’s social behavior in different ways. As a result, the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships varies depending upon the individual and his or her perception of the outside world.

Although the researchers provided solid and thorough information pertaining to teacher efficacy and classroom management, there were several gaps within the research, which the literature failed to address. Current research failed to address how and if professional development influenced teacher efficacy. Along with this, much of the research examined the academic growth and teacher efficacy of African American school-aged children, as opposed to narrowing the focus to African American males in grades PreK–2. In addition to these gaps
within the literature, the research examined very little pertaining to the availability of teacher and student resources. The research also included addressing specific strategies and/or techniques that teachers could implement within the classroom-setting. Implementation of such strategies and/or techniques will encourage African American males in grades PreK–2, to make better choices in satisfying the specific needs of their quality worlds. As a result of the multiple gaps found within the literature, the goal was to examine and investigate these areas, in an attempt to provide insight and knowledge that may have proven beneficial to educators when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Summary**

As previously mentioned, the elements within Chapter 2 were dedicated to discussing the research literature, as it related to teacher efficacy and classroom management. The conceptual framework on which this study focused was teacher efficacy and how it influenced classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Although there was literature that addressed teacher efficacy and classroom management, there continued to be a gap in the research that directly addressed how teacher efficacy influenced the classroom management of African American males in grades PreK–2. The theoretical framework, which was choice theory (Glasser, 1998), was relevant to this investigation because it examined teacher efficacy and behavior, in regards to meeting the needs of African American males in grades PreK–2. Due to the interests that included finding out how and why choices influence behavior, the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) was the most appropriate framework to center this study around. Most of the literature identified key influences, which influenced teacher efficacy and classroom management, when working with
students of color. These factors included teacher biases, stereotypes, personality, professional development, and resources.

As previously discussed within Chapter 3, the overall intended goal for this study was to determine how and if teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Although the literature addressed many of the characteristics that surrounded this study, a gap still remains in the research with its focus on teacher efficacy, classroom management, and African American males in grades PreK–2. The purpose of this research was to address the gap in understanding how to better support African American males socially and emotionally. Examining the experiences, behavior strategies, and methods of classroom management helped to address teacher efficacy, as it related to areas of need when preparing, training, and offering support to teachers who engage with African American males in grades PreK–2, within the classroom setting.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The methodology utilized within this investigation was an observational case study design, with a specific focus on analyzing information obtained through the comparative analysis format. This study examined the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management of African American males, in grades PreK–2. This included exploring the experiences of teachers through observations and interviews, in connection to their classroom strategies, as viewed from the lens of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Therefore, it was not known if and how classroom-management strategies would meet the social needs of African American elementary-school males, to promote their positive social and educational experiences.

According to Irvine (2015), Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, formally known as the control theory, claimed that all behavior has an intended purpose. Based on this understanding, educators must put forth an effort to identify specific needs of their students. According to Glasser (1998), there are five needs that an individual seeks to satisfy. The five needs are survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging (Irvine, 2015). Whether or not these needs are securely met may influence a person’s behavior. In fulfilling a desire and/or need, Glasser (1998) extended his theory to include other components such as the quality world, reality and perception, total behavior, and comparing place.

When a focus involves teacher efficacy and classroom management of African American males in grades PreK–2, through the perspective of choice theory, one can possibly gain insight on the best method to prioritize student needs in terms of which should first be addressed and/or satisfied. “Educational concerns for African American boys are associated with a host of additional negative statistics and societal fears about their increased likelihood of maladaptive developmental trajectories” (Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, & Chen, 2012, p. 560). Howard,
Flennaugh, and Terry (2012) revealed that African American males are often the target of negative stereotypes and social imagery, which influence their social-emotional development.

According to a study conducted by the National Education Association, African American males were less likely to be placed in gifted programs such as accelerated or honors courses, and more likely to be referred for special educational behavioral services (nea.org., 2011). Research conducted by the National Education Association claimed that this over-representation of African American males referred to special education programs, stemmed from the misconceptions of their educators (nea.org, 2011). Rather than making an intentional effort to address specific learning styles or taking the time to explore cultural dynamics that may influence classroom behavior, many teachers have distanced themselves from their students in an effort to avoid conflict (nea.org. 2011). In doing so, valuable educational time was not only lost, but undiscovered talents of African American males were overlooked and outweighed by negative perceptions, assumptions, and inaccurate presuppositions about their character and intellectual abilities.

Exploring classroom management and teaching strategies from a choice theory (Glasser, 1998) perspective can offer insight as how teachers may successfully meet the academic and emotional needs of these students, in particular, their African American male students. Because the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) offered insight about how one makes choices and interacts with the world around him or her, this study may have served as an opportunity to uncover new information that can assist teachers in supporting the social-emotional growth of their African American male students. Understanding how and why individuals make the choices they do can be paramount to determine how teachers perceive the actions of their students. Conversely, students whose needs are met within the quality world and total behavior components, according
to Glasser (1998) are more likely to establish meaningful relationships with the world around them (Glasser, 2010).

Based on this researcher’s findings from this study, the intent was to determine which strategies, if any, would prove beneficial in promoting a positive educational experience for African American elementary-school males in grades PreK–2, within the classroom setting. Breeman, Wubbles, Van Lier, Verhulst, Van der Ende, Maras, Hopman, and Tick (2015) claimed that positive teacher-student relationships play a vital role in the psychosocial adjustment of children within the educational setting. Findings from their study indicated that there was a relationship between teacher-student relationships and social development. This theory directly aligned with the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) in regards to fulfilling the element of making one feel as though he or she is part of a community.

Harradine, Ruth, Coleman, and Winn (2013) conducted a study that addressed the concept of responsiveness. Findings within their study indicated that a teacher’s responsiveness influenced the social-emotional and psychological growth of a child. Harradine et al. (2013) discovered that many teachers lack the knowledge and framework of how to respond appropriately to diverse cultures, as they relate to cultural awareness and sensitivity. When connecting this to choice theory, Glasser (1998) believed that every human has a choice, to Harradine et al. (2013) ideas often relate. What choice a person makes depends on his or her relationship and perception of the world around him or her. Depending on previous experiences, one may decide to make certain choices over others. With this in mind, Glasser (1998) claimed that all choices have an end result. In other words, every action has a reaction. Whatever the action or choice one selects, depends on the end result (Glasser, 2010). Understanding how the framework of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) connects with classroom management may
possibly serve as a viable resource in helping teachers to meet the needs of African American males. The key to increasing the likelihood that more African American males are successful within the academic setting lies not within the knowledge itself, but the ability to comprehend, analyze, and apply the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) to meet the needs of African American males.

**Research Questions**

While addressing the gap within the literature regarding teacher efficacy and its influence on African American males in grades PreK–2, an investigation was conducted with the teachers as the identified group. This researcher’s intentions was to gain an in-depth understanding, while drawing conclusions for the following research questions:

**Research question 1.** In what ways does understanding how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when educating African American males in grades PreK–2?

**Research question 2.** How does providing professional development to educators, addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, influence classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community?

**Purpose and Design of the Study**

Based on negative information that surrounds African American males in grades PreK–2 this specific group was chosen for this research study. Research has shown that students from ethnic minority groups are more likely to encounter harsher disciplinary punishments than students of other races (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015). There have been a growing number of
African American males in grades PreK-12 who have experienced social challenges (Howard et al., 2012). Cokely, Cody, Smith, Beasley, Miller, and Hurst (2014) believed that this was due to the racial disparities and how teachers perceived the academic abilities and behavior of African American students. When making a mistake, African Americans students are often perceived as “oppositional and defiant,” while their non-Black counterparts are perceived as “making a mistake and getting caught” (Cokely et al., 2014).

According to Cokely et al. (2014), educators are the key interventionists for their students. If teachers fail to accurately and adequately address their own biases toward African American male students, in terms of behavior and abilities, they risk the possibility of over-identifying these students as socially defiant and academically incapable (Cokely et al., 2014). As a result, African American preschool students are three-to-five times more likely to be suspended, expelled, or issued harsher disciplinary sanctions than students of other races (Cokely et al., 2014). These areas of deficiencies have been attributed to a long history of African American males being subjected to unjust, unfair, and inappropriate disciplinary procedures (Dunkake & Schuchart, 2015). Therefore, the goal of this study was to discover teaching and classroom-management strategies that aligned with the choice theory of supporting the needs of African American males in grades PreK–2 and their teachers, as well as addressing the students’ social-emotional deficiencies of freedom, survival, power, fun, and a sense of belonging to a community, so that there may be a positive influence on this outcome.

Conducting a case study with a focus on the comparative analysis format, has allowed an avenue for me to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why specific behaviors occur within a given setting. In this case, the data analysis was based on classroom observations and participant responses, both before and after teachers attended professional development based on
choice theory. It is important to note that observational data were collected once a week, for a period of six weeks, throughout the study. Observations lasted for a time-frame of 30 minutes each. Examining this research from a qualitative design, while specifically incorporating the case study method, was appropriate for this investigation because it supported the intended goal to collect, examine, and analyze information in order to draw research-based conclusions as to why African American male students in grades PreK–2 are continuing to encounter negative experiences within the educational setting. According to Nayab and Scheib (2011), comparative analysis can be used in a case study structure to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in a specific case. Constant comparison is defined and cited by Antony (2012), as:

> Categories arising from this method generally take two forms: those that are derived from the participants’ customs and language, and those that the researcher identifies as significant to the project’s focus-of-inquiry [sic]; the goal of the former “is to reconstruct the categories used by subjects to conceptualize their own experiences and world view,” the goal of the latter is to assist the researcher in developing theoretical insights into the social processes operative in the site under study; thus: “the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories” (Antony, 2012, p. 8.)

My study was examined through a single-case lens, drawing attention to one specific setting, which was the school/classroom environment. As researcher, classroom-management strategies were observed among 10 teacher-participants. Categories compared within this study included teachers’ responses. These responses were based on their perceptions and effectiveness of their overall classroom-management practices, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, prior to and after attending
professional development focusing on the total behavior and quality world components of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). The goal was to also elicit thick descriptions obtained by conducting one-on-one interviews with multiple participants, primarily focusing on interpretations, relationships, and patterns of behavior and strategies. Participants received professional development between the pre-and post-professional development interviews, specifically focusing on the total behavior and quality world components of Glasser’s (1998) choice theory. Observations of the study participants were also conducted, once a week, for six weeks, for a period of 30 minutes each. In doing so, this assisted me in drawing conclusions about the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, and to compare the results, using similarities and differences of their responses before and after having received professional development.

Breeman et al. (2013) conducted a study that examined teacher efficacy and social interactions within the classroom environment. Findings indicated that teachers, who exhibited confidence, flexibility, and cultural awareness, reported having fewer behavioral problems within their classrooms. Findings also indicated a link between positive teacher-student relationships and students’ social-emotional development. Teachers who developed positive relationships with their students reported higher levels of well-being and pro-social behavior among their students (Breeman et al., 2013). Supporting the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), this study drew special attention to the belief that every human has a choice to respond to different demands. According to the choice theory (1998), if humans react to specific demands based on their internal needs being met, as well as through the relationships that they build with others, then educators must make an intentional effort to set aside their personal assumptions.
stereotypical views, and presuppositions; in doing so, this will fill the emotional void that many African American boys possess. Therefore, the goal of the study was to examine from a choice theory (Glasser, 1998) perspective if there was a comparison or connection between teacher efficacy and classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

According to Creswell (2003), a case study captures the interpretation of events from multiple sources. Case studies can be considered a bounded system, which means that they are bounded by time and space (Creswell, 2003). A case study provides an in-depth understanding of the occurrence of an event, through the interpretations of either a single participant, or a small group of participants. Therefore, the focus is on the occurrence of the event and not on the participants themselves. Information that was collected was described by the participants within the investigation. The case study design allowed for me as a researcher to identify the occurrence of an issue, concern, or event, as described by participants in a study. Studying the interpretations of the participants enabled me to collect, examine, and analyze information in order to understand the development of a specific event (Creswell, 2013, p. 106). Upon completion of this study, the ultimate goal was to lift new information from the analysis of the research, as well as compare the similarities and differences of the teachers’ responses, in an effort to discover productive ways in which teachers can better support the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Research Population and Sampling Method**

The participants of this study were limited to 10 elementary-school teachers, who instructed African American male students in grades PreK–2. The school district selected was located in a small suburb on the outskirts of a large major city within the midwestern United States. All participants had at least five or more African American males in their classes with
whom they interacted and provided academic instruction on a daily basis. Participants were
selected on a volunteer basis. There was no release of any of the identities and/or personal
information of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to identify each participant.

The information collected from the interviews was for data-collection purposes only. All
participants were asked to sign an agreement in which they understood that this investigation was
for research purposes only and that they could have withdrawn from the study at any time, for
any reason, without becoming subjected to any form of consequence.

Instrumentation

Pre-and post-professional development interviews were conducted with 10 participants.
Once the 45-minute audio-recorded, pre-professional development interviews were conducted,
participants received professional development based on Glasser’s choice theory (1998),
specifically focusing on classroom management through the lens of total behavior and the quality
world. This training not only identified specific needs of African American male students in
grades PreK–2, but also provided the teachers of these students with viable resources and/or
strategies that helped them to fully support the social and emotional needs of their African
American male students. Immediately following the professional development, teachers were
expected to implement various social and emotional classroom-management strategies,
suggested by Glasser (1998) throughout the training. Six 30-minute observations were
conducted, beginning one week after the teachers received professional development. One week
following the completion of the weekly observations, one 45-minute post-professional
development interview was conducted with each participant, in order to collect information and
draw conclusions about teacher efficacy and classroom management as they related to teaching
African American males in grades PreK–2, as well as components within the professional development.

Throughout the duration of this study, information collected was based on weekly observations and teacher interview responses. On a weekly basis, I used a brief checklist during the classroom observations to record and track teachers’ progress and/or challenges they faced regarding implementation of various strategies that were presented in the professional development. Information obtained was analyzed and coded in an effort to discover patterns, similarities, and differences among classroom-management strategies, as well as the participants’ perceptions of the social-emotional abilities of their students. In addition to this, differences in the skills of the teachers after attending the professional development was recorded and analyzed, based on their weekly notes from the direct observations of the teachers. The interviews consisted of multiple open-ended questions that captured the authentic emotions and responses of the participants, specifically focusing on teacher efficacy, personal biases, and their familiarity and perceptions of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Gaining authentic and “truthful” responses from each participant was essential in obtaining a clear understanding of why particular events occur within the classroom environment.

In alignment with the case study design, pre-and post-professional development interviews were conducted. Professional development was also provided, focusing on Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, after the pre-professional development interviews, and before the post-professional development interviews. Observations of teachers were conducted on a weekly basis for 30-minute periods, throughout the implementation process, which occurred after they received professional development based on choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Upon completion of the post-professional development interviews, information was organized and analyzed to
discover new knowledge that may prove beneficial to teachers who instruct African American males in grades PreK–2. Concentration of the professional development was centered on the interpretations of the effectiveness of the choice theory within the classroom setting, as described by the participants. From this, coded and analyzed information was collected from the participants’ responses as well as from the observations of the participants, in an effort to discover new facts from the research.

All interviews were conducted within a public-school setting. In no way were responses solicited from students. All communication was solely solicited from the volunteer adult participants, who were the teachers. Information from the teacher interviews were recorded as field notes. Data collection focused on the teachers’ responses about their classroom-management strategies and their interpretations of their interactions with students their African American male students. All of the various methods in which information was collected, served as a purpose to triangulate the results and findings.

Data Collection

Collection of data occurred during the fall semester of 2016. Within this study, pre-and post-professional development interviews were conducted with classroom teachers, however, before and after offering them professional development. Interviews occurred, while simultaneously soliciting information about teachers’ perceptions of how the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) influenced their classroom-management strategies and efficacy, when interacting and teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. In an effort to obtain authentic information pertaining to the similarities and differences of the responses among the teachers, six weekly observations of 30 minutes each were also conducted after the participants received professional development. The information collected from these interviews were recorded,
analyzed, and coded, in an effort to discover common themes and trends among the participants, both prior to and after the professional development. Similarities and differences between the participants’ strategies and responses were examined and analyzed.

The collection of information was performed through personal interviews, this method of data collection provided additional information. Conclusions were drawn from the participants’ interpretations of the effectiveness of their classroom-management strategies, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

The information collected from the participant responses rendered that teachers’ awareness concerning their perceptions of the social and emotional needs of their African American male students included their own insights as educators. Teacher insights revealed how their individual levels of efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American male students in grades PreK–2. In doing so, this added validity to the investigation because information was attained from direct interviews and observations.

According to Yin (2003), a case study model is appropriate when one wishes to explore the how and why components of a phenomenon. Based on efforts to obtain an in-depth understanding how and why particular or particular events occurred, including various conditions that influenced the studied phenomenon, a case study model was the most appropriate method for this study. From this, the ultimate goal was to discover new information from the research. This information was based on the participants’ responses of comparing the similarities and differences of management techniques and interview responses. In doing so, this information also assisted teachers in supporting not only the five basic needs of African American males in grades PreK–2, according to the choice theory, but their social and emotional needs as a whole. In this case, the goal was to determine how teachers could better meet the social-emotional needs
of African American males in grades PreK–2, through classroom-management strategies. By providing teachers with professional development based on the information that was gathered from the pre-professional development interviews, the main goal was to also understand which contextual conditions influenced teacher classroom management, as well as discover successful ways to help teachers support African American males within the educational environment, according to the choice theory (Glasser, 1998).

In an attempt to attain the goal of achieving to better understand, discover, and answer the question of how teachers could better serve and support African American males in grades PreK–2, the aforementioned essential components were found to have triangulated with one another, as well as with the research questions. Due to the lack of realization of how or if teacher efficacy influenced classroom management in meeting the social needs of African American elementary-school males, promote their positive and educational experiences, an observational case study was conducted with the purpose to understand how this phenomenon and its surrounding conditions, were relevant to the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as well as the teaching and learning process as a whole.

Identification of Attributes

There were several elements that were considered when examining the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Aspects included teacher stereotypes, teacher bias, personality, professional development, socio-economic status, cultural norms, and availability of resources for teachers and students. All of these factors were taken into account when examining which teaching and classroom-management strategies were more beneficial when teaching African American males. The literature I have examined thus far about the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) supported the
view that an individual’s behavior can be influenced by not only his or her immediate environment, but the relationships that are established with others (Irvine, 2015).

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Interviews were conducted with 10 participants. The interview process consisted of two 45-minute interviews. Each participant participated in a pre-and post-professional-development interview, as well as attended one 90-minute professional-development class throughout the process. These interviews were audio-recorded. Six 30-minute weekly observations were also conducted, one week following the professional development. Information obtained was analyzed and coded in an effort to discover patterns, similarities, and differences among the perceptions of the participants, both before and after the professional-development interviews. The interviews consisted of multiple open-ended questions, in an effort to obtain the authentic emotions and responses of the participants. Gaining authentic and truthful responses from each participant was essential in obtaining a clear understanding of how teacher efficacy influences classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

Professional development focused specifically on the total behavior and quality world attributes of Glasser’s (1998) choice theory, as well as identifying the specific needs of African American male students. The professional development lasted for approximately 90 minutes. Throughout the professional development, teachers were introduced to Glasser’s (1998) theory, as well as various research-based, classroom-management strategies, which may have proven beneficial within the classroom setting when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Teachers also had the opportunity to collaborate with other study participants, in an effort to share successes and/or challenges pertaining to classroom management, which they have experienced when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. This was important
because it created a dialogue among the various grade-level teachers, which gave insight as to the developmental expectations of behavior, as it related to age and grade progression, as well as similarities and differences in perceptions of classroom-management strategies. One week following the professional development, 30-minute weekly observations were conducted for a period of six weeks, during the implementation process. Once the final weekly observation was completed, post professional-development interviews were conducted within one week of teachers’ completing the implementation process.

The information collected was coded according to categories. Documented notes from interviews with teacher participants was examined and analyzed according to grade-level groups. After the study conclusions, this researcher coded themes according to categories that reflected the participants’ responses. Teacher group one consisted of grades PreK and Kindergarten teachers. Teacher group two consisted of 1st-grade teachers. Teacher group three consisted of second grade teachers. Three to four teachers from each group were interviewed twice. Data from the observation checklist and/or field notes were included in the discussion of this study, in addition to teacher responses. The information collected was examined, coded, and analyzed, in order to discover and determine specific patterns and/or themes. By conducting the pre-and post-professional-development interviews, as well as providing professional development during the process, the information was analyzed with the hopes of uncovering similarities and differences within classroom-management strategies of the teacher participants.

Professional development. The central focus of the professional development presented in this study was choice theory (Glasser, 1998), who believed that all humans have five basic needs that must be met in order for them to thrive and develop emotionally. These needs included safety, power, freedom, fun, and love. Choice theory is grounded on the belief that all
behavior is chosen, all we can do is behave, and all behavior is total behavior. Glasser (1998) asserts that a person cannot control the actions of another person. According to choice theory, a person can only provide someone with information. This includes, but is not limited to providing an individual with information of how to making safe choices to meet his or her quality world.

Figure 1. This figure illustrates the 3 axioms of choice theory. Information presented in the figure was adapted from Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom, by W Glasser, 1998, p. 25.

The professional development was presented to the 10 teacher-volunteers who participated in this study. The professional development was conducted in a classroom within the school district where the investigation took place. The 90-minute professional development was separated into two parts. The first part of the professional development information about Glasser was introduced as well as the key elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), which are the quality world and total behavior. Within this section, both elements pertaining to Glasser were presented one at a time to the participants. One reason for this was to provide an in-depth explanation of individual characteristics on Glasser’s theory, as well as to demonstrate its relevance and overall connection to how behavior is developed, according to Glasser. The
second reason was to draw attention to how understanding children’s behavior development could influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, by providing teachers with possible tools that may help them to meet the social and emotional needs of their African American male students. Also included within this section, were the identification of the social and emotional needs of African American males in grades PreK–2, according to current research. In addition to this, classroom-management strategies were provided. Glasser suggested such strategies that teachers might use, in order to assist them in meeting the emotional needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2.

Examples of classroom-management theories included practices such as minimizing coercion, self-evaluation, and focusing on quality. Glasser (1998) argued that teachers should promote productive behavior by focusing more on building positive relationships with their students, rather than making their students behave according to specified demands and expectations. Self-evaluation, which Glasser (1998) claimed is the cornerstone of choice theory, involved teachers encouraging their students to take ownership of their behavior, decisions, and learning. Glasser (1998) also insisted that teachers focusing on the quality of their students’ work, placed emphasis on deep and critical learning, which encouraged students to take responsibility and ownership of their academic, social and emotional development.

The second part of the professional development allowed for the participants to work within their teacher groups, in order to share ideas, while creating a list of strategies and methods that can be used in the classroom to assist teachers in meeting the needs of the quality worlds of their African American male students. For example, during the second part of the professional development, all teachers in group 1 worked together; all of the teachers in group 2 worked together; and all of the teachers in group 3 worked together. The rationale behind this strategy
was to put teacher participants together based on the grade level taught. The idea was to capture the similarities and differences of ideas and classroom-management strategies, based on the needs of the teachers who taught African American male students in grades PreK–2.

In this section of the professional development, utilizing chart paper and markers, teachers worked in their groups, incorporating information acquired from the professional development, to create written lists of five strategies that may help them in supporting the social and emotional development of their African American male students. At the end of the professional development, each participant group shared and discussed with the entire study group, their collective list of strategies and methods, which may assist in helping them as educators, to support the social and emotional needs of their students, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Immediately following the group presentations, participants were able to ask questions and/or offer comments to the self as the lead investigator, or to other study participants as a whole. In doing so, participants were able to not only share ideas about their experiences and/or newly acquired knowledge pertaining to the investigation, they were also able to ask questions in order to receive clarity on concepts they may not have understood.

**Part one.**

**Core concepts.** Glasser’s theory (1998) was introduced at the beginning of the professional development, including its founder, who believed that all humans were motivated by five basic needs. An explanation was included on why these basic needs include survival, power, freedom, fun, and love and belonging. Following this introduction, detailed explanations and definitions of characteristics were provided for each of the five basic needs. For example, survival was defined as those qualities that a person may need in order to live and thrive physically, such as shelter, security, food, and water. Power was defined as the need for one to
feel as though he or she can contribute to a purpose, or make a meaningful contribution to a greater cause. Freedom was defined as the need for one to choose his or her own destiny. Fun was defined as the need for one to laugh and play. Love and belonging were defined as the need for one to be connected to a community. Participants were given explanations on why a person’s health is a reflection of how well his or her needs are being met using the appropriate strategies according to Glasser (1998).

Figure 2. This figure illustrates the 5 basic needs of choice theory. Information presented in this figure was adapted from Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom, by W Glasser, p. 44.

Quality world. The participants were informed that, according to Glasser (1998), the quality world consists of how a person would like to meet his or her basic needs. This includes factors such as interactions with people, activities, events, and elements that a person would like to include in meeting his or her basic needs. The quality world consists of those attributes that are important to a person, which help to shape how he or she views the world around him or her. People can be referred to as those individuals who play a significant role in an individual’s life.
This can include parents and/or other relatives, friends, or acquaintances. Activities can be considered as those endeavors and/or pastimes that a person may participate in. Events can be referred to as occasions, affairs, or incidents a person may experience (wglasser.com, 2016). Elements can be perceived as those foundations that influence how a person views the world around him or her (wglasser.com, 2016). The quality world consists of visualizations that a person forms in his or her mind about a particular concept. In some cases, people form pictures in their mind (quality world), that are reckless, negligent, and unhealthy. For example, a person who only feels a sense of power when he or she physically hurts another person, or a person who feels a sense of freedom when he or she is in control of others and their actions, have developed unhealthy quality world pictures. As a result, this unhealthy quality world impacts how he or she interacts and establishes relationships with others within his or her environment (Glasser, 2010).

Total behavior. According to Glasser (1998), a person’s total behavior is a collection of what a person does to meet his or her needs and quality world. The participants were informed that total behavior consists of four areas, which are actions, thoughts, feelings, and physical state. Thereafter, each component was defined. For example, actions referred to a person choosing what to do as he or she met the needs of his or her quality world (wglasser.com, 2016). Therefore, a person’s quality world motivates what he or she does. Thoughts are considered the way a person thinks, which determines how he or she reaches his or her quality world (wglasser.com, 2016). Glasser (1998) believed that a person’s thoughts and actions are the most controllable elements of his or her quality world. According to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), a person can choose his or her thoughts and actions. However, other elements such as feelings and physical state or “physiology,” are characteristics that are influenced by a person’s actions (wglasser.com, 2016). The comparison of the four components of total behavior to four wheels...
on a skateboard was the attempt to provide the participants with a better understanding of Glasser’s Total Behavior theory. In order for a skateboard to operate appropriately, all four wheels must be going in the same direction. Just as the four wheels on a skateboard, all components within the structure of total behavior are meaningful and must be actively involved, in order for a person’s behavior to develop appropriately.

**Figure 3.** This figure illustrates the four characteristics of total behavior. Information presented in this figure was adapted from *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*, by W Glasser, 1998, p. 62.

**Total behavior-problems.** Because total behavior involves the way we choose to act, think, feel, and a person’s overall physical state, it was important for me to explain the negative possibilities when there is a breakdown or lack of one or more of the components within the total behavior element. Problems may arise when there is an unhealthy use of total behavior, in an effort of meeting the needs of a person’s quality world (Glasser, 2016). According to Glasser (2010), the need for love and belonging is one of the most influential characteristics that many
people often lack in being fulfilled. Glasser (1998) stated that when the need of love and belonging is not met, relationships are not established. When this occurs, it creates problems in every other area of the total behavior “realm” (wglasser.com, 2016). As a result, a person may be encouraged to make poor choices or employ poor strategies to meet this need (wglasser.com, 2016). In addition, it was explained to the participants, that according to Glasser, when a person’s thoughts and actions are not steering them in the right direction, it negatively impacts his or her feelings and physical state (wglasser.com, 2016).

**Suggestions for teachers.** According to Glasser (2010), teachers should focus on teaching students the importance of responsibility and their choices. Glasser also suggested that educators should teach students how to make better use of their total behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, students being taught how to recognize their responsibilities, as it relates to their total behavior. In addition to this, Glasser insisted that students also be taught how to appropriately use the elements within their total behavior to assist them in achieving their quality world. Glasser strongly argued that teachers should focus on being managers of their classroom. In doing so, the central focus should be on teaching students to feel better about them, by educating them on how to make better choices, by taking responsibility for their actions and thoughts.

Next, Glasser’s (1998) indications of characteristics were reviewed to illustrate that choice theory classrooms should include within their daily management routines. This includes minimizing coercion, focus on quality, and self-evaluation. Glasser, claimed that these characteristics are essential in helping to address what teachers can do to meet the needs of the quality worlds of their students. Below is a detailed explanation of Glasser’s ideas:
Common Characteristics of Choice Theory Classrooms

| Coercion is minimized. Rather than trying to "make" students behave by using rewards and punishments, teachers build positive relationships with their students, managing them without coercion. (Understanding.com, 2011) | Focus on quality. Teachers expect mastery of concepts and encourage students to re-take tests and continue to work on assignments until they have demonstrated competence or quality. The emphasis is on deep learning demonstrated through the ability to apply what has been learned. (Understanding.com, 2011) | Self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is a cornerstone of Choice Theory. Given helpful information (rubrics, models, exemplars, etc.) students take on greater ownership of their learning by evaluating their own performance routinely. Encouraging students to self-evaluate promotes responsibility and helps students pursue goals and become skilled decision-makers because they are more actively involved in their education. (Understanding.com, 2011) |

Figure 4: This figure illustrates the common characteristics of choice theory classrooms.

Information presented in this figure was adapted from *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*, by W Glasser, p. 234.

In addition to this, Glasser suggested that teachers also incorporate a series of sub-categories into their daily management routines. The four sub-categories address the following questions: A) Wants—What are the primary wants and needs of the students? B) Doing—What are the students doing to achieve their quality worlds? C) Evaluation—What are the results of the students’ total behavior? And D) Planning—Create a plan to implement alternative/healthy behaviors to achieve quality worlds. Does the plan support intended goal?

**Part two-group activity.** As previously stated, the second part of the professional development included the participants working in teams according to their grade levels/participant groups. In these groups, participants were asked to reflect on the material that was presented in the professional development. As a team, while incorporating concepts from the professional development into their responses, participants were then asked to develop five
strategies that teachers can use within the classroom to assist with supporting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students. Teachers were given 20 minutes to complete this activity.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

This case study had several limitations. First, all of the participants were teachers of students in grades PreK–2, as opposed to teaching high school or college students. This was considered a limitation because of types of classroom-management strategies the participants may use, based on the cognitive levels and developmental abilities of the student population they were servicing. Second, the number of participants within this study was limited to 10 teachers of these students. As a result, the findings in this study were also limited due to the small number of participants. Next, the study population solely focused on teachers of African American males, as opposed to females. Further research could be conducted to determine if there are similar results, regarding teacher efficacy and classroom management, as it pertains to teaching African American females in grades PreK–2.

Although the study population solely focused on African American males, all of the classes consisted of other races and genders as well. As a result, the intended goal was to seek information from teachers’ interactions with the African American male population only.

Teacher A had 15 students (six African American males, nine other). Teacher B had 17 students (seven African American males, 10 other). Teacher C had 15 students, (five African American males, ten other). Teacher D had 20 students (nine African American males, 11 other). Teacher E had 18 students (six African American males, 12 other). Teacher F had 18 students (seven African American males, 11 other). Teacher G had 15 students (eight African American males, seven other). Teacher H had 19 students (eight African American males, 11 other). Teacher I had
21 students (seven African American males, 14 other). Teacher J had 20 students (ten African American males, ten as other).

Another limitation included the personal bias in regards to classroom behavior, management, and teacher efficacy. Due to harboring strong opinions about some of the negative characteristics that teachers exhibited, by assuming the position as researcher, the challenge to suppress certain opinions and strong feelings presented itself. As an African American, the limitation which may have existed centered on the possessing a measurable amount of prior first-hand knowledge and being more familiar with cultural routines and/or patterns of behavior among the African American race, than some of the participants involved.

Another limitation included the element in which no children were interviewed. All of the data and findings were those of the teachers. Therefore, data were drawn from teacher interviews and not the students themselves. Further research could be conducted to incorporate students’ perceptions concerning the effectiveness of their teachers’ classroom-management strategies, in fully meeting their social and emotional needs as perceived through choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Last, a final limitation within this study involved the professional development. Because participants participated in only a single 90-minute professional development, one could argue that findings and/or results may have differed if the participants were provided with additional or multiple professional-development sessions. Due to the short time frame concerning the professional development and implementation process, this provided only a snapshot and not a total picture of the connections among the professional development, teacher efficacy, and classroom-management practices. More time would yield deeper results.

Finally, although Glasser’s theory could apply to all students, regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic background, for the purpose of this study, Glasser’s (1998) theory applied
solely to the African American male population. The study was delimited to classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American male students in grades PreK–2. Therefore, results and conclusions were not extended beyond classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American males in grades PreK–2.

The study was delimited to classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American male students in grades PreK–2, in a mid-western state in the United States. Therefore, results and conclusions were not extended beyond classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American males in grades PreK–2. The conditions and circumstances that surrounded were chosen for the study due to the disproportionate amount of African American males depicted as having more problems in school as it relates to academic and social-emotional development. As a result, teachers may be struggling on a daily basis to determine how to address the needs of African American males in grades PreK–2. Evidence reflects that some teachers experience a daily struggle to determine how to best address the needs of African American males in grades PreK–2.

Validation

In an attempt to obtain valid information, all information was recorded immediately, as it occurred to refrain from making subjective comments. During this study, an analysis of teacher responses regarding their interactions with their students, the classroom-management techniques of each teacher, teacher reactions to the behavior of their students, and the teachers’ overall expectations of their students. In addition to concentration paid towards the intentional teacher statements on how they accommodated their teaching and behavior strategies, in order to meet the social-emotional needs of their African American male students.
Credibility. Throughout this process, participants were expected to produce truthful and accurate responses. In addition to this, it was also expected that all participants were to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. As a researcher, strict adherence was made towards recording, examining, and analyzing data from an objective and non-biased viewpoint. This included being cognizant, conscious, and aware of not letting the personal opinions influence this study in any way, shape, or form. In doing so, reflexivity was continuously applied within the process, in order to maintain an objective point of view throughout the investigation.

Dependability. All of the information gathered through interviews and field notes were solely used to explain and discuss why a particular phenomenon occurred. The findings and information from this study were compared to current research about the topic. Following this protocol and set of procedures helped to not only triangulate information gathered, but also helped to control researcher bias, thus protecting the validity and dependability of the study as a whole. Information collected was obtained directly from the study participants’ pre-and post-professional development responses, as well as from the observations of the teachers’ implementation of various strategies from the professional development into their daily management routines.

Expected Findings

Throughout this investigation, the expectations were to discover not only the identified needs of African American male students, but also which teaching strategies proved themselves successful and beneficial in meeting and supporting the social-emotional needs of African American males in grades PreK–2. This meant understanding how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when addressing the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging of African American boys in grades PreK–2, as well as understanding how to fulfill
these needs by providing professional development to teachers who work with African American males in grades PreK–2. Additionally, the anticipation existed to have discovered new information of how teacher personality and bias influenced classroom discipline procedures and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community.

An extension to the aforementioned expectations, there was a level of optimism to reveal how other influences such as teachers’ cultural awareness and motivation may have influenced how a classroom is managed, as well as to what extent was there a need to incorporate fun and freedom within an educational setting, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Lastly, there was great anticipation to learn how the availability of educational resources that provide educators with specific tools focusing on teaching materials and social-emotional learning programs tailored to the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), influenced the ability of teachers supporting the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to establish positive relationships with the world around them. Assuming that all teacher participants acted in an ethical and professional manner, existed an expectation to uncover hidden biases as well as discover the specific needs of teachers who work with African American males in grades PreK–2.

These findings influenced current literature by providing a more in-depth insight of how to better support teachers of African American males, in regards to their social-emotional needs. Because most of the current literature focused on African American males in high school, this research has shed insight of how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management within the elementary school setting, when incorporating the quality world and total behavior elements of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998).
**Ethical Issues of the Study**

**Conflict of interest.** In an effort to address and reduce the influence of which a conflict of interest may have on the study, none of the participants were the current first-year mentees within our district teacher mentee program. In addition to this, none of the participants were the immediate supervisors or administrators. As a result, there were no financial or personal obligations that were tied to this study or to the participants who were involved. All participants were informed that his or her willingness to participate in this study was done on a voluntary basis.

**Researcher’s position.** As the principal investigator throughout the study, I conducted all pre-and post-professional development interviews, as well as delivered professional development to the participants involved. In addition to this, teachers were observed in an effort to record similarities and differences, as it pertained to their interview responses, both before and after the professional development, as well as among their classroom-management practices as a whole. To secure the protection of the participants, confidentiality guidelines were strictly followed, as a requirement of the Institutional Review Board of Concordia University-Portland. In doing so, the following procedures were followed in an effort to protect the privacy of all study participants.

Participants in this study were recruited on a volunteer basis. All participants had the right to withdraw from this study, at any time, without being subject to consequences or penalties. This study consisted of adult participants only. No children were interviewed, questioned, or spoken to, whatsoever throughout the process of this study. Pseudonyms were used in place of the names of the participants. These pseudonyms were used in the data-
collection process, which included field notes, interview documents, coding patterns, and observation notes.

**Summary**

The purpose of the study was to determine if teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of the choice theory. Within this study, research was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of which factors affected teacher efficacy, thus influencing classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the methodological components of this study mirrored characteristics of a observational case study. The intended goal was to collect, examine, and analyze information according to a group of individuals in a contemporary environment, to determine which characteristics of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) influenced classroom management in order to meet the social-emotional needs of African American males in grades PreK–2. In addition to this, the goal was to encompass thick descriptions obtained through teacher interviews, while interpreting relationships and patterns of multiple participants. This assisted me in drawing conclusions about if and how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. As previously stated, although the classes consisted of other genders and/or races, information collected only focused on the teachers’ interactions with the African American male population within their classes.

The case study design also allowed for me to identify and lift new information from the research, regarding the experiences and perceptions of how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, as well as identifying the specific social and emotional needs of African American male students in grades PreK–2 when incorporating the quality world and total
behavior elements of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). In result of this study, conclusions were drawn about teacher efficacy and classroom management, based on information gathered concerning the similarities and differences of not only the pre-and post-professional development interview responses, but from the teachers’ implementation practices as a whole. Analyzing the interpretations of the participants, as to the effectiveness of Glasser’s (1998) theory and its influence on classroom management and teacher efficacy, enabled me to discover patterns and/or hidden themes, which may be used to emotionally support African American males in grades PreK–2, within the educational environment.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

This observational case study was designed to focus on teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. This qualitative research was examined through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as it related to the total behavior and quality world components. Although Glasser’s theory can apply to all students, regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic background, for the purpose of this study, Glasser’s (1998) theory applied solely to the African American male population in grades PreK–2.

Pre- and post-professional development interviews were conducted with participants, along with professional development, focusing on the above-mentioned elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). As a researcher, I observed behavior-management strategies utilized by the teachers. In addition to this, information obtained from both sets of interviews was compared to each other, in an effort to not only draw meaningful conclusions, but to discover new insight as to how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, from the perspective of choice theory. This included taking a deeper look at how teachers can better support the social and emotional development of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. The effectiveness of the professional development on the subgroup was assessed based on the participants’ pre- and post-interview responses, as well as from field notes, pertaining to six 30-minute weekly observations. This chapter included a review of the sample population involved within the study. Along with this, an explanation and description of the research methodology and data analysis were discussed. A summary of the findings and a presentation of the data and results were included within this chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary, highlighting key components in this section.
This observational case study investigation examined the question: How does teacher efficacy influence classroom management when educating African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998)? In an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic, the research questions that guided this study are listed below.

**Research question 1.** In what ways does understanding how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when educating African American males in grades PreK–2?

**Research question 2.** How does providing professional development to educators, addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, influence classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community?

**Description of the Sample**

**Research population.** The participants of this study were limited to 10 elementary-school teachers, who instructed African American male students in grades PreK–2. The selected school district is located in a small suburb on the outskirts of a large major city within the state of Illinois. All participants have at least five or more African American males in grades PreK–2, in their classes with whom they interacted and provided academic instruction on a daily basis. Participants were selected on a volunteer basis. There was no release of any of the identities and/or personal information of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to identify each participant.

Of the 10 teacher participants, two were male and eight were female. Teaching experience varied among the participants. Three participants had 1-3 years of teaching
experience. Three teachers had 4-7 years of teaching experience. Lastly, four teachers had eight or more years of teaching experience. The ethnicity of the participants was diverse. Four of the participants were Caucasian, five were African American, and one participant was Latino/Asian Indian Heritage. Ages of the participants ranged from 28-67 years of age.

**Research Methodology and Analysis**

**Method and rationale.** An observational case study research design was utilized in this investigation, with the simultaneous incorporation of the comparative analysis format. According to Yin (2003), a case study model is appropriate when one wishes to explore the how and why components of a specific or series of events. The case study model was determined to be the most appropriate for this study due to the established goal to seek out and acquire an in-depth understanding of how and why teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as well as various conditions that may have influenced the occurrence of such events. The comparative-analysis format allowed me to compare and contrast information within this specific case, in an attempt to draw new information from the data that provided insight as how to better assist teachers in supporting the needs of African American males, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Information and data from this research were acquired through the use of pre-professional development and post-professional development interviews with the ten participants.

Along with the interviews, participants also attended a professional-development session that pertained to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), which specifically focused on the elements of the quality world and total behavior. The purpose of the pre-professional development and post-professional development interviews was for me to capture first-hand perceptions and interpretations of the teachers, as they related to the influence of teacher efficacy on classroom
management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. These perceptions were analyzed and examined through the lens of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) in terms of how to better meet the social and emotional needs of African American males in grades PreK–2. Findings from this data were used to determine and/or assess the effectiveness of the professional development, as it relates to teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Immediately following the professional development, participants were expected to incorporate ideas and/or concepts pertaining to meeting the social-emotional needs of their African American males within their classrooms into their daily classroom-management routines. For a period of six weeks, participants were observed once a week, for a period of 30 minutes per observation. At the conclusion of the six-week observation where the participants were requested to implement ideas from the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) on professional development within their classrooms, teachers then participated in post-professional-development interviews. This post-professional-development interviews occurred within one week of teachers’ completing their final weekly observations. During these interviews, perceptions of the teachers were keenly noted, as they related to how meeting the basic needs of the African American males within their classrooms influenced teacher efficacy, thus affecting their classroom management.

**Analysis.** Information from this investigation was examined utilizing a comparative-analysis format. The information collected from both the pre-and post-professional development interviews was analyzed. According to Nayab and Scheib (2011), comparative analysis or constant comparison can be used in a case study structure to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in a specific case. In this case, responses of the participants were compared prior to attending the professional development, with their responses after receiving
professional development, as well as their perceptions of their effectiveness of their classroom-management strategies. The rationale in using such approaches enabled me to present the perceptions of the participants involved, pertaining to their teacher efficacy and how it influenced their classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, both before and after having attended professional development focusing on the choice theory (Glasser, 1998). From this, sub-categories were created that divided the teacher responses into grade levels. Next, data and information were discussed, in regard to the similarities and differences of both, the pre-professional development and post-professional development responses, and the responses according to the grade levels participants teach. Various themes were also noted within the discussions.

Responses from the pre-professional development and post-professional development interviews were examined, in order to bring about new insight as to how teacher efficacy has influenced classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as well as to assess the effectiveness of the professional development. Upon analysis of such information, one goal of this study was to use the collected findings to draw meaningful conclusions, which in turn supported the theoretical framework (Ratcliff, 2011; Seidel, 2011). The second goal was to provide teachers of African American male students in grades PreK–2 with viable tools to support the social and emotional development of their students.

**Summary of the Findings**

Data discussed in the following sections represent individual interviews, participant pre- and post-professional interviews, as well as from information gathered from classroom observation notes. Observation notes contained information of the observations of the
participants’ implementation of the strategies that were presented in the study. Information from the research revealed similarities and differences between the initial perceptions of the teachers concerning the effectiveness of their management strategies, as well as their personal bias, and whether or not it has influenced daily classroom-management routines, when teaching African American male students in grades PreK–2. Each participant group displayed a separate theme from the other. This could be due to the common grade level taught, and/or the fact that teachers within each group had established professional learning communities where ideas were exchanged and common language was used. Pre-professional development interviews presented information and data before professional development was provided to the participants. Post-interview information and responses were a reflection of the perceptions of the participants following professional development, and having been afforded the opportunity of implementing Glasser’s (1998) concepts into their daily classroom-management routines.

First, this researcher found that prior to attending the professional development, teachers felt less confident in their abilities, not only to address discipline and negative behaviors of their African American male students in grades PreK–2, but struggled with successfully managing a classroom that fully supported the social and emotional development of their students in general. After receiving training, findings indicated that teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy toward teaching African American male students increased. This is believed to have been the result of the teachers having been presented with information that provided a detailed explanation of the specific needs of their African American male students, regarding various elements that helped to develop and shape their behavior, as perceived through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998).
According to Ray, Fleming, and Kimondo (nbcdi.org, 2013), cultures have shaped who individuals are, as well as how they have, and will continue to experience the world around them. This claim was closely related to Glasser’s (1998) assertion of how a person’s quality world is influenced by prior experiences. Therefore, a person’s quality world motivates what he or she does, which Glasser (1998) referred to as total behavior. As previously mentioned, total behavior is a collection of what a person does to meet his or her needs and quality world. An important factor to mention is that when attempting to support the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2, according to Glasser (1998), teachers must look at the specific needs of their students, in regards to how these needs influence behavior. In addition to this, Searcy (nbcdi.org, 2013) insisted that teachers, who are attempting to meet the behavioral needs of African American students, must take into account their own teaching style, ensuring that is compatible to the learning style of their students. According to Searcy (nbcdi.org, 2013),

Statistics show exclusionary discipline, or the permanent removal of a student from a school, is used at disproportionately high rates with African American students. This type of discipline implies that the reasons behind inappropriate behavior lie within the individual student. However, teaching in a way that is incompatible with how students learn puts students at risk for both academic and behavioral difficulties. When the teacher’s style of instruction does not match the student’s style of learning, misbehavior can result. In practice, misbehavior may be the function of teachers’ failure to meet the needs of diverse students (nbcdi.org, 2013).
Second, findings revealed that teachers who understood how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of the information from the professional development, were able to identify the specific needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. Handouts were given to the teachers, identifying the social and emotional needs of African American male students in grades PreK–2, according to current research (see Appendix B). Key terms, suggested classroom strategies, and additional explanations, pertaining to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), are also included within this appendix section.

The teachers were also able to appropriately create and implement classroom-management strategies that were directly tailored to the needs and abilities of their African American male students, as well as share them with fellow participants during the professional-development session. Teachers’ responses indicated that teachers who were able to align their classroom routines to the needs of their African American male students saw a decrease in these students’ negative, defiant, and undesirable behaviors.

Next, findings suggested that by providing professional development to educators, addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community, were influenced in multiple ways. One way this was achieved involved the concept of self-reflection. Teachers who attended the professional development reported that they did not realize how their overall actions, personalities, and lack of understanding of their African American male students’ cultural attributes, were negatively influencing their classroom routines. Prior to attending the professional development, seven of 10 participants reported that the professional development helped them to better understand the
specific needs of their African American male students. Findings also indicated that the professional development helped teachers to openly and honestly address their personal biases and biased perceptions about their African American male students’ abilities to make meaningful contributions to the learning environment. As a result of learning how to address these hindrances, teachers were able to incorporate strategies within their classrooms that encouraged positive student engagement and participation.

Presentation of Data and Results

Pre-professional development interviews. As the participant interviewing process commenced, it was noted that the teachers were eager and excited to participate in the study. However, 7 of 10 participants initially appeared to be a bit nervous about questions they may be asked about their ability to control and manage their classroom, as well as various characteristics they may use to support the social and emotional needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. Nervousness of the participants was also noted through their body language and tense/timid voice. This information was recorded in the pre-professional-development notes. To ease the anxiety of the participants, prior to starting the pre-professional development interviews, each participant was informed that a series of questions would be asked pertaining to their experience as a teacher. The procedures were also explained in terms that the focus of some of the questions would be on their reflecting about their classroom-management routines, while other questions would be focused on their perceptions of how well they incorporated various ideas and concepts into their daily management routines.

I also expressed to the teachers that their participation in the study was greatly appreciated, as it will help to serve as a resource for how teachers can better support the social-emotional growth of African American males in grades PreK–2. For instance when participants
did not feel comfortable to answer certain questions, it was made clear that any question of their choice could be skipped at any time. Lastly, it was clearly expressed to all the participants that they were under no obligation to participate in this study, and may withdraw any time. Before signing the consent form, all participants were assured that their identities would not be disclosed to anyone, as pseudonyms replaced the names of all volunteers.

Participants were separated into three teacher groups. Teacher group 1 consisted of four participants who taught in grades PreK and Kindergarten. Teacher group 2 consisted of three participants who taught first grade. Lastly, teacher group 3 consisted of three participants who taught second grade. Teachers were separated into grades taught in order for me to examine, code, and compare information regarding teacher perceptions of their own classroom-management abilities, as well as various influences that each group of teachers believe to have influenced their abilities to connect socially and emotionally to their African American male students. Separating teachers into grade-level groups allowed for me to also examine to what extent the implementation of concepts provided in the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) influenced classroom management and teacher efficacy when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

**Research themes.** The series of interview questions asked were separated into two categories that aligned with the research questions. Question 1 focused on data that addressed the question: In what ways do understanding how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when educating African American males in grades PreK–2? Question 2, on the other hand, focused on information that addressed the question: How does providing professional development to educators, addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and
bias, influence classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community? Information listed under the pre-interview sections are not only separated according to themes, but is also divided into pre-professional development and post-professional development responses, acquired from each of the three teacher groups.

According to the two research questions, teacher responses were separated based on common topics. From this point, teacher-response themes were created from these two research questions. For example, when looking at Question 2, a theme that was discussed concerned how bias influenced the teachers' management routines. It was discovered that prior to attending the professional development, 7 of 10 the teachers with all three groups did not realize how they exhibited bias toward their African American male students. After attending the professional development, teachers were not only able to reflect on their management practices, but were also able to identify their own biases, and how they influenced how they managed their classroom, their perceptions of their African American male students' abilities to socially adapt within the classroom setting, and their perceptions of their own abilities to support these students both socially and emotionally.

**Teacher group 1-pre-professional development interviews.** Group 1 participants consisted of PreK and kindergarten teachers. During the pre-professional development interview stage of this investigation, there were various common themes and key terms participants used that were expected among the responses, such as learning, developing, struggling, difficulty, teacher training, and defiant behavior. All of the participants appeared excited about the grade in which they were teaching, as well as were open to learning new strategies and/or methods in which they can better support their African American male students both emotionally and
socially. Teacher A shared that although she felt somewhat confident in applying basic management strategies to assist the social growth of her African American male students, she still felt that she lacked a comprehensive understanding of how to emotionally support them. Teacher B stated that she was willing to learn new ways to help support her African American male students. Teachers in this group perceived their classrooms as learning environments that were specifically tailored to the characteristics of their African American male students. With this in mind, when addressing various elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), all of the teachers continuously stated that they wished that they had more ideas, training, or “bags of tricks” to utilize when attempting to meet the social and emotional needs of their students (Question 2). Close notice was paid towards how each teacher’s body language or voice changed when asked about his or her confidence level in dealing with difficult situations pertaining to student behavior (Question 2). Teachers A through D became either tense and/ or slow to respond, demonstrating a sense of unease on the matter. This information was recorded in the pre-professional-development interview notes.

Although claiming they felt somewhat comfortable with their classroom-management techniques, Teachers A, C, and D expressed that they would like more professional development opportunities that focus on helping them expand their knowledge of how the behavior of her African American male students’ is affected by classroom-management techniques (Question 2). Teacher A stated that she felt that she had some good ideas for controlling her classroom; however, she noticed that many of her African American male students did not respond to her strategies. Teacher A stated that she believed this was because she had difficulty understanding and emotionally connecting to her African American male students. Teacher A claimed that she did not want to offend anyone, therefore; she was careful in her approach to engaging and
interacting with her African American male students. According to Teacher A, she did not want to be perceived as insensitive or prejudice for assuming that her African American males were lacking the abilities to adapt socially within her classroom. However, when speaking about her African American male students, Teacher A continued to state that she felt her African American male students were not ready to independently create rules for the classroom.

Another pattern noted was the honesty each of these participants exhibited about the need for more training (Question 2). Each teacher in group 1 admitted to his or her limitations and was aware of his or her weaknesses within his or her classroom-management routines. Teachers A, B, and C shared their frustration of trying to make connections with their African American male students by attempting to provide a classroom setting that afforded students with a sense of power, freedom, and safety (Question 1). Teacher C expressed that it was rather frustrating at times to determine what to do in order to help the students. “On the other hand, Teacher D shared that she focused more on discipline and routines, rather than intentionally focusing on incorporating elements such as fun and love (Question 1). Teacher D stated that her African American male students needed discipline and must be taught how to conduct themselves within the classroom setting. Teacher D expressed that currently she did not feel comfortable to allow her kids to make any decisions pertaining to the classroom. Her interpretation of leadership involved that students should first have the ability to follow rules then becoming a leader will follow. All of the teachers in this group also shared that they had not considered teaching fun and love as a separate skill.

One common characteristic was that teacher group 1 participants perceived their African American male students as blank slates, ready to be transformed, nurtured, and shaped into productive citizens. For example, when asked about if and how these teachers incorporated
freedom and a sense of power into their daily management routines, Teachers A, B, and D stated that they felt that their African American male students must be taught the essential characteristics of how to behave in the classroom (Question 1). In addition to this, all these teachers expressed that because their students were very young, some attending school for the first time, they found it necessary as adults and as teachers to create the classroom rules instead of allowing their students to do so. Teacher C, on the other hand, felt her African American male students must be taught how to critically and successfully problem-solve. As a result, Teacher C stated that she rarely intervened when a social problem or situation arose in her classroom (Question 2). Teacher C conveyed that her focus was more on students learning how to solve problems analytically. This included classroom rules being established and maintained. She explained that by doing so, her African American male students were taught safety skills and how to function socially within the context of the real world. (Question 1).

**Teacher group 2 -pre-professional development interviews.** Teacher group 2 consisted of three 1st-grade teachers. This group of participants shared common patterns of various uses of words such as community, struggle, parents, defiance, and perceptions. Teachers F and G exhibited more confidence in dealing with their African American male students than Teacher E. In their interviews, Teachers F and G often mentioned words such as cultural awareness, misunderstood, subjective, and society. Teachers F and G’s discussion included a more psychological approach that attributed the behavior of their African American male students to such factors as their environment and their abilities to establish and maintain positive relationships with others. Teachers F and G both included safety in their daily management routines as a way to teach their African American male students about their ability to survive in the real world when not in the
school environment. (Question 1). On the other hand, Teacher E focused more on safety rules in the classroom and within the school environment. Another factor to note was that Teachers F and G displayed a sense of urgency when speaking about creating a sense of power and freedom in their classrooms for their African American male students (Question 1). These teachers looked at power and freedom as internal characteristics that must be taught and developed in order for one to survive (Question 1). As Teacher G conveyed if one is in control of their emotions is the key to survival in the modern society. Knowing right from wrong is no longer sufficient. In order for our African American males to survive, they must understand that they must be in full control of their actions. It could mean the difference between life and death in some cases, especially with our males.

All in all, this group of participants offered similar, yet different, approaches to teaching than did teacher group 1. For example, according to Teachers F and G, their personal biases, culture awareness for African American males in general, and their personalities, influenced how they chose to implement and incorporate various management routines within their classrooms (Question 2). While Teacher E, who continued to stress the importance of “being able to successfully communicate and engage with others,” implemented strategies that taught her African American male students how to properly conduct themselves within the educational environment. This included focusing on skills such as safety and survival, as well as power (Question 1). Just as Teachers F, G, and Teacher E expressed that they all shared the same thought of teaching fun and love was a separate skill. As previously stated, each teacher as a member of this particular group were observed to have had similar, yet different,
approaches to managing a classroom and supporting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2.

**Teacher group 3 -pre-professional development interviews.** Teacher participants in this group were all instructors of second-grade African American male students. This group of teachers also had common patterns of various use of words. These words included rules, discipline, and structure. Although these teachers expressed the idea of their African American male students having the freedom and autonomy to make appropriate choices, it was observed that every teacher, in his or her own way, placed heavy emphasis on the need for them as educators to implement structure, rules, and discipline in their classrooms. For example, Teacher H, has more than 7 years of teaching experience, insisted that some of her African American male students needed to acquire skills that would help the students engage and communicate with their fellow more effectively. According to Teacher H, this can only be accomplished by teaching her students how to use their freedom of communication wisely (Question 1). This included Teacher H providing her African American male students with clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate forms of communication. Teachers I and J, both male teachers having taught for more than 10 years each, heavily relied upon their past experiences, personalities, and cultural awareness to guide their classroom routines (Question 2). Teacher I placed a heavy emphasis on including fun into his daily routines, while Teacher J focused more on teaching his African American male students discipline and survival skills (Question 1).

All teachers in this group agreed that more professional development, focusing on methods of supporting the social and emotional needs of African American male students in grades PreK–2, is vital to these students’ success within the classroom environment (Question 2). These teachers expressed they would like to learn more ways in which they can better support
the emotional development of their students. Teacher I was very emphatic when she expressed her thoughts on possessing a well of strategies as resources to acquire a thorough knowledge base. She felt that the resources would be a valuable support for meeting both the social and emotional development of the students. Additionally, Teacher one expressed that the resources would also aid to form productive, trusting and sustainable relationships with specifically African American male students.

Regardless of the experience, all teachers were open to learning about choice theory (Glasser, 1998) and its elements, where they could possibly incorporate into their classroom-management routines as well as help support the social and emotional growth of their African American male students.

Teacher group 1 (Teachers A-D) responses from the professional development collaborative group activity was recorded as the following:

1. Listen to students more. Make African American male students feel like they belong.
2. Teach students right from wrong. Teach African American male students how to make healthy choices.
3. Let African American male students talk about their actions/behaviors.
4. Make sure that all African American male students are safe. Make African American male students feel like they are loved and wanted.
5. Reflect on the actions as a teacher. Be conscious of African American male students’ feelings.

Teacher group 2 (Teachers E-G) responses from the professional development collaborative group activity were recorded as the following:

1. Handle minor discipline infractions in-house.
2. Listen to African American male students more.

3. Make African American male students feel like they are loved, wanted, and a part of the classroom community.

4. Allow African American male students the freedom to help establish classroom rules.
   Let African American male students have fun.

5. Allow African American male students to talk about their behaviors.

Teacher group 3 (Teachers H-J) responses from the professional development collaborative group activity were recorded as the following:

1. Allow African American male students the freedom to make more choices in the classroom.

2. Encourage African American male students to engage in more dialogue with staff members and their peers. Listen to students.

3. Offer African American male students positive alternatives to their “unhealthy” behaviors.

4. Reflect on how teacher choices influence African American male students’ behaviors.

5. Incorporate more activities that are fun.

**Teacher group 1-post-professional development interviews.** Throughout the post-professional development interview process, there were similarities among participants’ responses in teacher group 1. When asked about perceptions of their classroom-management strategies following the professional development, common words and/or phrases were used such as new alternatives, enlightening, new perception, critically assess, and eye opener. Prior to attending the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development, many of the participants
in this group perceived themselves as good teachers who have implemented effective management strategies within their classroom environments.

After attending the professional development, Teachers A through D began to perceive the abilities of their African American male students differently. Teachers A and C talked about how they realized that the behaviors of her African American male students had a lot to do with their own actions as teachers and the choices they made within the classroom (Question 2). This new understanding allowed for these teachers to begin looking at their classroom-management strategies in new and different ways (Question 2). For example, Teachers B and D talked about changing their discipline methods to include more communication. Another common theme that this teacher group shared was realizing and addressing their personal biases (Question 2). All of the teachers discovered these hidden biases, then they began to focus on why they had not addressed specific emotional needs of their African American male students such as those discussed within choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Prior to attending the professional development, the teachers in this group perceived their students as having limited social abilities. However, following the training and having been provided with the opportunity of implementing newly acquired information into their classroom routines, Teachers A, C, and D admitted to recognizing that the weaknesses were in their abilities as teachers, to fully address and support the social and emotional development of their African American male students in grades PreK–2 (Question 2).

In reference to incorporating choice theory (Glasser, 1998) elements, such as fun, safety/survival, love, freedom/power, and a sense of belonging, teachers in this group expressed that they now have a better understanding of how to include them into daily management routines (Question 1). Teacher I expressed that “the need for his students to develop a sense of belonging
was key to his ability to make viable connections with the African American males in his classroom (Question 2).”

Finally, 10 participants stated that professional development was an effective tool because it provided them with an understanding of how behavior is shaped and formed, according to Glasser’s (1998) perspective. In doing so, participants in this group felt that they were more confident to address and support their African American male students both socially and emotionally within the classroom environment after the professional development (Question 2).

**Teacher group 2- post-professional development interviews.** After receiving professional development about the quality world and the total behavior elements of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998), teachers E, F, and G, were asked to elaborate on whether or not their perceptions of their ability to handle difficult situations when dealing with African American males were significantly affected. In response, participants in this group discussed their experiences in a critical and analytical manner, using words such as re-examine, re-assess, productive, and counter-productive. Teacher E claimed that attending the professional development encouraged her to re-assess her management routines, in an attempt to connect her discipline strategies to the behavior of her African American male students. Teachers F and G discussed how the elements presented in the professional development encouraged them to examine and re-examine the effectiveness of their management routines, as it related to them being proactive in their approaches. Teacher G elaborated by claiming that her being provided with a clear understanding of how her actions as a teacher influenced the overall dynamics of her students’ behavior, was key in her developing a management plan that fully supported the social and emotional needs of her African American male students. Teacher G stated that before she
attended the professional development, she felt that the behaviors of her students had very little to do with her as a teacher. However; after receiving training, she realized that the behavior of her Black male students within the educational setting, had everything to do with how she managed and ran her classroom.

The pre-professional development interview responses from participants in this group differed significantly from their post-professional development interview statements. For example, prior to receiving professional development, Teachers E, F, and G, felt they were providing the appropriate services to their African American male students. However, once training occurred, these teachers’ perceptions of their own abilities to successfully manage a classroom, were either shifted, or strengthened, as well as their perceptions of the abilities of their African American male students (Question 2). Teacher E stated, that she did not know what a disservice she was doing to her African American male students, by assuming that they were not capable of making appropriate decisions within the classroom setting.

Data also revealed that Teachers E and F had a shift in their perceptions when they reflected back to their previous statements, prior to attending the professional development, concerning their personal bias and the overall effectiveness and confidence in their classroom-management routines (Question 2). Teacher G’s personal bias, on the other hand, was reinforced by the information presented throughout the professional development. Teacher G stated that she felt that her African American male students had been misunderstood for many years. She claimed the training confirmed her longstanding personal beliefs pertain to the specific needs of young black boys. As an educator, she felt that teachers in general, must align teaching to address the needs of the students they service on a daily basis. Teacher G’s personal bias was the driving force that helped her to excel and move forward without hesitation, as it related to
seeking multiple ways in building positive relationships with her students (Question 2). Teachers E and F on the other hand, learned more about how their biases were influencing their abilities to further support the emotional needs of their African American male students (Question 2). Teacher G learned more about herself, as it related to being willing and open to learning new ideas (Question 2). All of the teachers in this group felt that the professional development was beneficial because it helped them to reflect on their own biases, routines, disciplinary consequences, and social connections that they have made and continue to make with their African American male students in grades PreK–2 (Question 2).

Teachers in this group also discussed their intentions of applying the choice theory’s (Glasser, 1998) five basic needs into their daily management routines (Question 1). Teachers E and F had similar responses when commenting on how to apply love and a sense of belonging into their classroom routines (Question 1). Teacher E claimed that love goes beyond simply telling someone that they are loved. According to Teacher F, love is a skill that should be taught in detail. This included a person demonstrating his or her feelings through actions, as opposed to words. Teacher E explained that love is a skill that should be taught on a daily basis. This can be accomplished through modeling, demonstrating, or verbal communication (Question 1). Teacher G believed that her central focus has included love; however, power/freedom, a sense of belonging, and safety/survival skills will also be taught on a daily basis (Question 1). As previously mentioned, Teacher G continued to express an urgency for her African American male students to be taught these skills, even going on to state that this could be the difference between life and death for these particular students.

**Teacher group 3- post-professional development interviews.** Common themes in this group also demonstrated a great deal of self-reflection. Initially, prior to receiving choice theory
professional development, group participants focused more on student discipline, infractions, and consequences for defiant and disruptive behavior. However, the responses of the teachers in this group also changed significantly. For example, Teachers I and J initially stated in their pre-professional development interview that they did not have biases when it pertained to their African American male students. However, after attending the professional development, Teachers I and J admitted not only to biases, but also revealed how these personal feelings have impacted their teaching and classroom management styles, as well as how well they have established relationships with their African American students (Question 2). All participants in this group began to reflect upon their own actions, in order to see how these actions influenced the way they made connections to their African American male students, as opposed to examining primarily student behavior (Question 2). For teachers H, I and J, this was an important step because this new information had influenced their current, and possibly future classroom-management routines, when supporting the needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2 (Questions 1 and 2).

Participants in this group also admitted to having a better understanding of not only the five basic needs of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), but also the way in which each element can be applied in order to assist African American male students with their social and emotional development (Question 1). Teacher J believed that prior to attending the professional development, he felt as if he was just going with the flow, hoping to maintain somewhat a grip on his classroom management. However; he felt that the professional development provided him with concrete tools to help his African American male students. Similar to Teacher J’s response, Teacher I shared that the professional development provided him with information that he was unaware of, pertaining to how his perceptions, actions, and beliefs of what learning looked like
within the classroom environment, influenced the behaviors of his African American male students. Teachers H, I, and J shared that prior to attending the professional development; they all had general understandings of the concepts of love, power/freedom, fun, love/belonging, and safety/survival (Question 1). However, after attending the training, all three of these teachers explained that they were excited about the creative ways in which they could support their African American male students’ social and emotional development (Question 2).

Alignment to Conceptual Framework

Interview data about choice theory and teacher support-similarities versus differences. There were many similarities among the teachers’ responses that were evident throughout the pre-professional development and post-professional development interviews. For example, in the pre-professional development interviews, teachers in all three groups stated that they never considered love and fun to be skills that were taught in isolation. Teacher D expressed that she assumed that these skills were something that just happened in the classroom. Teachers A through D (group 1) all expressed the need to provide their students with a solid formation of how to conduct them appropriately within an educational environment, thus arranged their classroom-management routines to mirror these concepts.

Teachers in group 2 (participants E through G), focused more on supporting students in the areas of power, freedom, and developing a sense of belonging. Teachers E and F concentrated on power and freedom, as it related to teaching their African American male students the importance of using these qualities in a way that enhanced their lives and their interactions with others around them. On the other hand, Teacher G focused more on survival skills, as it pertained to training her African American male students how to conduct themselves in the modern society.
Teachers in group 3 (participants H through J), felt a strong need to also focus on teaching their African American male students survival skills. However, similar to Teacher G’s strong belief of focusing on survival skills within the classroom environment, Teachers H and I also expressed a strong sense of urgency connected to survival skills. Teachers G, H, and I shared that survival skills can be the difference between life and death for some African American males, granted the prejudices and biases that are displayed within today’s world. Teacher J deviated from many of the other participants, expressing the necessity to teach all of the basic needs discussed within Glasser’s theory; however, he has kept fun as the central focus for his classroom management routine.

When analyzing the themes, it was discovered that prior to attending the professional development, all of the participants demonstrated or expressed a basic or general understanding of the concepts of love, survival, belonging, fun, and power/freedom. However, none of the participants admitted to implementing more than one or two of the basic needs, with the exception of Teacher J. Throughout many of the pre-professional development interview discussions, the participants demonstrated a preference toward teaching certain skills than others, based on the needs of the African American male students in their classrooms. For example, Teacher G preferred to focus on survival skills. On the other hand, Teachers E and F decided to focus on love and belonging. After attending the professional development, all of the participants began to express an in-depth understanding of Glasser’s (1998) five basic needs. Having done this, another similarity among the group of participants was that they had begun to incorporate most, if not all of the basic needs into their daily classroom routines. Based on the post-professional-development interviews, data revealed that 10 of 10 teachers were applying concepts and/or strategies from the choice theory within their daily routine. In addition to this, 10
of 10 teachers claimed that the training allowed for them to be more conscious of how their actions influenced the behavior of their students.

**Interview data about teacher bias-similarities versus differences.** Patterns emerged throughout the study concerning the participants’ pre-professional development and post-professional development responses. Within the pre-professional development interviews, Teachers A through F initially claimed that they did not have any biases that impacted their interactions with their African American male students. However, the conversations of these individuals revealed conflicting beliefs. For example, Teachers A, B, C, and D often made statements that singled out their African American male students. Such comments referenced and/or accused their African American male students as being the most defiant students in the classroom. Other comments included teachers claiming that many of their African American males in the class come from homes that appear to be unstable and dysfunctional. Teachers E repeatedly made comments about teaching their African American male students how to utilize their freedom and power, Teacher F believed that freedom and power was key to her students’ survival in this world. She wanted most for her African American male students to learn how to properly embrace their freedom and not to infringe on others. What many of these participants did not realize was that they were demonstrating bias by making distinctions between their African American males and the other students in their classrooms. When analyzing this information, these behaviors could also be an expectation of teachers with other types of student groups.

On the other hand, Teachers G through J openly admitted to their biases. All of these teachers expressed that they were fully aware of how these biases influenced not only their classroom-management routines, but the teachers’ overall perceptions of their students’
emotional development abilities. For example, Teacher J’s response was similar to this. Teacher J openly admitted that his personal feelings about children having the ability to have fun within the educational environment are what have guided his daily routines thus far.

Another finding worth noting is how Teachers A through F started to acknowledge and recognize their biases, as well as factors and experiences that triggered certain feelings towards their African American male students. As revealed through the findings, understanding how to fulfill the basic needs of their students’ emotional development, was key to these teachers understanding how they interacted with their students, as well as what strategies and/or methods they chose to implement within the learning environment.

**Interview data about teacher–efficacy and classroom management-similarities versus differences.** During the pre-professional development interviews, teachers in group 1 had similar goals and perceptions of their African American male students’ abilities to establish and create classroom rules. Teachers in group 1 felt that their overall goal was to teach their students the fundamental characteristics of how to interact within the learning environment. According to these teachers, they felt that their students were too young to know or understand the general rules and/or behaviors within the classroom setting. Teachers in this group perceived their efficacy at various levels. For example, although Teacher A felt that she initially had a good grasp on her classroom-management routines, she continued to feel limited, as it related to her availability of resources and/or her ability to draw upon familiar strategies that would address the basic needs of her African American male students, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Similar to this feeling, other teachers from group 2 shared parallel responses. Teachers B, D, E, and F, all stated that prior to attending the professional development, they thought they were supporting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students;
however, also continued to express frustration with their limited knowledge of other ways that they could support the social and emotional growth of their students. On the other hand, after attending the professional development this group of teachers reported that their levels of efficacy had increased, based on the information provided in the training.

The initial perceptions of the teachers in group 3 prior to attending the professional development varied slightly from the previously mentioned groups. Examining the patterns from their responses, teachers in group 3 expressed a general concern of not knowing how to support their students’ emotional development. Prior to attending the professional development, seven of 10 participants shared that they were either uncomfortable, or less confident in their abilities to not only identify the specific needs that their African American male students lacked, but also in implementing strategies that promoted emotional and social growth.

After receiving professional development, all participants reported having felt that they were better equipped with viable resources and information to support the social and emotional well-being of their students. In addition to this, all of the participants reported that they felt more confident in supporting their African American male students, due to their understanding of how to meet specific needs that their students may have initially lacked.

Lastly, a final similarity among the participants involved their perceptions about the connection between their efficacy levels, and their classroom-management routines and outcomes. All of the participants reported that as their efficacy level increased and they began to feel more confident in their abilities to support the emotional needs of their African American male students, their classroom-management routines were positively impacted. For example, Teacher D stated that as she began to recognize and identify certain behaviors of her students, this enabled her to align her management routines to specifically address their needs. In doing so,
she reported a decrease in the overall negative behavior and classroom disruptions. Teachers A, B, C, H, and J reported similar findings. These teachers expressed that many of their African American male students were hesitant to participate or buy into the process initially. However, after several attempts and about 2-3 weeks of implementing various strategies focusing on Glasser’s (1998) recommendations for implementing choice theory concepts into the classroom setting, several of these students began to respond positively to the management strategies of their teachers. Teachers A and C both claimed that since they began to incorporate choice theory concepts into their daily management routines, they have not had any discipline referrals. Teacher B expressed that she has only had one discipline referral during the two to three-week implementation period. Teacher H shared that she believed that the connection between teacher-efficacy levels and classroom management was due to the teachers exhibiting and demonstrating not only confidence in their new management approaches, but also due to the positive perceptions of the African American male students’ abilities to respond to the change within the classroom structures.

**Interview data about professional development-similarities versus differences.**

Teacher participant responses varied when concerning the provision of professional development to educators, when addressed teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias. Similarities among the responses of the participants explained how these factors influenced classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community. For example, all teachers stated that having attended the professional development helped them to pay close attention to the cultural aspects of their African American male students, which they never thought to do before. Participants F, G, and H stated that the professional development helped
them to reflect upon their actions as teachers, in regards to their own personalities and the choices they make as educators within the classroom setting, when interacting with their African American male students. Teachers A, B, and C expressed how the professional development helped them to recognize their own biases, and how it impacted teachers’ perceptions of the abilities of their African American male students. Teacher A commented, “Prior to attending the training, I felt that the students lacked the abilities to socially adapt to the classroom environment. I did not realize how this belief was based on assumptions, rather than facts and concrete evidence.”

Teacher B stated, “The perceptions of the African American male students’ strengths were limited due to me not being able to see beyond the current behaviors of the students.” Teachers E, I, and J all stated that having learned new concepts from the professional development concerning the quality world and total behavior, helped them to look at both their personal biases, but also their presuppositions and assumptions about the social experiences of their African American male students. These teachers openly admitted to having strong biases about the social experiences of their students, which influenced how they not only interacted with these children, but also posed a heavy influence on which basic needs they as educators, chose to address within their management routines. All participants agreed that having had the ability to attend the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development served as a beneficial tool in helping them to not only understand, identify, and support the needs of their African American male students, but to address their own needs as well.

**Findings and results addressing research question 1.** Data addressing research question 1, indicated teachers’ understanding on how to fulfill the needs of survival, power, fun, and love, through the use of professional development, influenced teacher efficacy and
classroom management, when educating African American males in grades PreK–2 in several ways. Data suggested that teacher efficacy and classroom management were influenced through the use of professional development, by providing teachers with an in-depth understanding of the basic needs, according to Glasser (1998), as well as providing information to educators as how to best implement, apply, and progress monitor the effectiveness of their classroom behavior strategies. As a result, teachers were provided with information that helped them to be proactive, as opposed to being reactive, when implementing management routines within the educational setting. This included teachers understanding what characteristics make up an individual’s quality world, and how these elements influence his or her total behavior.

According to the findings, teacher efficacy and classroom management were also influenced through the use of professional development by increasing the teachers’ confidence levels when they attempted to form relationships with their students. In doing so, this helped the teachers to identify triggers that may influence negative behaviors of their African American male students. Finally, when addressing how teacher efficacy and classroom management were influenced through the use of professional development, information suggested that educators were provided with the knowledge of how to encourage African American male students to take responsibility for their behavioral choices and learning. In doing so, teachers admitted to feeling more confident in supporting their students to take accountability for their own emotional growth and development.

Findings and results addressing research question 2. When focusing on how providing professional development to educators, while addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, influenced classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an
educational community, research data revealed a multitude of information. Teachers indicated that information from the professional development helped them to re-examine and re-assess their discipline strategies as a whole. This included teachers engaging in self-reflection, concerning the effectiveness of their classroom-management strategies, in regards to how they identified and addressed their own personalities, and how it influenced the dynamics of their African American male students’ behavior. After attending the professional development, eight of 10 teachers reported that the information attained from the professional development invalidated presuppositions and negative assumptions that they had about their African American male students’ ability to relate, actively participate, and adapt within the classroom setting. As a result, teachers reported how the professional development helped them as educators, to identify undiscovered biases and their influences on teacher-student relationships, when attempting to motivate their African American male students in grades PreK–2. Eight of 10 teachers claimed that the professional development provided them with great insight as to how and why they were struggling to meet the social and emotional needs of their African American male students. 10 of 10 teachers claimed that the professional development was a vital tool in helping them to implement strategies within their daily management routine that could be used with fidelity. Although five of 10 teachers admitted to being nervous about taking on the challenge of engaging and interacting more with their African American male students, all of these teachers admitted that learning new strategies gave them the confidence to put forth more effort and step out of their comfort zones.

Additional information attained through the research, suggested that not only did the professional development provide teachers with the tools to become more creative and think outside of the box, but it also expanded their awareness of how cultural elements and practices
can influence the behaviors of teachers and students. Finally, when looking at how providing professional development to educators, while addressing teacher personality, cultural awareness, and bias, I examined how these characteristics influenced classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for African American males in grades PreK–2 to develop a sense of belonging within an educational community. The data implied that teachers were provided with a working knowledge of how to better support the social and emotional development of their students by teaching them how to make appropriate choices that will satisfy the needs of their quality worlds. As a result, this encouraged teachers to address how well their own personal needs have been met, and how this has influenced their perceptions and practices of how they select and implement their classroom discipline strategies.

Collectively, teachers began to understand that a sense of belonging consists of more than classroom behavior. Glasser (1998) insists that a sense of belonging influences how well an individual establishes and sustains relationships with others around them. Lastly, Glasser (1998) claimed that by supporting students’ needs of developing a sense of belonging, students are provided with essential resources that can help them to adopt, adjust, and appropriately connect with the outside world as they understand it.

**Chapter Summary**

This observational case study focused on teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. The research conducted in this study was examined through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as it related to the total behavior and quality world components. Both pre-and post-professional development interviews were conducted, along with participants attending a professional development
focusing on the elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Information obtained from both sets of interviews were compared to each other, in an attempt to not only draw meaningful conclusions, but to discover new insight as to how teacher efficacy influences classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, when viewed from the perception of choice theory.

The participants of this study were limited to 10 elementary-school teachers, who instructed students in grades PreK–2. This case study was examined and explained utilizing a comparative analysis format, more specifically, focusing on the constant comparison approach. According to Nayab and Scheib (2011), comparative analysis can be used in a case study structure to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in a specific case. The rationale in using such approaches enabled me to present the perceptions of the participants involved, pertaining to their teacher efficacy and how it influenced their classroom management, both before and after attending professional development focusing on the choice theory (Glasser, 1998).

There were some common themes that extended across the three teacher groups, such as the need for professional development and the mistaken belief that classroom-management practices, prior to receiving professional development, were meeting the social and emotional needs of the participants’ African American male students in grades PreK–2. For example, all of the participants claimed that they felt they were supporting the social and emotional growth of their African American male students, as outlined in the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). However, after attending the professional development, these teachers began to see the gaps in their management routines, which
addressed little to none of the essential basic needs that choice theory (Glasser, 1998) claims is pertinent to emotional and social development.

Post-interview responses varied by grade level taught and teacher. While some responses indicated self-reflection of teaching practices, others revealed a significant shift in how teachers were beginning to not only perceive their own abilities of them socially and emotionally supporting their African American male students in grades PreK–2, but how they perceive the abilities of these students as a whole. A more in-depth explanation and analysis of the research information, as well as possible recommendations for future research, was discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this observational case study was to examine if and how teacher efficacy influences classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. This research was also conducted through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as it related to the total behavior and quality world components. Although Glasser’s theory can apply to all students, regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic background, for the purpose of this study, Glasser’s (1998) theory was applied solely to the African American male population.

Pre-and post-professional-development interviews were conducted with participants. Observations of the teachers were conducted, following these teachers attending professional development, which focused on the total behavior and quality world elements of choice theory (Glasser, 1998). This chapter presents an examination, analysis, and discussion of the findings of this investigation as they related to current information and literature on the topic of this study.

Components of this chapter include the following sections: Introduction, Summary of the Results, Discussion of the Results, Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature, Limitations, Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory, Recommendations for Further Research, and Conclusion.

Summary of the Results

When addressing research question 1, pre-professional development interview information revealed that prior to attending the professional development, seven of 10 teachers who participated in the investigation were under the impression that they were successfully meeting the basic needs of their African American male students, despite having limited knowledge of a variety of methods to choose from. However, data also suggested that prior to attending the professional development; none of the participants were familiar with choice theory.
or its elements specifically addressing the needs of power, freedom, fun, love, and belonging. In addition to this, pre-professional development interview responses revealed a pattern of teachers expressing their concern regarding their limited knowledge of various classroom-management routines that they can readily implement within the educational setting.

However, after attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers not only expressed a shift in how they perceived their efficacy level, but also how well they were managing their classrooms as a whole. 10 of 10 admitted they did not realize how comprehensive each of the five basic needs was, nor did they understand how each basic need included specific characteristics that influenced the overall behavior of their African American male students. Because of this, 10 of 10 participants explained that this information provided them with a new way of perceiving the social and emotional abilities of their African American male students.

According to the data collected in this study, teachers shared that the professional development provided them with insight on how to self-reflect about their teaching practices. This included teachers’ abilities to align and implement appropriate strategies within their classrooms that were designed to meet the specific needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. Research data also drew attention to teachers’ views of the abilities to identify specific characteristics of behavior. According to the participants, 10 of 10 teachers expressed that prior to receiving choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development; they had limited knowledge of what specific characteristics influenced the behavior of the African American male students within their classrooms. However, post-professional-development interviews revealed that after attending the training, teachers not only had a more crucial understanding of each basic need that Glasser (1998) referred to in his theory, but they also understood how to more accurately identify possible triggers of the undesirable behavior that
their African American male students exhibited. According to teachers’ responses, having this knowledge also increased their perception of their efficacy level when not only managing their classrooms, but engaging and interacting with the African American male student population.

The following sections incorporate responses from each of the three teacher groups, prior to, and after having attended the professional-development training on choice theory (Glasser, 1998). In addition to being separated into categories of grade levels, responses were also divided into two themes, which included subcategories of responses pertaining to power and freedom, classroom climate and culture, love and belonging, teacher bias, fun, and teachers’ perceptions of the professional development.

**Teacher group 1 pre-professional-development responses-power and freedom.** A key pattern that was discovered throughout the interviews prior to attending the professional development was the case that all of the teachers in group 1 admitted to establishing the rules for their classrooms, with little to no input from their African American male students. Power, according to the teachers in this group, was solely limited to students having been allowed to establish rules and procedures for their classrooms. None of the discussions extended beyond this perception. All of the teachers in this group perceived their African American male students as lacking the discipline or knowledge of how to behave appropriately within the classroom environment.

What is also worth noting is that none of the teachers provided solid evidence, including current actions or behaviors of their African American male students. These teachers failed to provide any type of rationale as to how or why they came to the assumptions or perceptions of their African American male students. All of the teachers in this group justified their actions of not allowing their students the power or freedom to establish rules within their educational
setting, based on their (the teachers’) predetermined assumptions concerning the abilities of their African American male students to be able to socially and emotionally adapt to the learning environment. The actions of the teachers and their perceptions toward their African American male students, demonstrated not only the teachers’ lack of knowledge pertaining to the basic needs, as outlined in choice theory (Glasser, 1998), but also how this lack of understanding impacted how teachers engaged with their students and managed their classrooms as a whole.

**Teacher group 2 pre-professional-development responses-powers and freedom.**

When examining and coding the data, key patterns emerged from the information. There was a difference of how Teacher E and Teachers F and G perceived the concept of power. Although all of the teachers in this group felt that power and freedom was an important characteristic to include in their daily routines, how each teacher carried out these tasks varied in approach? Teacher E limited her perception of power to those behaviors that are exhibited within the classroom setting. This included teaching her African American male students the importance of following school rules such as walking down the hall, showing respect to others, and keeping their hands to themselves. Most of Teacher E’s conversation was narrowed to that of what takes place solely within the classroom setting.

On the other hand, Teachers F and G looked beyond the classroom environment, and related the concepts of power and freedom to not only the greater society, but often made constant references to the importance of safety and survival elements as a whole, as it related to African American males. Teacher E exhibited more of a modest approach when addressing power and freedom in her classroom, while Teachers F and G viewed these concepts from a more philosophical approach. From this, a conclusion can be made that all of the needs that Glasser (1998) spoke about in his theory can be interpreted and applied in subjective ways.
Knowing this, it is important for teachers to thoroughly understand how Glasser’s (1998) theory is intended to be applied to the classroom setting, in an attempt to utilize its components according to their envisioned purposes.

**Teacher group 3 pre-professional-development responses-power and freedom.**

Distinct differences were found among teachers in this particular group upon examining and coding information concerning the concepts of freedom and power. Teachers H and I claimed that they felt responsible in making and establishing all of the classroom rules. These actions were influenced by the teachers’ perceptions about their African American male students’ abilities to socially adapt to the learning environment. Both teachers expressed strong opinions towards their students’ social development, often expressing that their African American male students had too much leniency and/or got away with whatever they could, from their previous teachers. As a result, Teachers H and I believed that it was their responsibility to change and/alter the behaviors of their African American male students. In alignment with choice theory (Glasser, 1998), a person cannot change another person’s behavior. The only thing that can be done is to provide him or her with information about alternative choices concerning his or her behavior. If this is the case, then the perceptions of these teachers have led them to manage a classroom that did not meet the social and emotional needs prior to attending the professional development.

Teacher J, on the other hand, had a very different perception of what power and freedom should look like in the classroom setting. First, throughout much of his conversation, Teacher J continuously used words such as fun, freedom, and flexibility. In addition to this, Teacher J continuously stressed the concept of autonothe, in regards to allowing for his African American
male students to make positive choices without being told to do so. Second, Teacher J claimed that he was not familiar with Glasser (1998) or the elements within his theory. However, unintentionally, Teacher J was incorporating some of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) elements within his daily management routines, without any prior training. Third, in addition to Teacher J attempting to establish a classroom that supported freedom and autonomy of his African American male students, he admitted to not being a big disciplinarian, which is the opposite of Teachers H and I. Patterns noted were that Teacher J reported less disciplinary problems within his classroom, than his fellow colleagues, who focused more on discipline and structure, as it related to his African American male students’ behavior and engagement. Examining this information through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), it appears that Teacher J’s African American male students responded better when given the freedom and opportunity to select behaviors that allowed them to make meaningful contributions to the learning environment as a whole.

**Teacher group 1 pre-professional-development responses-fun.** When examining and coding the information from this group, patterns within the responses all lead to these teachers’ perceptions of incorporating fun within the management routines, all consisted of African American male students being provided the ability to move around. This included, but was not limited to, recess breaks and/or lessons that incorporated kinesthetic movement activities. All of the participants in this group had similar perceptions of what fun should look like within the classroom environment. Just as the concepts of power and freedom, all of the teachers’ perceptions of fun were limited to incorporating movement within the management routines of their classrooms.
Teacher group 2 pre-professional-development responses-fun. When examining and coding the data from this study, information revealed that all of the teachers believed fun was another characteristic that should be incorporated within daily management routines, when attempting to support the social and emotional development of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. However, just as previously discussed, implementation strategies for this concept also varied drastically. Teacher E focused more on technology and stimulating brain activities. Similar to other responses, Teacher E connected the element of fun to have included more of a cognitive approach. Teacher F on the other hand, claimed that she had not perceived fun as being taught as a separate element. As a result, Teacher F claimed that she chose to focus more on providing her African American male students with a decent education. Teacher F’s strategies focused more on presenting her African American male students with activities that challenged them to utilize critical thinking skills, in an attempt to successfully problem solve. As a result, activities such as mathematical words problems, or crossword puzzles were used, in lieu of kinesthetic and musical movement lessons.

Teacher G had a different approach from Teachers E and F. Teacher G’s strategies of implementing fun into classroom strategies included whole-body/kinesthetic methods. Teacher G claimed that this method has motivated her students to become actively engaged within the classroom setting. Elaborating, Teacher G shared that her African American male students behave better when provided the opportunity to move around the classroom. For this group of teachers, other than all three of them agreeing that classroom-management strategies should include the element of fun, there was a clear difference of how each teacher perceived what fun should look like within the educational setting, as well as which strategies should be used to demonstrate these perceptions.
Teacher group 3 pre-professional-development responses-fun. When examining and coding information from this group, key patterns were discovered. All of the teachers in this group interpreted fun differently. Teacher H expressed that she chose to focus on providing African American male students with a sound and meaningful education. Teacher H expressed that she has incorporated stability into her daily management routines, instead of centering her efforts on having fun and being her African American male students’ friend. Teacher H felt that although she was firm in how she managed her classroom, she was also fair, and a true believer that all children could learn and be successful if provided the proper educational tools. Teacher I incorporated fun into his classroom by implementing a variety of kinesthetic activities such as finger painting, chalk sketches, guided dancing and calming exercises. Teacher I liked to get involved with his African American male students and challenge them not only academically, but also creatively. On the other hand, he considered himself to be incapable of fully supporting the social needs of his African American male students. Teacher I claimed to have felt limited in regards to his knowledge of meaningful strategies that he could use to help his African American male students develop better emotionally. Within the classroom, Teacher J used humor to incorporate fun into his daily management routine. However, he continued to consider himself a disciplinarian, in regards to classroom order and structure. He attributed much of this to his past educational experiences, growing up as a child.

Teacher group 1 pre-professional-development responses-power and freedom. A key pattern that was discovered throughout the interviews prior to attending the professional development was the case that all of the teachers in group 1 admitted to establishing the rules for their classrooms, with little to no input from their African American male students. Power, according to the teachers in this group, was solely limited to students having been allowed to
establish rules and procedures for their classrooms. None of the discussions extended beyond this perception. All of the teachers in this group perceived their African American male students as lacking the discipline or knowledge of how to behave appropriately within the classroom environment. What is also worth noting is that none of the teachers provided solid evidence, including current actions or behaviors of their African American male students. These teachers failed to provide any type of rationale as to how or why they came to the assumptions or perceptions of their African American male students. All of the teachers in this group justified their actions of not allowing their students the power or freedom to establish rules within their educational setting, based on their (the teachers’) predetermined assumptions concerning the abilities of their African American male students to be able to socially and emotionally adapt to the learning environment. The actions of the teachers and their perceptions towards their African American male students, demonstrated not only the teachers’ lack of knowledge pertaining to the basic needs, as outlined in choice theory (Glasser, 1998), but also how this lack of understanding impacted how teachers engaged with their students and managed their classrooms as a whole.

**Teacher group 2 pre-professional-development responses-power and freedom.** When examining and coding the data, key patterns emerged from the information. There was a difference of how Teacher E and Teachers F and G perceived the concept of power. All of the teachers in this group felt that power and freedom were important characteristics to include in their daily routines and how each teacher carried out these tasks varied in approach. Teacher E limited her perception of power to those behaviors that are exhibited within the classroom setting. This included teaching her African American male students the importance of following school rules such as walking down the hall, showing respect to others, and keeping their hands
themselves. Most of Teacher E’s conversation was narrowed to that of what takes place solely within the classroom setting.

On the other hand, Teachers F and G looked beyond the classroom environment, and related the concepts of power and freedom to not only the greater society, but often made constant references to the importance of safety and survival elements as a whole, as it related to African American males. Teacher E exhibited more of a modest approach when addressing power and freedom in her classroom, while Teachers F and G viewed these concepts from a more philosophical approach. From this, a conclusion can be made that all of the needs that Glasser (1998) speaks about in his theory can be interpreted and applied in subjective ways. Knowing this, it is important for teachers to thoroughly understand how Glasser’s (1998) theory is intended to be applied to the classroom setting, in an attempt to utilize its components according to their envisioned purposes.

**Teacher group 3 pre-professional-development responses-power and freedom.**

Distinct differences were found among teachers in this particular group upon examining and coding information concerning the concepts of freedom and power. Teachers H and I felt responsible for making and establishing all of the classroom rules. These actions were influenced by the teachers’ perceptions about their African American male students’ abilities to socially adapt to the learning environment. Both teachers exhibited strong opinions towards their students’ social development, often expressing that their African American male students had too much leniency and/ or “got away” with whatever they could, from their previous teachers. As a result, Teachers H and I believed that it was their responsibility to change and/alter the behaviors of their African American male students. In alignment with choice theory (Glasser, 1998), a person cannot change another person’s behavior. The only thing that can be done is to provide
him or her with information about alternative choices concerning his or her behavior. If this is the case, then the perceptions of these teachers have led them to manage a classroom that did not meet the social and emotional needs prior to attending the professional development.

Teacher J, on the other hand, had a very different perception of what power and freedom should look like in the classroom setting. First, throughout much of his conversation, Teacher J continuously used words such as fun, freedom, and flexibility. In addition to this, Teacher J also stressed the concept of autonothe, in regards to allowing for his African American male students to make positive choices without being told to do so. Although Teacher J was not familiar with Glasser’s theory (1998) or its elements, he unintentionally, incorporated some of the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) elements within his daily management routines, without any prior training. Third, in addition to Teacher J attempting to establish a classroom that supports freedom and autonothe of his African American male students, he admitted to not being a big disciplinarian, which is the opposite of Teachers H and I. Patterns noted were that Teacher J reported less disciplinary problems within his classroom, than his fellow colleagues, who focused more on discipline and structure, as it related to his African American male students’ behavior and engagement. Examining this information through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), it appeared that Teacher J’s African American male students responded better when given the freedom and opportunity to select behaviors that allowed them to make meaningful contributions to the learning environment as a whole.

**Teacher group 1 pre-professional-development responses-classroom climate and culture.** When examining and coding the information from the participants’ responses, one conclusion that can be made involved the concept of contradiction. Teachers A and C used words such as exciting, self-exploration and discovery to describe their classroom environments.
However, these were the same teachers who not only admitted to limiting the opportunities of their African American male students to display power and freedom within the class setting, but also admitted they have not specifically focused on implementing love and belonging within their daily management routines on a regular basis. These actions could be viewed as hindrances to teachers’ ability to fully support the social and emotional growth of their African American male students as a whole. Although having limited knowledge of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), Teachers B and D, continued to be extremely critical of their actions and thoughts, often expressing feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, as they related to their management practices.

**Teacher group 2 pre-professional-development responses-classroom climate and culture.** Key patterns emerged from the data when examining and coding information from this group of teachers. Teachers E, F, and G all claimed to have established learning environments that promoted inclusion of their African American male students; however, the opposite of their intentions occurred. For example, Teacher E unintentionally neglected to fully support the social and emotional needs of her students by attempting to address all of her students’ needs the same way, regardless of whether they were African American male or not. Teacher F, on the other hand overcompensated in attempting to meet the needs of her African American male students by not only speaking for them, but by completing various tasks for them, based on her assumptions and perceptions of the social and emotional abilities of her students. Similar to these teachers, Teacher G also failed to meet the needs of her African American male students by failing to correctly identify the social and emotional needs of these students. Teacher E expressed that she felt confident in making connections with her African American male students; however, she noticed that many of them were beginning to display more aggression toward not only each other, but toward staff members as well.
When examining this information, various conclusions can be made. First, although Teacher E felt confident with making connections to her African American male students, she continued to feel that these students’ levels of aggression toward peers and staff had increased. Glasser (1998) claimed that an individual’s quality world is influenced by how well his or her basic needs are being met. In addition to this, depending on past experiences, Glasser (1998) asserted that an individual eventually chooses how he or she will satisfy those needs, which connects back to his or her total behavior. If not taught appropriate strategies for meeting these needs, he or she may choose to do so in an unsafe manner.

According to choice theory (1998), this could include individuals displaying behavior that could be harmful to themselves and/or others. According to Glasser (1998), different people may have different needs that must be satisfied. In addition to this, Glasser (1998) claims that not all needs can be satisfied the same way. A strategy for meeting the needs of one person may not be beneficial for another. If this is the case, then Teacher E was not meeting the needs of her African American male students in a way that would assist them in making appropriate choices when attempting to satisfy their needs. As previously stated, although equality in the classroom has its benefits, in Teacher E’s case, it appeared as though some of her African American students needed more support in the area of love and belonging. Because Teacher E was more focused on treating all students equally, it was observed that she failed to provide additional support where needed, thus unintentionally neglecting the social and emotional needs of some of her African American male students. Therefore, if Teacher E was attempting to not only meet the exact same needs of her students, in the exact same way, then according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), as well as data from this study (1998), Teacher E was not supporting the social and emotional development of her students.
With this in mind, choice theory (Glasser, 1998) claims that total behavior is comprised of a person’s actions, thoughts, feelings, and physical state. Actions referred to a person choosing what to do as he or she met the needs of his or her quality world (wglasser.com, 2016). Thoughts are considered the way a person thinks, which determines how he or she reaches his or her quality world (wglasser.com, 2016). Glasser (1998) believed that a person’s thoughts and actions are the most controllable elements of his or her quality world. According to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), a person can choose both, his or her thoughts and actions. However, other elements such as feelings and physical state or physiology, are characteristics that are influenced by a person’s actions (wglasser.com, 2016).

According to choice theory (Glasser, 1998), the need for love and belonging is one of the most influential characteristics that many people often lack in being fulfilled. Glasser (1998) stated that when the need of love and belonging is not met, relationships are not established. When this occurs, it creates problems in every other area of the total behavior realm (wglasser.com, 2016). As a result, a person may be encouraged to make poor choices or employ poor strategies to meet this need (wglasser.com, 2016). This could be the case with the increasing aggression of Teacher E’s students, due to the fact that she is not appropriately meeting their needs.

Teacher F explained her classroom climate as one of inclusion. Teacher F wanted all of her African American male students to feel like they were a part of a community. With this in mind, Teacher F focused more on her African American males, because she perceived them as the forgotten ones. Teacher F’s perceptions included evident and distinct characteristics were when examining and coding information from. Although Teacher F wanted to make her African American male students feel like they were a part of a community, she did the opposite. Teacher
F seemed to overcompensate when attempting to address the needs of her students. Teacher F appeared to have directed all of her management routines directly toward her African American male students, often making them the main focus of her management structure. If this is the case, then by doing so, these students were constantly placed in the limelight, as opposed to blending into the class community. Reflecting on Teacher F’s conversation, she continued to use the statement, “especially the African American males,” or “the African American males in particular.” These phrases clearly demonstrated that the African American male students continually remained the main focus of the classroom-management routines, as opposed to them being a part of the educational community that Teacher F claimed, was the foundation of which her class culture and climate was based upon.

Teacher G believed her classroom culture was conducive to learning, when meeting the social needs of her African American male students. She too wanted to make her African American male students feel like they were a part of a learning community. Similar to the actions of Teacher F, Teacher G also focused much of her daily management routines on the needs, or what she assumed were the needs, of her African American male students. Although Teacher G continued to struggle with her limited knowledge of multiple strategies that could support the social and emotional needs of her African American male students, she did not express any noted and/or negative responses regarding student behavior, as it pertained to her management strategies.

**Teacher group 3 pre-professional-development responses-classroom climate and culture.** Teacher H felt that her classroom supported the emotional and social growth of African American males. However, because she was an ongoing learner, Teacher H shared that she wanted to receive more training about how to make better connections with her African
American male students. Teacher I also made it a point to establish the rules in his class, rather than having allowed his students do so, believing that his African American male students needed discipline and structure. Teacher I believed that his African American male students must be taught right from wrong, instead of allowing for them to figure it out on their own. Teacher J felt that his classroom climate and culture was one that incorporated a sense of humor and the opportunity for children to have fun. Although claiming to be a big disciplinarian, Teacher J felt that his African American male students needed the opportunity to have fun.

**Teacher group 1 pre-professional-development responses-belonging and love.**

When-examining and coding the data from the discussions and actions of these teachers, data suggested that Teachers B and D felt more comfortable, attempting to implement the elements of love and belonging within their daily routines. This was exhibited by their actions of actively engaging with their African American male students. By personally greeting their African American male students every morning, walking around the classroom, and/or repeatedly calling on these students randomly, Teachers B and D claimed to ensure that all of these strategies helped to keep their students on task.

On the other hand, Teachers A and C openly admitted that they did not specifically focus on teaching the concept of love as a separate skill. Teacher D on the other hand, continued to feel unsuccessful when attempting to include the characteristics of love and belonging within her classroom-environment. A key factor that is worth noting is that the teachers who did not intentionally focus on incorporating the concepts of love and belonging felt more confident in their daily routines than their peers who had intentionally focused on these concepts. Teachers B and D were more critical and self-reflective of their strategies, than Teachers A and C. One could argue that this was another example of the biased thinking patterns that the teachers in this group
often exhibited, pertaining to their perceptions of not only their African American male students’ social and emotional abilities, but their own roles as educators, to support the social and emotional development of these students as a whole.

**Teacher group 2 pre-professional-development responses-belonging and love.**

When examining and coding the information from this group, there were key concepts that were evident. First, all teachers in this group were able to articulate that their students were in need of being supported, as it related to developing a sense of love and belonging. However, when asked to explain their various strategies for supporting the needs of their students in the classroom, all of the teachers responded with either vague answers, or had difficulty explaining how these concepts were demonstrated in their classrooms. Teacher G felt that she continued to struggle with identifying and accurately supporting the social and emotional needs of her African American students. Second, all of the teachers seemed to apply a philosophical approach to the concepts of love and belonging, which was noticeably different from how they perceived and demonstrated the previously mentioned concepts of fun, power, and freedom. Teachers in this group appeared to display a more efficacious attitude about wanting to learn how to support the social and emotional development of their African American male students. All of these teachers appeared passionate and highly motivated to help their students, but were limited due to their lack of knowledge regarding strategies that were specifically tailored to meeting their African American male students’ social and emotional needs.

All of the teachers’ responses focused more on empowering African American males as a whole. Teacher G displayed a more persistent attitude towards her ability of establishing a learning environment that is conducive to the emotional development of her African American male students. Teacher G appeared to be convinced that she could make a positive difference in
her classroom-management techniques, if she was provided training that is specifically tailored to explaining how to meet the needs of her African American male students. This opinion alone, was different from any other teacher in the study, because it displayed Teacher G’s determination and tenacity to address classroom-management from a perspective that embraced her willingness to transition from that of authoritarian to a manager, which is in alignment to what Glasser (1998) suggests as the role of the teacher to be. Third, despite their abilities to articulate in great detail, the importance of incorporating love and a sense of belonging into daily management routines, none of the teachers were able to explain, in detail, how they implemented and/or demonstrated this within their classroom-management routines. This, again, was believed to have been directly associated with the teachers’ limited knowledge of management strategies that could be included within their daily routines.

**Teacher group 3 pre-professional-development responses-belonging and love.**

Teacher H stated that she has made an effort to listen more to her African American male students, in an effort to try and understand how they felt about themselves and their peers. Teacher H connected this with the concept of love and a sense of belonging, stating that she wanted her African American male students to feel like they were important and belonged to a community of learners, as opposed to being isolated from the group. Teacher I used his kinesthetic activities to connect with his African American male students. According to Teacher I, this strategy was one method he used often in his class to actively engage his African American male students and make them feel like they are a part of the class community.

When incorporating love within his daily management routines, Teacher I had not focused on this characteristic. He believed his African American male students felt that he cared about them; however, struggled with explaining it, as he fidgeted and sighed in his seat. Just as
Teacher I, Teacher J also focused very little on intentionally incorporating love into his daily routines. Just as the previous teacher, Teacher J also assumed that his African American male students knew that he cared for them.

**Group 1 pre-professional-development discussion-Question 1.** When examining and coding the information from the data, it was observed that teachers in this group exhibited biased thinking, as it related to their abilities in meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students. Teachers A, B, C, and D exhibited presuppositions and assumptions about their African American male students’ abilities to adapt and emotionally develop within the classroom setting. As a result, these teachers’ perceptions served as hindrances for them being able to fully support the social and emotional needs of their African American male students. For example, all of group 1 teachers felt they established the classroom rules for their students, as opposed to allowing for their African American male students to share and/or actively participate in creating an educational environment that is conducive to learning.

Conclusions can be drawn based on the information presented, that the actions of Teachers A, B, C, and D, significantly limited the power and freedom of their African American male students to help establish the culture and climate of the classroom environment as a whole. Lastly, although teachers claimed that their classrooms were inviting, many of their actions demonstrated the opposite. This included, but not limited to, taking full control of establishing most of the classroom rules, as well as deciding which activities the African American male students will participate in. It is important to understand that the information presented in this section is data collected prior to teachers having attended the professional development.

**Group 2 pre-professional-development discussion-Question 1.** When examining and coding information from this group, key patterns were discovered from both the responses and
actions of the participants in group 2. When focusing on the concept of love, Teacher E appeared
more modest in her approach, focusing more on solely the classroom environment. What is not
clear is why Teacher E limited her intentions to solely focus on supporting the emotional and
social development of her African American male students to that of the educational setting, as
oppose to extending it beyond the classroom as some of her peers did. In doing so, Teacher E’s
various approaches to meeting the needs of her African American male students appear to be
vague and one-sided.

On the other hand, Teachers F and G used a more philosophical approach when
attempting to address the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.
Teachers F and G, often referenced and connected their perceptions of power, to safety and
security. These two teachers extended their perceptions of power, beyond the classroom setting,
thus applying it to everyday life, within the modern society as a whole, as it related to their
African American male students.

When examining teacher responses pertaining to love, Teacher E admitted not making an
intentional effort to incorporate love within his daily management routine, also appearing to
believe that his African American male students knew he cared about them. On the contrary,
when asked to explain how he came to this conclusion, Teacher E struggled to provide concrete
examples that supported his statements. Because of this, a conclusion was drawn that prior to
attending the professional development, Teacher E struggled with understanding not only what
love is, as it related to one of the basic needs, but she also struggled with knowing how to
implement and apply it within the classroom setting, when supporting the emotional needs of her
African American male students.
On the other hand, Teachers F and G took specific actions to show their African American male students they cared for them. This included greeting students with fist bumps and/or high fives. Throughout the study, data revealed that Teachers F and G shared many of the same ideas/perceptions, as well as strategies for trying to emotionally support their African American male students. One element to note is that, because Teachers F and G are on the same grade-level professional planning team, they are often expected to collaborate and share ideas, challenges, and data, as they pertain to both academic and social development of their African American male students. As a result, although Teachers F and G were unaware of the others’ participation within this study prior to the professional development, they still had similar ideas of how to manage their classroom on a daily basis.

When coding and examining information collected based on the participants’ responses pertaining to fun, all three participants in this group had different approaches. Teacher E demonstrated a more modest approach. Teacher E’s perception of fun included technology-based activities that stimulated the brain. This consisted of math, phonics, and reading puzzles and/or games that were played on the smart-boards, I-pads, and other computer devices. Teacher E admitted to focusing more on academic-based activities, rather than ones incorporating African American male students to physically move throughout the classroom.

Contrary to Teacher E’s approach to implementing fun within her management routines, Teacher G’s perception of fun incorporated kinesthetic activities that involved dancing, singing, and whole-body movements. Teacher G’s perception included more of getting her African American male students to socialize better by actively engaging in physical activities focusing on collaboration and teamwork. Teacher F on the other hand, did not focus on fun at all. Teacher F claimed that fun just happened within her lessons. Attempting to explain more, just as Teacher E
did, when discussing love, Teacher F also struggled with expressing her perception of the concept of fun, as well as how this concept has illustrated itself within her management routines. Prior to the professional development, all three teachers struggled with explaining their perceptions of belonging, as well as how it was included within their management strategies was revealed when examining and coding data concerning the concept of belonging. When referring to the culture and climate of their classrooms, all three teachers in this group claimed to have established environments that exhibited characteristics such as inclusion, equality and togetherness. As previously stated, although treating students equal can have its benefits, on the other hand, those African American male students who required additional support in areas such as belonging, love, and power, were overlooked. By doing so, conclusions can be drawn that specific needs of some of the African American male students were neglected, whether intentional or unintentional, when attempting to treat all of them equally. If all of the students have different needs that should be addressed in different ways, then treating African American male students equally in the classroom, as it related to addressing their particular needs, was ineffective. Based on the information collected from the study, it is evident that all three teachers in this group lacked the pertinent information and/or strategies of not only what each of the basic needs entails, but how to apply such elements within their daily management routines, in an effort to support the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

**Group 3 pre-professional-development discussion-Question 1.** Teachers in this group had drastically different perceptions of how each of the five basic needs should look like within the classroom setting. Teachers H and I focused heavily on discipline, rules, and procedures, while Teacher J claimed to have concentrated more on freedom, fun and flexibility. Teachers H and I were stricter in how they managed their classrooms, admitting to establishing all of the
rules. These teachers expressed the same, if not less confidence in their African American male students’ abilities to make appropriate choices, as it relates to how they meet their quality worlds. As a result of this, these teachers often ran their classrooms, focusing heavily on discipline, despite their initial claims of having established classroom climate that were aligned to the needs of their African American male students.

Although admitting to being a strict teacher, Teacher J was more flexible in his management methods, often making an intentional effort to include his elements such as humor and laughter. When focusing on fun, J appeared to have understood that children needed the opportunity to laugh and unwind; however, this must be done so within limitation. Teacher H focused more on structure and stability, rather than acting as if she were her African American male students’ friend. Teacher H believed that she would rather provide her African American male students with the essential tools to help them become productive citizens. Ironically, prior to attending the professional development, Teacher H did not perceive many of the basic needs that Glasser (1998) referred to as essential tools. Teacher H concentrated more on meeting the academic needs of her African American male students, rather than supporting their social and emotional development. If this is the case, then prior to attending the professional development and implementing new information and strategies learned within the training, Teacher H was not meeting the social and emotional needs of her African American male students.

Although claiming to concentrate more on discipline and routines, Teacher I perceived fun very differently from his colleagues. Teacher I, in an effort to be creative, included more kinesthetic, whole-body activities. This involved his African American male students role-playing, singing, dancing, and participating in outdoor recess/ free-play activities.
As this researcher examined and coded information pertaining to the concept of belonging, Teacher H felt that she listened to her African American male students; however, she made most, if not all, of the decisions in the classroom. Teacher H’s classroom-management strategies were a complete contradiction of her claim of listening to her students. Teacher H acted as more of an authoritarian within her classroom, as oppose to a creating an environment where the feedback from her African American male students were welcomed. Throughout most of the interviews from the participants in all three groups, there was a pattern of teachers claiming to do one thing; however, their statements contradicted how they claimed to manage their classroom-environments. For example, despite Teacher I claiming not to exhibit bias, through his conversation pertaining to his African American male students, Teacher I expressed a lack of confidence in his students’ abilities to successfully adapt within the classroom both socially and emotionally.

**Group 1 pre-professional-discussion-Question 2.** As information from the study was examined and coded by this researcher, key patterns were discovered. It is important to understand that all of this information included pre-professional-development participant interview responses. All of the teachers in this group claimed to have had no bias toward their African American male students. Information collected from the participants’ pre-professional-development interviews revealed that three out of four teachers exhibited a high level of bias toward their African American male students. Teacher A felt her African American male students displayed more defiance, difficult and aggressive behaviors, than her other students. Teacher C believed that she did not allow for race and/or gender to influence how she engaged with her students. However, Teacher C constantly referred to her African American students as consistent trouble makers. In addition to this, Teacher C believed in choosing her words
carefully. On the other hand, Teacher C claimed to have believed some of the negative rumors about her African American students. This included her African American students being extremely disrespectful, defiant, and violent toward teaching staff and other students. As a result, despite her claims of making positive connections with her students, it appeared that Teacher C allowed for her assumptions and biases to influence how she managed her classroom. Through observation, conclusions were drawn that Teacher C’s efficacy level had been influenced by her personal opinions of her African American male students’ abilities to socially and emotionally adapt to the classroom environment. This has influenced her classroom-management techniques and her ability to fully support the social and emotional development of her African American male students.

Similar to Teachers A and C, Teacher D also felt that she had no bias toward her African American male students. However, Teacher D believed her African American male students exhibited difficulties when establishing positive relationships with adults and staff members. This perception alone demonstrated bias. What is key to point out from the collected data from this group of teachers, is that many of their responses pertaining to bias, confidence, and or efficacy levels, were contradictory to their actions of not only interacting with their African American male students, but how well they managed their classrooms as a whole. It appeared that all of the teachers in this group believed their claims of not demonstrating bias toward their students to have been accurate, and not able to see how their biases have influenced their management routines. Contrary to these patterns, Teacher B was the only participant in this group whose actions were more aligned with what she claimed to believe about her African American male students. Throughout the interview, Teacher B’s comments of alluding to her African American students, was significantly less than Teachers A, C, and D. This may have
been a direct result of what Teacher B chose to concentrate and/or focus on within her daily management routines, as well as her perception of her efficacy to establish a learning environment that supports the social and emotional development of her African American male students. As previously mentioned, Teacher B focused heavily on reflecting on her management techniques, efficacy, and perceptions of her abilities to meet her African American male students’ needs, more than any other participant in this group of teachers. Therefore, it is clear that a shift in Teacher B’s focus was what possibly contributed to the decrease of her exhibiting bias within her classroom setting.

**Group 2 pre-professional-development discussion-Question 2.** When this researcher examined and coded the information throughout the study, key patterns within this area were also noted. Just as described within previous patterns regarding the participants’ responses, Teacher E continued to be modest in her approach of specific management routines implemented within her classroom. Although Teacher E appeared to have used the stoplight behavior technique, her daily routines appeared to be simple and basic approaches. Teacher E felt that she did not have a wide variety of strategies to use within her classroom, due to her limited knowledge of resources. As a result, the only alternative methods that Teacher E used were the processes of either sending disruptive African American male students to the office and/or calling their parents. Teacher E’s conversation was very straightforward, focusing primarily on the above-mentioned management strategies.

Teacher’s F and G chose to look at classroom management from a cultural-awareness standpoint. Contrary to Teacher E’s response of claiming not to have had any bias toward her African American male students, Teachers F and G openly admitted to having biases toward their African American male students in particular. Teacher F felt that she has tried to be more
proactive in her approach to classroom management, while Teacher G focused primarily on addressing assumed stereotypical perceptions of her African American male students. Because Teacher F felt she could predict the triggers of her students, in regards to their negative behaviors, she chose to look for these elements on a daily basis, in an effort to address potential problems before they negatively impact the classroom environment.

On the other hand, Teacher G focused heavily on establishing positive relationships with her African American male students. Teacher G claimed she wanted to be respected as the authority power within her classroom. As a result, she rarely sent her African American male students out of the classroom for discipline infractions. Teacher G preferred to handle her behavior strategies at the school level rather than to allow for someone else to have the power of disciplining her students. As a result, Teachers G and F appeared more disciplined and structured in their management routines, than Teacher E. Despite the differences and/or similarities in their approaches to classroom management, as it related to their perceptions of their biases, discipline routines, and choices of strategies, all of these teachers shared that they continued to feel limited in their knowledge of multiple strategies that they could utilize within the classroom to fully support the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

**Group 3 pre-professional-development discussion-Question 2.** When examining and coding the information from the study, the following patterns were discovered. Teacher H attributed much of her beliefs regarding discipline, structure, and classroom management, to her upbringing as a child. Because she was raised, having been taught that children were to respect their elders regardless of the situation, she carried these principles throughout her life, which transferred into her daily management routines. Just as Teachers F and G, two of three teachers in this group openly admitted to having biases about their African American male students.
Teacher H claimed that because she had previous relationships with the families of some of her African American male students, she had prior knowledge that these students came from unstable homes. As a result, while acting out of her feelings and perceptions about her students, Teacher H chose to govern her classroom with strict rules and procedures. However, what is worth noting here is that Teacher H believed that she treated all of her African American male students equally and applied all of the strict rules and procedures to all students. If, according to Glasser (1998), basic needs can vary from person to person, then Teacher H’s implementation of a universal classroom management approach is ineffective when attempting to meet the specific social and emotional needs of her African American male students.

Teacher I, a male teacher, also believed that much of how he conducted his classroom was influenced by his past educational experiences. Initially, Teacher I felt that he tried not to allow for his bias to influence his classroom management; however, his actions indicated the opposite of what he said. Just as other participants did, Teacher I also made quite a few references toward his African American males, specifically pointing them out from the rest of the class, when describing their behaviors and perceptions. At the beginning of the pre-professional-development interview, Teacher I appeared to believe that all children should be given a second chance, with an understanding that they make mistakes. On the other hand, as the pre-professional development interview progressed, Teacher I admitted to also managing a classroom that placed a heavy focus on discipline, rules, and procedures. At times, Teacher I appeared to believe that children should respect their elders regardless of the situation. Appearing less complex than the other participants’ routines, Teacher I stated that his discipline routine solely included his contacting parents.
Teacher I firmly asserted that this was the best management tool for him, thus far. However, despite his initial claim of feeling confident with implementing his classroom-management routines, as the pre-professional-development interview concluded, Teacher I began to exhibit a shift in his perception of his ability to manage a classroom environment conducive to meeting the needs of his African American male students. Teacher I appeared that he thought he was doing a good job because he ruled a tightly structured classroom. However, he began to realize that he did more harm by not understanding how ineffective his routines were to the emotional development of his African American male students. He admitted that he used discipline as a way to cover up and/or mask, his lack of knowledge, as it pertained to implementing a variety of social and emotional strategies to support his African American male students.

Similar to the other participants in this group, Teacher J, who was also a male teacher, believed he exhibited no bias toward his African American male students. Contrary to this belief, his perceptions of student behavior, and children as a whole, were almost identical to those perceptions of Teachers H and I. Admitting to having allowed for his past educational experiences to influence his management routines, Teacher J shared that his classroom structure was heavily disciplined as well. Teacher J also spoke of allowing for his African American male students to have fun; however, according to him, this also must be done in moderation. Throughout most of his pre-professional-development interview process, Teacher J felt his management routines would be a lot better if he had the appropriate tools and resources. Teacher J appeared to continue to feel limited in his ability to draw upon additional resources that focused on the social and emotional development of his African American male students.
One important element worth mentioning is the distinctive differences in the styles of classroom management between the male and the female teachers. Throughout the study, eight of 10 participants were female. When examining the characteristics of the classroom styles among the teachers, key themes were discovered. Both of the male teachers chose to establish routines and procedures with an emphasis on discipline, specific procedures, and survival strategies. Because he was an African American male, Teacher I’s conversation focused on addressing survival elements from an African American male perspective. This included Teacher I educating his African American male students on the importance of making choices that would not put them in a life-threatening situation. Much of Teacher I’s conversation was surrounded by this concept. On the other hand, Teacher J’s responses often referenced discipline, procedures, and safety from a male perspective in general. This included his (Teacher J), supporting the development of his African American male students in making wise decisions that would keep them safe, as well as understanding the consequences of their behavioral choices.

On the contrary, all of the female participants’ management styles focused more on nurturing, inclusion, and discipline. Teachers F, G, and H, took more of a mothering role, creating management routines that attempted to meet the social and emotional needs of their African American students. As a result, a conclusion can be made that because of the different styles of management between the male and female teachers, they received different responses from their African American male students. The male teachers reported less defiant behavior within their classrooms, as opposed to the female teachers. On the other hand, despite this being the case, the female teachers reported higher levels of efficacy, as it pertained to meeting the needs of their African American male students. This could be due to the fact that three of seven female teachers shared how they often self-reflect on their actions and choices, as they related
to classroom-management routines, and their overall abilities to meet the needs of their African American male students.

When addressing question 2, data revealed that eight of 10 teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged them to look at their own personalities and reflect how this influenced their classroom-management routines, as well as how well they established meaningful relationships with their African American male students. Prior to attending the professional development, findings indicated that four of 10 teachers who participated in this study perceived their personalities as having little to do with how they established relationships with their African American male students, as well as how well they managed their classrooms. On the other hand, after attending the professional development, eight of 10 teachers shared how their past educational experiences as students not only influenced their personalities, they also helped to shape their perceptions about the school environment as a whole. For example, six of 10 participants shared that because their previous teachers focused heavily on discipline, they adopted this characteristic and viewed the classroom as an environment that embraced order, rules, and regulations. As a result, this encouraged these teachers to implement learning environments that fostered limited movement and limited conversation.

These teachers also admitted to exhibiting strict personalities when engaging with their African American male students. After attending the professional development, through discussion and post-professional-development interviews, data revealed that these same teachers were the participants who, prior to receiving professional development, perceived more than half of the African American male students in their classes as being more defiant and disruptive than their other students. As a result of these beliefs, many of their African American male students often received consequences such as isolation, removal from the classroom, and loss of
classroom enrichment privileges, for actions such as speaking out in class, or getting out their seats without permission. When examining and analyzing these findings, one could argue that the personalities of these teachers, which embraced distortions and assumptions regarding student behavior, may have posed an influence on how they perceived their African American male students’ abilities of developing a sense of belonging in the learning environment.

Additional findings indicated that the professional development encouraged teachers to become culturally aware of their African American male students’ needs. This included teachers learning how a student’s culture can influence his or her behavioural routines, thus causing him or her to exhibit certain behaviors. For example, in an interview following the professional development, Teacher D claimed felt she did not realize that the cultural norms and behaviors of her African American male students could transfer into the classroom setting. As a result of this lack of understanding, prior to attending the professional development, Teacher D perceived her students as exhibiting defiant behavior. Because of this, one may attempt to argue that teachers’ awareness and assumptions about their African American male students’ social and emotional abilities may influence how well teacher-student relationships are established within the classroom setting. However, this directly aligns to Glasser’s (1998) theory concerning the element of total behavior (Glasser 1998) attested through his research that because total behavior is comprised on the four elements, which are actions, thoughts, feelings, and physiology, with actions and thoughts being the most dominant of the group, whatever a person is thinking, his or her actions and feelings will follow, thus influencing his or her physical state as well. In other words, if teachers embrace negative stereotypes, presuppositions, and negative perceptions, then their actions and the way they implement classroom strategies and engage with their African American male students will also reflect their thought processes.
Data from the study suggested that the professional development also encouraged teachers to address their biases from a more in-depth perspective, due to acquiring specific information as to how behavior is developed and nurtured. As discussed within both Chapters 4 and 5, the perceptions of the teachers in regards to if and how their efficacy influenced classroom management, has either increased or changed altogether. Findings implied that eight of 10 teachers who, prior to attending the professional development, felt limited in their knowledge of classroom-management strategies, reported an increase in their perceptions of managing their classroom, as well as how they interact with their African American male students. These teachers reported that they felt more comfortable interacting and engaging with their African American male students because they have been provided with an insight to better support them both socially and emotionally. Lastly, information from this study revealed that 10 of 10 teachers agreed that the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development was a vital resource in helping them not only to understand how to appropriately meet the basic needs of their African American male students, but has also increased their efficacy, as it relates to successfully managing a classroom that is conducive to the needs of the learners.

Discussion of the results- pre-professional-development responses versus post-professional development responses. When focusing on research question 1, it is important to make notice of the significant-differences between the teachers’ pre and post professional-development interviews. Prior to the intervention, all 10 participants expressed that they were not familiar with choice theory (Glasser, 1998). In addition, seven of 10 participants also expressed that they did not have any bias toward their African American male students. For example, Teacher A believed that many of her African American male students have displayed the most defiant behavior within her classroom. Teacher C, on the other hand, felt that her students were
not capable of making classroom rules because they were too young and in need have discipline and structure. Reflecting on these views, one can draw special attention to the strong opinions of these teachers, concerning the social and emotional abilities of their African American male students. From the data, conclusions can be drawn that although the teachers claimed they did not exhibit any bias toward their students, through their responses, it was apparent the participants did possess strong biases about their African American male students. As a result, these biases appeared to have not only influenced how these teachers engaged with their African American male students, but also influenced how they managed their classrooms.

When addressing research question 1, pre-professional-development interview information revealed that prior to attending the professional development, seven of 10 teachers who participated in the investigation were under the impression that they were successfully meeting the basic needs of their African American male students, despite having limited knowledge of a variety of methods to choose from. However, data also suggested that prior to attending the professional development; none of the participants was familiar with choice theory or its elements specifically addressing the needs of power, freedom, fun, love, and belonging. In addition to this, pre-professional-development interview responses revealed a pattern of teachers expressing their concern regarding their limited knowledge of various classroom-management routines that they can readily implement within the educational setting.

However, after attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers not only expressed a shift in how they perceived their efficacy level, but also how well they were managing their classrooms as a whole. All of these teachers admitted that they did not realize how comprehensive each of the five basic needs was, nor did they understand that each basic need included specific characteristics that influenced the overall behavior of their African
American male students. Because of this, 10 of 10 participants explained that this new information provided them with a new way of perceiving the social and emotional abilities of their African American male students.

According to the data, teachers shared that the professional development provided them with insight on how to self-reflect about their teaching practices. This included teachers’ ability to align and implement appropriate strategies within their classrooms that were designed to meet the specific needs of their African American male students in grades PreK–2. Research data also drew attention to teachers’ views of the abilities to identify specific characteristics of behavior. According to the participants, 10 of 10 teachers expressed that prior to receiving choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development; they had limited knowledge of what specific characteristics influence behavior. However, post-professional-development interviews revealed that after attending the training, teachers not only had a more comprehensive understanding of each basic need that Glasser (1998) refers to in his theory, but they also understood how to more accurately identify possible triggers of the undesirable behavior that their African American male students exhibited. According to teachers’ responses, having this knowledge also increased their perception of their efficacy level when not only managing their classrooms, but engaging and interacting with their African American male students as a whole.

Another characteristic worth noting is the frustration level of the teachers during the pre-professional-development interviews. Throughout the pre-professional-development conversations, 10 of 10 teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with their lack of abilities to draw upon additional classroom-management resources. Although varying in levels of frustration, all teachers felt this lack of knowledge often hindered how they would govern their classrooms. Five of 10 teachers shared a similar belief that they felt less confident in their abilities to fully
support the social and emotional abilities of not only their African American male students, but their students as a whole. Responses reflected teachers feeling uncomfortable, or not knowing how to address discipline problems, as it pertained to their African American male students. Some of the teachers admitted to avoiding addressing discipline problems altogether by making the students resolve the issues. Although these teachers claimed that this was their method for teaching their students how to resolve minor issues on their own, one factor to point out is that these are the same teachers who lacked confidence in interacting with and addressing the behavior issues of their African American male students. Reflecting on the information acquired from the interviews, prior to having attended the professional development, teacher participants also admitted that much of these feelings were from fear of not wanting to appear prejudiced or insensitive toward their African American students.

After attending the professional development, all of the teachers claimed that their knowledge base was broadened because they were provided with in-depth information explaining how behavior is developed. Many of the teachers claimed that prior to attending the professional development; they implemented management strategies within their classrooms, based on the premise that they could control their African American male students’ behaviors. However, while attending the professional development, teachers were taught that all they can do is provide information to their students about how to meet their basic needs in healthy ways. This included offering their African American male students alternative choices to negative behaviors, which taught these students how to satisfy their quality worlds in a manner that is not harmful to themselves or others.

As teachers implemented choice theory characteristics within their classroom-management strategies, observations revealed that through their post-interview responses and
observations, teachers exhibited more confidence and enthusiasm about their abilities to successfully support the social and emotional development of their African American male students. After attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers claimed to have felt more confident when teaching and engaging with the African male students in their classrooms because they were now able to specifically identify their social and emotional needs, as described according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Examining and analyzing the teachers’ actions, as well as their responses and rationales of their own behaviors as it related to managing their classrooms successfully, a conclusion can be made that the efficacy of these teachers was positively influenced after attending the professional development. This was believed to have been attributed to teachers receiving information that helped to increase their knowledge and understanding of how to fully support their African American male students’ emotional needs.

When addressing research question 2, there were many distinct characteristics that were highlighted throughout the participants’ pre-professional development and post-professional-development responses. Pre-professional-development interviews revealed that all of the teachers had different perceptions of whether or not their personalities influenced their abilities to support their African American male students in developing a sense of belonging within the classroom setting. Some teachers claimed their personalities had little to no influence on how they supported their students. However, on the other hand, some teachers claimed they felt their personalities were possibly too strong, which in turn may have hindered them in supporting their students. Others admitted not knowing how to support the specific needs of their African American male students in developing a sense of belonging. Teachers who claimed that their personalities posed little or no influence on their management practices admitted to feeling as if they continued to struggle with African American male student participation and engagement.
during the class lessons. These teachers shared similar ideas that their personal rationale behind their African American male students’ behavior had little to do with their actions and choices as teachers, and everything to do with the lack of discipline and structure of their students. These teachers took little accountability for the behavior of the students within the classroom setting. Eight of 10 teachers claimed that their students’ lack of participation was a direct result of the African American male students’ laziness or being unmotivated, and unwilling to following directions from an authority figure. As a result, their African American male students responded to these feelings and actions exhibited from their teachers by not participating in lessons and other activities within the classroom environment.

When analyzing and examining this information, one could draw conclusions that the teachers’ beliefs and actions were unconsciously displayed in the classroom through their actions. As previously discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, one of the main focuses of total behavior, according to Glasser (1998), is that there is a triangulation among a person’s thoughts, actions, and physical health state. In this case, when referring to the teachers, the thoughts and perceptions of their African American male students and their social and emotional development were exhibited by the teachers’ actions and overall physical state within the educational environment. A conclusion can be made to state that this may have been why some of these teachers felt defeated and/or overwhelmed when trying to find ways of establishing positive relationships with their African American male students.

Conclusions for teachers who claimed that their personalities were too strong could be seen as having similar outcomes to those of the previously mentioned group. Teachers in this group expressed that because they were overly concerned about how their personalities influenced their abilities to support their African American male students’ needs of developing a
sense of belonging, they too, may have exhibited specific behaviors that may have negatively influenced their implementation of effective classroom-management strategies. This group of teachers also shared that they were careful, at some times, too careful of what and how they communicated with their African American male students. Teacher A often spoke for her students, rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Teacher H felt that she already knows all of the things that her African American male students needed. As a result, she provided them with what she felt was important, rather than attempting to address their specific social and emotional needs. As a result, these teachers also complained of the lack of participation within their classes, from their African American male students. These teachers often referred to these students as lazy, unmotivated, and at times, helpless, not realizing that their actions as teachers may have influenced the outcomes of their African American male students’ behaviors.

Based on the information from the data, conclusions can be made that because the teachers in groups 1 and 3 were overcompensating for their African American male students, often speaking for them, and/or assuming that they knew what each of their students’ needs were, this sabotaged their management routines. However, this overcompensation of what these teachers may have thought of as supporting the needs of their students, appeared to have done just the opposite of what these teachers may have intended. It appeared that because the teachers were speaking and completing tasks for their African American male students, the students were less likely to perform various tasks, and/or communicate on their own. After attending the professional development, all the teachers claimed they realized they were doing their African American male students a disservice by not encouraging them to participate actively in class,
assuming their abilities were being addressed, and avoiding and/or neglecting the need to first establish trusting and productive relationships with their students.

What is worth noting from this information is that prior to attending the professional development, all these teachers neither recognized, nor did they understand how their own actions, biases, personalities, and choices, influenced how well they were able not only to support students in developing a sense of belonging within the classroom environment, but in meeting all of the basic needs, according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Teacher I felt that after receiving professional development, he realized that he did more harm by not understanding how ineffective his routines were when supporting the emotional development of his African American male students. Teacher I shared that he used discipline as a way to compensate and/or mask, his lack of knowledge, as it pertained to implementing a variety of social and emotional strategies to support his African American male students. Once understood, all of the teachers within the study began to implement strategies within their classrooms that could possibly encourage students to find alternative and positive ways to satisfy the needs of their quality worlds.

When addressing question 2, data revealed that eight of 10 teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged them to look at their own personalities and reflect how this influenced their classroom-management routines, as well as how well they established meaningful relationships with their African American male students. Prior to attending the professional development, findings indicated that four of 10 teachers who participated in this study perceived their personalities as having little to do with how they established relationships with their African American male students, as well as how well they managed their classrooms. On the other hand, after attending the professional development, eight of 10 teachers shared how
their past educational experiences as students not only influenced their personalities, they also helped to shape their perceptions about the school environment as a whole. For example, six of 10 participants shared that because their previous teachers focused heavily on discipline, they adopted this characteristic and viewed the classroom as an environment that embraced order, rules, and regulations. As a result, this encouraged these teachers to implement learning environments that fostered limited movement and limited conversation.

These teachers also admitted to displaying stern attitudes when engaging with their African American male students. After attending the professional development, through discussion and post-professional-development interviews, data revealed that these same teachers were the participants who, prior to receiving professional development, perceived more than half of the African American male students in their classes as being more defiant and disruptive than their other students. As a result of these beliefs, many of their African American male students often received consequences such as isolation, removal from the classroom, and loss of classroom enrichment privileges, for actions such as speaking out in class, or getting out their seats without permission. When examining and analyzing these findings, one could argue that the personalities of these teachers, which embraced negative perceptions and assumptions regarding student behavior, may have posed an influence on how they perceived their African American male students’ abilities of developing a sense of belonging in the learning environment.

Additional findings indicated that the professional development encouraged teachers to become culturally aware of their African American male students’ needs. This included teachers learning how a student’s culture can influence his or her behavioral routines, thus causing him or her to exhibit certain behaviors. For example, in a post-professional-development interview,
Teacher D felt that prior to attending the professional development, she did realize how the cultural norms and behaviors of her African American male students transferred into the classroom setting, which if not understood, appeared as them exhibiting defiant behavior. Because of this, one may attempt to argue that teachers’ awareness and assumptions about their African American male students’ social and emotional abilities may influence how well teacher-student relationships are established within the classroom setting. However, this directly aligned to Glasser’s (1998) theory concerning the element of total behavior. Glasser (1998) attested through his research that because total behavior is comprised on the four elements, which are actions, thoughts, feelings, and physiology, with actions and thoughts being the most dominant of the group, whatever a person is thinking, his or her actions and feelings will follow, thus influencing his or her physical state as well. In other words, if teachers embrace negative stereotypes, presuppositions, and negative distortions, then their actions and the way they implement classroom strategies and engage with their African American male students will also reflect their thought processes.

Data from the study suggested that the professional development also encouraged teachers to address their biases from a more in-depth perspective, due to acquiring specific information as to how behavior is developed and nurtured. As discussed previously within Chapter 4, as well as within this chapter, the perceptions of the teachers in regards to if and how their efficacy influenced classroom management had either increased or changed altogether. Findings implied that 10 of 10 teachers who, prior to attending the professional development, felt limited in their knowledge of classroom-management strategies, reported an increase in their perceptions of managing their classroom, as well as how they interacted with their African American male students. These teachers reported that they now felt more comfortable interacting
and engaging with their African American male students because they have been provided with an insight of how to better support them both socially and emotionally. Lastly, information from this study revealed that 10 of 10 teachers agreed that the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development was a vital resource in helping them not only to understand how to appropriately meet the basic needs of their African American male students, but had also increased their efficacy, as it related to successfully managing a classroom that is conducive to the needs of the learner. The results and data from the overall study were recorded as follows:

1. It was apparent that 10 of 10 participants did possess strong biases about their African American male students. These biases appeared to have not only influenced how these teachers engaged with their African American male students, but also influenced how they managed their classrooms.

2. After attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers not only expressed a shift in how they perceived their efficacy level, but also how well they were managing their classrooms as a whole.

3. Post-professional-development interviews revealed that 10 of 10 teachers better understood the characteristics of each basic need that Glasser (1998) refers to in his theory, and how to more accurately identify possible triggers of the undesirable behavior of their African American male students. According to teachers’ responses, having this knowledge also increased their perception of their efficacy level when not only managing their classrooms, but engaging and interacting with their African American male students as a whole.

4. Ten of 10 teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy level pertaining to managing a classroom increased, due to them learning new strategies.
5. After attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers claimed their knowledge base was broadened due to them have been provided with in-depth information explaining how behavior is developed.

6. After attending the professional development, 10 of 10 teachers exhibited more confidence and enthusiasm about their abilities to successfully support the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

7. Eight of 10 teachers’ beliefs and actions were discovered to have been unconsciously displayed in the classroom through their actions.

8. It was believed that teachers’ thoughts and perceptions of their African American male students influenced teachers feeling defeated and/or overwhelmed when trying to find ways of establishing positive relationships with their students.

9. After attending the professional development, seven of 10 teachers claimed they realized they were doing their African American male students a disservice by not encouraging them to participate actively in class, assuming their abilities were being addressed, and avoiding and/or neglecting the need to first establish trusting and productive relationships with their students.

10. After receiving professional development, 10 of 10 teachers implemented strategies within their classrooms that encouraged African American male students to find alternative and positive ways to satisfy the needs of their quality worlds.

11. After attending the professional development, data revealed that eight of 10 teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged them to look at their own personalities and reflect how this influenced their classroom-management routines, as
well as how well they established meaningful relationships with their African American male students.

12. After attending the professional development, data revealed that 6 of 10 teachers were the participants who, prior to receiving professional development, perceived more than half of the African American male students in their classes as being more defiant and disruptive than their other students. It is believed that the personalities of these teachers, which embraced negative perceptions and assumptions regarding student behavior, may have posed an influence on how they perceived their African American male students’ abilities of developing a sense of belonging in the learning environment.

13. Findings indicated that the professional development encouraged seven of 10 teachers to become culturally aware of their African American male students’ needs.

14. Data revealed that teachers’ awareness and assumptions about their African American male students’ social and emotional abilities influenced teacher-student relationships within the classroom setting.

15. After having attended the professional development, 10 of 10 teacher perceptions were altered, in a manner that exhibited a transformation in their efficacy perceptions of their classroom management abilities. Findings indicated that due to the professional development, teachers felt more confident in establishing and sustaining productive relationships with their students, as well as having been provided information that increased their abilities to appropriately identify and support the specific social and emotional needs of their African American male students. Therefore, conclusions were made that teacher efficacy directly influenced how well
teachers managed their classrooms, as well as the various strategies they chose to implement within daily routines.

16. Data from the study suggested that the professional development also encouraged 10 of 10 teachers to address their biases from a more in-depth perspective, due to acquiring specific information as to how behavior is developed and nurtured.

17. Data revealed that 10 of 10 teachers agreed that the choice theory (Glasser, 1998) professional development was a vital resource in helping them not only to understand how to appropriately meet the basic needs of their African American male students, but had also increased their efficacy, as it related to successfully managing a classroom that is conducive to the needs of the learners.

18. Findings revealed that teachers who understood how to fulfil the students’ needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, were able to identify the specific needs of their African American male students.

19. Findings indicated that the professional development helped 10 of 10 teachers to address openly and honestly their personal biases and different perceptions about their African American male students’ abilities to make meaningful contributions to the learning environment. As a result of learning how to address these hindrances, teachers were able to incorporate strategies within their classrooms that encouraged positive student engagement and participation, while teaching their African American male students in grades PreK–2 how to incorporate healthy and productive behavioral choices into their total behavior that will successfully meet the needs of their quality worlds.
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

The results from this observational case study examining if and how teacher efficacy influences classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2, aligned with recent research. In regards to its findings, this study revealed not only the elements that can be considered as both positive and negative influences of teacher efficacy, but how these factors influenced classroom management, when provided choice theory professional development. Although it was necessary and relevant to discuss the outcomes of this study, it was also imperative to examine the outcomes in a broader context, as they related to current research literature. Results from this study may serve as a viable means of filling the gaps within the literature, as they pertain to providing an in-depth understanding of if and how teacher efficacy influences classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

Prior to completing this study, there were multiple insufficiencies that were evident within the current educational research. Many of the current studies focused more on the academic development of African American school-aged children, rather than narrowing its focus to address specifically, the social and emotional development of the male population in grades PreK–2. For example, studies conducted by Howard, Flennaugh, and Terry (2012), Monroe (2013), Ford and Moore (2013), and Cokely et al.(2014), all addressed the problem of either teacher efficacy, as it related to African American males, or perceptions of teachers who work with African American males, as it related to supporting them both socially and emotionally. However, much of this information pertained to students/children in either middle school or high school. Within this group, studies that did not specifically mention a grade level, but related the information to the general population of African American males as a whole. In
addition to this, these studies failed to address specific strategies and/or methods, which teachers could use to encourage their African American male students in grades PreK–2, to make better choices of satisfying the needs of their quality worlds. For example, Monroe (2013), primarily examined racial disparities between African American middle-school male children, and middle-school males of other races, as it pertained to disciplinary measures within the academic setting, rather than specifically focusing on African American males in grades PreK–2. Another example includes Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, and Chen (2012), who conducted a study similar to that of Monroe (2012); also focusing on the achievement gaps and negative educational experiences of African American male students in grades four and higher. As a result of the limited concentration, focusing on younger children, this study examined teacher efficacy and classroom management through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

Britt (2013), who examined teacher-student relationships and student achievement, suggested that the establishment of trust between teachers and students was essential in creating and sustaining learning communities. Britt (2013) also discussed how the establishment of productive teacher-student relationships is attained through the process of shared decision-making between both teachers and students. If this is the case, then what Glasser (1998) suggested in his theory, pertaining to the roles of teachers offering information in an effort to encourage students to make healthier choices, is in alignment with the research incorporated within this study. Findings from this research emphasized not only the importance of knowing how to appropriately identify the emotional needs of African American male students, but to use this knowledge to assist in establishing and sustaining meaningful teacher-student relationships.
that will assist in the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2 as a whole.

In connection with the current research, Banks, Dunston, and Foley (2013), suggested that teacher training and professional development influenced how teachers implemented and organized their classroom strategies. Their study implied that teachers with less training often felt unprepared as how to interact with students of color, as well as how to successfully manage a classroom that is conducive to teaching and learning. When analyzing and examining what Banks, Dunston, and Foley’s (2013) research stated, compared to the context of this study, conclusions can be made that teacher efficacy has a direct influence on how well a teacher manages his or her classroom. Further, the various strategies that he or she may choose to implement within daily routines.

Findings from this research revealed that prior to receiving professional development, teacher participants felt unprepared and hesitant when engaging with their African American male students. This, in turn, demonstrated their low levels of efficacy because of the teachers’ perceptions of their ability to manage a classroom of African American male students successfully and productively. After having attended the professional development, teacher perceptions were altered, in a manner that exhibited a transformation in their efficacy perceptions of their classroom management abilities. Findings indicated that due to the professional development, teachers felt more confident not only in establishing and attempting to sustain productive relationships with their students, but also having a broader knowledge base in their ability to appropriately identify and support the specific social and emotional needs of their African American male students.
Teachers having an understanding of how their personality may influence the behavior of their students’ and/or the characteristics of their quality worlds, may help educators meet specific needs of their students, according to choice theory (Glasser, 2010; Irvine, 2015; wglasser.com, 2016). Depending on the teacher’s personality, African American male students may or may not be provided with the necessary and appropriate strategies to meet the needs of their own quality worlds. Research supported that there is an unbalanced level of negative student educational experiences that African American males encounter versus their Caucasian peers (Ford & Moore, 2013). African Americans are more likely to be perceived as less intelligent and having behavioral problems (Ford & Moore, 2013). These researchers claimed that many teachers often make assumptions about their students, based on personal experiences, stereotypes, and socio-economic status of their students. Supporting this view, Fantuzzo et al. (2012), stated that there is a distinct difference in the level of negative discrimination that Caucasian students face, versus their African American counterparts, within the educational realm. “Previous researchers have noted that teachers who are successful disciplinarians of Black children frequently share and/or deliberately build on the cultural backgrounds of the young people in their charge” (Monroe, 2013).

A 12-week study, conducted by Graham et al. (2013) with a group of early elementary school students, showed that the perceptions of teachers about their students played a vital role in increasing or decreasing the social and motivational skills of their students, in the classroom setting. Teachers who implemented classroom-management strategies, which were tailored to meeting the needs of their students, saw an increase in the positive social interaction among the African American males in the classroom. In alignment with Glasser’s (1998) theory, specifically addressing total behavior within the context of the research, findings indicated that
teacher perceptions about the abilities of their students were major factors in how the participants in this study chose to interact with their students, as well as how they supported the emotional development of their students as a whole. Pre-professional-development and post-professional-development interview responses, along with teacher claims concerning their actions, confirmed Glasser’s (1998) assertions of behavior. Glasser (1998) attested through his research that because the total behavior is comprised of the four elements, which are actions, thoughts, feelings, and physiology, with actions and thoughts being the most dominant of the group, whatever a person is thinking, his or her actions and feelings will follow, thus influencing his or her physical state as well. In other words, if teachers hold to their negative perceptions of their students, these assumptions will display themselves through their teaching practices, classroom-management strategies, and their daily interaction with their students. In doing so, the need for individuals to establish meaningful relationships may be negatively influenced.

This includes, but is not limited to, the importance of teachers having an awareness of the cultural aspects of their African American male students. Different perceptions of behavior can lead to inconsistent and unequal reactions from teachers (Cokely et al., 2014). In the context of this study, this statement holds true. Searcy (nbcdi.org, 2013) insisted that teachers, who are attempting to meet the behavioral needs of African American students, must take into account their own teaching style, ensuring that is compatible with the learning style of their students. Evidence from the pre-professional-development interviews indicated that eight of 10 teachers were unaware that cultural dynamics of their African American male students could and may have been one of the underlying influences of their students’ behaviors. In addition to this, because of this lack of awareness, many of these teachers perceived their African American male students as being defiant, as opposed to exhibiting behaviors that may have been deemed as
normal, according to others who are more familiar with the African American culture. African American homes embrace high levels of movement, and various sources of stimulation, such as music, dancing, and dialogue (Rouland et al., 2014). However, traditional American classrooms are characterized by limited movement and more structured learning (Rouland, et al., 2014).

Recent studies conducted by Breeman et al. (2015), Cokely et al. (2014), and Rouland et al. (2014), have shown that African American youth perform significantly better in school when they are able to learn in a style that reflects their home culture rather than in the style associated with traditional classrooms. Further, studies have shown that when elementary students perceive discontinuity between home and school cultures, they have lower motivation and poorer academic outcomes (Rouland et al., 2014).

**Limitations**

This qualitative case study had several limitations. First, all of the participants were teachers of students in grades PreK–2, as opposed to teaching high school or college students. This can be considered a limitation because of types of classroom-management strategies that the participants may use, based on the cognitive levels and developmental abilities of the student population they are servicing. Second, although a small number of participants are expected, based on the type of research design this study involved, the number of participants within this study could be seen as a limitation. As a result, the findings in this study were also limited to 10 participants. Next, the study population solely focused on teachers of African American males, as opposed to females. Further research could be conducted to determine if there are similar results, regarding teacher efficacy and classroom management, as it pertains to teaching African American females in grades PreK–2. Another limitation included the personal bias in regards to
classroom behavior, management, and teacher efficacy. Due to the strong opinions about some of the characteristics that teachers exhibit, as the researcher, I was faced with the challenge of suppressing certain opinions and strong feelings. As an African American female, the limitation might have been that I was more familiar with cultural routines and/or patterns of behavior than some of the participants involved.

Another limitation included the element in which no children were interviewed. All of the data and findings were those of the teachers. Therefore, data were drawn from teacher interviews and not the students themselves. Further research could be done to incorporate students’ perceptions concerning the effectiveness of their teachers’ classroom-management strategies, in fully meeting their social and emotional needs as perceived through choice theory (Glasser, 1998). Last, a final limitation within this study involved the professional development. Because participants participated in only a single 90-minute professional development, one could argue that findings and/or results may have differed if the participants were provided with additional or multiple professional-development sessions. Due to the short time frame concerning the professional development and implementation process, this provided only a snapshot and not a total picture of the connections between the professional development, teacher efficacy, and classroom-management practices. Finally, although Glasser’s theory could apply to all students, regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic background, for the purpose of this study, Glasser’s (1998) theory applied solely to the African American male population. The study was delimited to classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American male students in grades PreK–2, in Illinois. Therefore, results and conclusions were not extended beyond classroom management, teacher efficacy, and African American males in grades PreK–2, within this geographic area.
Pertaining to this study, there were 16 pre-professional development and 10 post-professional development interview questions. These open-ended questions were designed to prompt honest and descriptive responses about the overall topic of research. It is also worth mentioning that the examination and analysis for each response was subjective for me. Since the analysis of the information, other researchers might have interpreted the data differently, thus deriving different reactions, results, and conclusions.

**Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

According to Glasser (1998), human behavior is influenced by the meeting of an individual’s basic needs such as love, survival, power, freedom, and fun. He claimed that the only behavior that one can control is one’s own. With this in mind, Glasser believed that teachers should focus on providing information in a form that encourages their African American male students to make healthier choices, when attempting to fulfill the needs of their quality worlds. When examining teacher efficacy, one must understand its influence, and how this influence transfers into the educational environment. Educators who feel more confident in teaching African American males are more likely to display an attitude of persistence and/or determination than those teachers who lack such confidence (Bullock et al., 2015).

For teachers working in a school setting, their efficacy can influence classroom management, as well as student behavior. When examining behavior through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), teachers can begin more accurately to address the specific needs of not only their African American male students, but all students in general, by first understanding how behavior is shaped, influenced, and exhibited. The results of this study can serve as a long-term, viable, and research-based, resource for teachers attempting to not only understand the connection among teacher efficacy, classroom management, professional development, and
student behavior, but may also assist teachers with developing a classroom environment that fully supports the social and emotional needs of their African American male students as a whole. Not limiting the implementation and practices of this study, information collected from this study relating to choice theory (Glasser, 1998) and its various elements can be used as professional development to assist teachers in managing a classroom that meets the address the social and emotional needs of not only their African American male students, but all students in general.

The findings and information presented in this study revealed how teacher efficacy influenced classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. This study also may provide insight for educators to understand how to fulfill not only African American male students’, but all students’ specific needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development according to Glasser’s (1998) theories, as well as how they may influence teacher efficacy and classroom management, when educating all students, including African American males in grades PreK–2. Lastly, through this study, the educational community may be informed about how providing professional development to educators, which addresses teacher personality, cultural awareness, specific social/emotional needs, and bias, influences classroom discipline procedures, teacher choices, and the need for all students, including African American males in grades PreK–2, to develop a sense of belonging within the educational community. This includes meeting the specific needs of African American males in grades PreK–2, as well as all students in general.

Based on the results and the information provided in this study, administrators, school leaders, and teachers, may collaborate to develop programs that may assist with helping teachers to fully support the social and emotional needs of their African American male students in
particular grades PreK–2. In addition, findings from this study can also serve as a resource for helping teachers better understand not only how human behavior is shaped and influenced, but also how their personalities, practices, and choices, influence the classroom setting as a whole. For example, this study found that when professional development was provided to teachers, focusing on choice theory (Glasser, 1998) elements that influence behavior, teachers felt more confident in their abilities to emotionally support their African American male students.

Educational leaders, therefore, potentially may create professional-development programs that examine and critically assess classroom-management strategies that address the specific needs of the student population whom they serve. Such programs may include, but are not limited to, mentoring programs, hiring practices, and formal and/or informal evaluations.

In addition to developing these programs, findings from this study can serve as a resource for assisting teachers with addressing other factors that may affect daily management routines, such as self-reflection, teacher choices, cultural awareness, and teacher bias. Although this study focused on the traditional classroom setting, practices and strategies can also be beneficial for educational leaders and teachers alike in non-traditional educational settings. Therefore, information discovered in this study may benefit the educational community as a whole. In doing so, educators may begin not only to challenge themselves to serve students better, but to assist in providing African American male students in grades PreK–2, as well as all students, with an education that exhibits positivity, empowerment, and innovation, in hopes of successfully preparing them for future endeavors.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Further inquiry is needed, as it relates to the limitations of this study. First, additional research can be conducted to include teachers of students in grades 3-12, as well as those of
undergraduate and graduate college students. Because this study was conducted with teachers of younger children, further research may prove beneficial in an effort to see whether or not the results are consistent with those from this investigation.

Second, further research can be conducted to include a larger number of participants. Because the number of participants was small, results from this study were limited to that of the smaller participant sample size. Therefore, investigation is recommended in an attempt to gain a better understanding if and how the sample size might affect future study results.

Third, further research can be conducted to include a more diverse student population. The results from this study focused on teachers of African American male students. This can be considered as a limited population, in regards to race and gender. Additional inquiry may include teachers of African American females.

Fourth, further research can be conducted to include a school that is located in a different demographic location, such as a suburban community. Results from this study were based on African American male students who resided in an urban and low-income neighborhood. Because various communities receive different funding for schools located within their boundaries, further inquiry can be conducted to determine if this impacts the availability of resources that schools could receive to assist teachers in supporting the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

Next, additional research may also take into account the researcher’s bias. Another principal investigator may offer different strategies, suggestions, or interpretations of participant responses. He or she may also interpret Glasser’s (1998) theory and suggestions differently, thus resulting in a change of how data and information are presented.
Conclusion

This observational single case study examined teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. Research was conducted in a suburban Illinois school district, located on the outskirts of a major Midwestern city. Teaching younger male students has its benefits, as well as its challenges. Prior to conducting this research, when examining through the lens of choice theory (Glasser, 1998), little was known at the site where the research was conducted about teacher efficacy and its influences on classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

Results from this study yielded multiple findings. First, prior to attending the professional development, teachers felt less confident in their abilities not only to address discipline and negative behaviors of their African American male students, but also struggled with successfully managing a classroom that fully supported the social and emotional development of their students in general. After receiving professional development about choice theory (Glasser, 1998), findings indicated that teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy increased. Second, findings revealed that teachers who understood how to fulfill the students’ needs of survival, power, freedom, fun, and belonging, through the use of professional development, were able to identify the specific needs of their African American male students. The teachers were also able to create and implement appropriate classroom-management strategies that were directly tailored to the needs and abilities of their African American male students. Findings indicated that the professional development helped teachers to address openly and honestly their personal biases and different perceptions about their African American male students’ abilities to make meaningful contributions to the learning environment. As a result of learning how to address these hindrances, teachers were able to incorporate strategies within their classrooms that
encouraged positive student engagement and participation, while teaching their African American male students in grades PreK–2 how to incorporate healthy and productive behavioral choices into their total behavior that will successfully meet the needs of their quality worlds.

Findings and information from this study were intended to provide an in-depth insight as to how teacher efficacy influences classroom management, when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2. By using this information, educational leaders and teachers can begin to look beyond the present, in an effort to develop and implement future innovative strategies. In doing so, this not only prepares African American male students in grades PreK–2 for an ever-changing society that allows for them to receive an education specifically tailored to their social and emotional needs, but will help them to become productive citizens and leaders, that will make positive contributions for generations to come.
References


educators’ psychological characteristics and classroom management self-efficacy beliefs.

*Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement, 47*(2), 175.


Appendix A: Participant Pre-and Post-Professional Development Questions

A series of questions pertaining to your experience as a teacher will be asked. Some of the questions focus on you as a teacher, reflection on your classroom-management routines, while other questions will focus on your perceptions of how well you incorporate various ideas and concepts into your daily management routines. Your participation is greatly appreciated, as it will help to serve as a resource for how teachers can better support the social-emotional growth of students, particularly African-American males in grades pre-k-2. If for any reason, you feel uncomfortable and wish not to answer a question, or would like to skip an answer, you may do so at any time. You are under no obligation to participate in this study, and may withdraw at any time.

Pre-Professional-Development Interview Questions

1. Tell me about some of your career highlights as a teacher.
2. What is the student make-up of your class?
3. Explain in detail some difficult moments that you have experienced with your African American male students.
4. How do you handle discipline and behavior problems within your classroom? Which strategies and/or methods have you found to be most successful in your classroom?
5. How do you incorporate fun into your daily classroom-management routines?
6. Tell me about a time when you incorporated cultural awareness within your classroom?
7. How do you handle African American male students who are struggling with developing a sense of belonging within your classroom?
8. Explain in detail how your past experiences, such as upbringing and/or professional encounters have influenced your teaching.

9. How comfortable are you in working with African American male students who do not comply with your classroom rules?

10. How do you incorporate love within your daily classroom-management routines?

11. As an educator, what are some of personal biases that you have found to impact how you establish relationships with your African American male students?

12. How do you incorporate freedom and a sense of power within your daily classroom routines?

13. How does technology and resources, or lack of, influence your ability to support the social-emotional development of your African American male students?

14. In your opinion, what makes an African American male student defiant?

15. How do you motivate and or encourage African American male students within your classroom to make appropriate choices concerning survival elements, such as relaxation and personal safety?

16. Have you heard of the choice theory? If so, what do you know about it and have you ever utilized any of its elements in your classroom?
Now that you have completed the professional development and have had an opportunity to incorporate some of the ideas from the training into your daily manage-
routine, I would like to ask you some questions about your perceptions of the choice theory, and how it has impacted your classroom-management, as well as your confidence level of supporting the social-emotional development of African-American males in grades PreK–2.

Post-Professional- Development Interview Questions

1. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, which characteristics are you more likely to incorporate within your classroom on a long-term basis and why?

2. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, what changes, if any, did you incorporate within your classroom to support African American male students who lack the sense of freedom?

3. After receiving professional development, how has the choice theory impacted your perception of your classroom-management routines?

4. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, how has the choice theory impacted your personal biases?

5. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, how do you handle discipline within your classroom?

6. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, how confident do you feel in dealing with the African-American males within your classroom?

7. In your opinion, how does your efficacy as a teacher impact your classroom-management routines, when dealing with the African-American males in your class?
8. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, what new information have you discovered or learned about yourself as a teacher regarding the choices you make within the educational setting?

9. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, what new information have you discovered or learned about your African American male students regarding the choices they make within the educational setting?

10. After receiving professional development on the choice theory, what are some ways in which you can support and/or assist your African American male students in establishing positive relationships with others and the world around them?
Appendix B: Observation Checklist

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CHOICES BELOW TO INDICATE EVIDENCE OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

1. Was there evidence of the element of love being applied within the lesson?
   Yes       No       Explain:

2. Was there evidence of the element of safety/survival being applied within the lesson?
   Yes       No       Explain:

3. Was there evidence of the element of power being applied within the lesson?
   Yes       No       Explain:

4. Was there evidence of the element of fun being applied within the lesson?
   Yes       No       Explain:

5. Was there evidence of the element of safety/survival being applied within the lesson?
   Yes       No       Explain:

6. Additional Notes:

Participant’s Name___________________________________________
Date _______________________________________________________
Time _______________________________________________________

Obtained from the 10 participant pre-and post-professional-development responses. This was information was collected from audio-recorded interviews prior to and after attending.
Appendix C: Professional Development Participant Packet

Choice Theory Professional Development

Central Focus

Although choice theory (Glasser, 1998) is composed of several elements, this professional development will focus solely on the Quality World and Total behavior components of this theory, as it relates to teacher efficacy and its influence on classroom management when teaching African American males in grades PreK–2.

Purpose of Professional Development

➢ To provide teachers with an in-depth understanding of how to support the social and emotional development of African American males in grades PreK–2, through the lens of choice theory.

Background


Primary Beliefs

➢ Glasser (1998) claimed that the only behavior we can control is our own.
➢ We can only provide others with information, or receive information from others.
➢ Our behavior is motivated by the meeting of 5 basic needs—love/belonging, survival, belonging, power, and freedom.
➢ All human behavior is chosen. We can choose how we think or act.

Core Concepts

According to Glasser (1998),

all humans are motivated by 5 basic needs.

➢ Love— the need to be connected to and/or associated with others or a community.
➢ Survival— the need of having those elements that are necessary for a person to survive. This includes such things as shelter, food, water, and safety.
➢ Power— The need of being able to make meaningful contributions to one’s environment. Places emphasis on self-worth.
➢ Freedom— The need for one to be able to choose his or her own destiny.

Our health is an overall reflection of how well these needs are met with appropriate and healthy strategies.

Quality World

➢ An element of choice theory that involves the way humans would like to meet their basic needs. Focuses on what is important to a person. This includes factors such as people, activities, or significant events.
Total Behavior

➢ An element of choice theory that involves what humans do in order to meet their 5 basic needs and their quality worlds.

*Consists of choices in 4 areas:*

- Actions- Choosing what to *do*, as one meets his or her quality world.
- Thoughts- The way a person *thinks* is how he or she reaches his or her quality world.
- Feelings- How a person acts or thinks, motivates how he or she *feels*.
- Physical State- A person’s physical well-being is determined by how he or she acts, thinks, and feels.
- Think of 4 wheels on a car. All wheels must be going in the same direction in order for the object to move. The same concept applies to this theory. All components are meaningful and necessary in order for behavior to develop appropriately.

*Problems:*

- Problems arise when there is a breakdown in one of the areas of total behavior. This means that there is an unhealthy use of total behavior to meet the needs of a person’s quality world.
- According to Onedera and Greenwalt (2007), most breakdowns usually occur when there is a lack of satisfying a person’s need of love and belonging. When this happens, relationships are not established. Because the need of love is considered to be a “core” component, it creates problems in every other area of the behavior realm. This lack of fulfillment can lead to a person making poor choices to meet his or her quality world.
- When our total behavior (actions and thoughts elements) are not leading us in a positive direction, it negatively impacts a person’s feelings and negative state (feelings and physiology).

*What can teachers do to support their students’ needs?*

According to Glasser (1998), teachers should:

- Focus on teaching students the importance of responsibility and choices.
- Teach students how to make better use of their total behavior.
- Teach students how to recognize their responsibilities pertaining to their total behavior.
- Teach students how to make better choices when selecting ways to fulfill their quality worlds.
- Support students in finding positive and productive ways to use their actions and thoughts, that will help them to achieve their quality worlds.
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
Glasser (1998) explores 4 subcategories for teachers to take into consideration when attempting to support the basic needs, total behavior, and quality worlds of their students. This includes teachers looking at the following areas:

- Wants (Help students to determine their wants)
- Doing/ Direction (Encouraging students to examine their actions to determine if they will fulfill healthy ways of supporting their needs)
- Evaluation (Support students in looking at how well their actions are fulfilling their needs)
- Plan (Support students in creating a plan that helps them move in a healthy direction of fulfilling their quality worlds).
- Allow for students to critically discuss their own behaviors.

**Addressing Specific Needs of African American Males Within the Classroom Setting**

According to the National Black Child Development Institute (2017), teachers are encouraged to consider the following factors when addressing the social and emotional needs of African American male children:

- Establish a learning environment that focuses on collective/ shared responsibility towards the goals of the greater community.
- Create a learning environment that embraces both discipline and flexibility.
- Set expectations and rules that are reasonable and attainable.
- Focus on the strengths of the students and not the weaknesses.
- Encourage children to perceive themselves as part of a world of community members/learners, rather than limited participants within the educational system.
- Encourage children to strive for self-mastery.
- Celebrate and embrace cultural aspects.
- Provide a safe place to discuss feelings and emotions.

**Part 2-Collaborative Group Activity**

Divide into grade levels. Discuss and brainstorm with the members in your group about the elements of choice theory, specifically the basic needs, total behavior, and quality world components. Also, taking into account the specific needs of African American males in grades PreK–2, create a list of no more than 5 strategies that can be used in the classroom to support the social and emotional development of these students. Select a reporter for the group to present your ideas.

**Part 3- Questions, Comments, and Concerns**
Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Research Study Title: Teacher Efficacy and Its Influence on Classroom Management when Teaching African American Males in Grades PreK through 2: A Case study
Principle Investigator: Suzon Pulliam
Research Institution: Concordia University-Portland
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Barbara Weschke

Purpose and what you will be doing:

The purpose of this study is to determine if teacher efficacy impacts classroom management when teaching African American males in grades preK – 2, through the lens of the choice theory, specifically focusing on the attributes of total behavior, which focuses on acting and thinking abilities, and the quality world, which focuses on motivation. I anticipate approximately 10 volunteers. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on October 25, 2016 and end enrollment on October 31, 2016. To be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute, audio-recorded, pre-study interview, focusing on your perceptions of your teaching experience. Once this is done, you will be asked to attend a 60-90 minute professional development focusing on the choice theory and its originator William Glasser (1998). Upon receiving this training, all participants will be given approximately 6 weeks to incorporate some of the ideas from the training into their daily classroom-management routines. Post-study interviews will be conducted after the allotted time-frame for implementation. Throughout this time, weekly observations will be conducted for a period of 20-30 minutes each, for 6 weeks. The study will conclude with a group debriefing session, reporting study cumulative findings. The study will last for about 8-10 weeks, however, your participation should take less than 4 hours of your time, with the exception of classroom-implementation.

Risks:

There are minimal risks to participating in this study which include stress no more than that of taking a basic exam. However, I will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption or locked inside of a file cabinet. None of the data will have your name or identifying information. I will only use a secret code to analyze the data. I will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed 3 years after I conclude this study.
Benefits:

Information you provide will help educators to understand the choice theory, in being able to comprehend the choices that their students make and why, as well as recognize how and why they as teachers themselves make specific choices. The goal is for all participants to thoroughly understand the connection between teacher-efficacy, classroom-management, and the choice theory, being able to draw upon its elements in an effort to make strategic and research-based decisions to improve student behavior as a whole. You could benefit in this study by gaining knowledge and/or skills that may help to better support the social-emotional development of African-American males in grades pre-k-2.

Confidentiality:
This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you inform me of abuse or neglect that makes me seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation is greatly appreciated, but I acknowledge that the questions I will ask may be personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a bad emotion from answering the questions, I will stop asking you questions.

Contact Information:
You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principle Suzon Pulliam at [Researcher email redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).
Your Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and the questions were answered. I volunteer the consent for this study.

_______________________________                   ___________
Participant Name                                      Date

_______________________________                   ___________
Participant Signature                                Date

_______________________________                   ___________
Investigator Name                                     Date

_______________________________                   ___________
Investigator Signature                                Date
Appendix E: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of the work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

• Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
• Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
• Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
• Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.
Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association.

Suzon M. Pulliam

Digital Signature

Suzon M. Pulliam

Name (Typed)

September 11, 2017

Date
Appendix F: Pre-Professional Development Teacher Responses

Pre-professional-development responses from teachers in group 1 (Teachers A-D) were recorded as the following:

1. Perceived African American male students as blank slates.
2. Felt students were too young to make appropriate behavior decisions.
3. Overcompensated/ completed tasks for students.
4. Claimed to have no bias toward African American male students.
5. Felt limited in their knowledge of resources pertaining to meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.
6. Unfamiliar with the total behavior and quality world elements of choice theory.
7. Claimed to have treated all students equal.
8. Unclear of how to identify the social and emotional needs of African American male students.
9. Assumed they were meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students appropriately.

Pre-professional-development responses from teachers in group 2 (Teachers E-G) were recorded as the following:

1. Perceived African American male students as less than capable of making appropriate behavior decisions.
2. Addressed social and emotional needs of African American male students from a psychological approach pertaining to safety.
3. Attributed African American male students' defiant behavior to their environment.
4. Classroom-management routines focused more on discipline and structure rather than social and emotional characteristics.

5. Felt limited in their knowledge of resources pertaining to meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

6. Unfamiliar with the total behavior and quality world elements of choice theory.

7. Claimed to have treated all students equally.

8. Unclear of how to identify the social and emotional needs of African American male students.

9. Claimed to have no bias towards African American male students.

Pre-professional-development responses from teachers in group 3 (Teachers H-J) were recorded as the following:

1. Perceived students as needing discipline and structure.

2. Felt students needed to be taught how to behavior appropriately within the educational setting.

3. Claimed to have no bias toward African American male students (one of three teachers).

4. Management routines focused on discipline and structure rather than social and emotional needs of African American male students.

5. Felt limited in their knowledge of resources pertaining to meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

6. Unfamiliar with the total behavior and quality world elements of choice theory.

7. Claimed to have treated all students equally.
8. Unclear of how to identify the social and emotional needs of African American male students.

9. Assumed they were appropriately meeting the social and emotional needs of their male students.
Appendix G: Post-Professional Development Teacher Responses

Post-professional-development responses from teachers in group 1 (Teachers A-D) were recorded as the following:

1. Teachers' perceptions toward the abilities of African American male students transformed to view students as capable of adapting socially and emotionally to the classroom environment.

2. Teachers realized how their actions and choices regarding classroom-management routines influenced the behavior of their African American male students.

3. Teachers acknowledged, identified, and addressed their personal biases regarding their interactions with their African American male students.

4. Teachers shared how they learned to identify the specific needs of their African American male students based on information presented in the professional development.

5. Teachers expressed how they learned to incorporate classroom-management strategies specifically tailored to meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

6. Teachers expressed how they learned to apply characteristics of the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory to their daily management routines to meet the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

7. Teachers acknowledged their weaknesses in their abilities to fully support the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

8. Teachers claimed that the professional development was an effective tool because it offered new and practical insight of how teachers can better support the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.
9. Teachers expressed an increase in their perceptions of pertaining to their abilities of managing a classroom that fully supports the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

   Post-professional-development responses from teachers in group 2 (Teachers E-G) were recorded as the following:

1. Teachers shared that the professional development encouraged them to critically self-reflect on their classroom management choices, in regards to their effectiveness.

2. Three of three teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged them to become proactive when creating and implementing discipline and management routines that support the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

3. One of three teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged her to re-examine how her actions and choices influenced the behaviors of her African American male students as a whole.

4. All teachers expressed that they felt more confident in their abilities to successfully manage a classroom that fully meets the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

5. All teachers claimed the professional development was an effective tool in helping them to identify the specific social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

6. Teachers expressed how they learned to apply characteristics of the quality world and total behavior elements of choice theory to their daily management routines to meet the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.
7. Teachers acknowledged their weaknesses in their abilities to fully support the social and emotional development of their African American male students.

8. Unclear of how to identify the social and emotional needs of African American male students.

9. Teachers acknowledged, identified, and addressed their personal biases regarding their interactions with their African American male students.

10. Three of Three teachers reported a decrease in defiant behavior from their African American male students, after implementing classroom-management strategies from professional development.

   Post-professional-development responses from teachers in group three (Teachers H-J) were recorded as the following:

   1. Teachers claimed that their perceptions of their African American male students' social and emotional abilities were transformed to them (the teachers) believing that their students are capable of successfully adapting socially within the classroom environment.

   2. Teachers claimed that the professional development encouraged them to self-reflect on their classroom-management practices and choices, in regards to how they influence the behavior of their African American male students.

   3. Two of three teachers claimed the professional development encouraged them to address their biases, as it pertained to how these feelings influenced classroom management, teaching styles, and their abilities to establish meaningful relationships with their African American male students.
4. Three of three teachers expressed a shift in focus from the behavior of their African American male students, to their own actions as teachers.

5. All teachers expressed to have a better understanding of choice theory, as it relates to the characteristics of total behavior and the quality world.

6. All teachers claimed the professional development provided them with practical and creative strategies and knowledge that assisted them in meeting the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

7. Teachers shared how they learned to identify the specific needs of their African American male students based on information presented in the professional development.

8. Teachers claimed the professional development assisted in increasing their efficacy levels, as it pertained to managing a classroom environment that fully supports the social and emotional needs of their African American male students.

9. Three of three teachers reported a decrease in defiant behavior from their African American male students, after implementing classroom-management strategies from professional development.