Code-Switching Among African American Male Faculty Regarding Recruitment, Advancement, and Retention at Predominantly White Institutions

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Code-Switching Among African American Male Faculty Regarding Recruitment, Advancement, and Retention at Predominantly White Institutions

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Code-Switching Among African American Male Faculty Regarding Recruitment, Advancement, and Retention at Predominantly White Institutions

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in
Higher Education

Donna Graham, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee
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Abstract

The lack of diversity in leadership roles at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education has been a concern often addressed in the strategic plans at these institutions. Exploring how African American male faculty members perceive code-switching as a strategy to address this gap in representation was the purpose of this study. A qualitative research design was used to gain an understanding of how code-switching uses the structure of language to obtain access to advancement opportunities. Results from the study show that although African American men have varying views on how to use language within the workplace setting, the majority feel that code-switching improved the trajectory of their career path. Early exposure to code-switching, language use for networking and relationship building, as well as other ways to code-switch, such as wardrobe selection, were all factors that significantly affected the perception of code-switching by the participants of the study. Data collected and analyzed from this study can assist PWIs of higher education with ways to organize and implement ways to use or abstain from code-switching as a way to improve recruitment, advancement, and retention.

Keywords: higher education, code-switching, African American, males, faculty, predominantly White institutions, language, retention, advancement, recruitment
Dedication

Tyrone Hibbler, thank you for supporting me on this journey. We agreed to make several sacrifices during this time in order for me to pursue what God has in store for me. We will reap all the benefits of what this seed will sow.

Sariah and Laina Hibbler, you have watched mommy step outside her comfort zone in order to show each of you the resiliency needed to not only have a dream but to accomplish it as well. Please absorb what you have witnessed and apply this to your dreams as well.

Aylin Uly Hibbler, you were literally with me during this process. Being pregnant with you during the last portion of my dissertation process taught me to understand pausing does not mean stopping. There are no limits when you decide on what your version of greatness will become.

Thank you to my family for teaching me the greatest love a wife and mom could have.
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I want to first give thanks to God; I have succeeded in this process by your grace. I have overcome many personal struggles during various phases in my course work. Turning to you with my worries and listening to your guidance was the reason for my success.

An abundance of love goes to my family unit, Tyrone, Sariah, Laina, Aylin Uly, and Kayla. Each of you played a key role in supporting me. The years dedicated to going from Mrs. to Dr. both took what seemed like forever and flew by in no time. We have dealt with many issues during this time, but we were able to do it together. My journey was just the beginning of the accomplishments this family will achieve. Your belief in me, prayers, and encouragement did not fall on deaf ears. I am truly grateful to have your support throughout these last few years.

One part of the journey has ended, opening doors for another to begin.

Lastly, I would like to thank the African American males who took part in this study. Without your participation, support, belief in the topic, and input, this study would not be possible.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

The disparity in representation associated with race in America is palpable; this has been evident by the lack of diversity in higher education institution’s faculty. The advancement and retention rates of African American male faculty at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education has been a concern for PWIs focused on employing and advancing a diverse faculty (Siegel, Barrett, & Smith, 2015). A concern often mentioned when describing the state of higher education institutions in the United States was the lack of diversity among faculty and administration (Wilder, 2015). In 2016, African American college presidents only held 8% of the available positions, which was a stark contrast to the 83% of Caucasians in the same role during this time (American Council on Education, 2017). Mitchell (2016) described the disparity best stating when traveling to PWIs across the U.S. there has not been an instance where all the African American faculty could be placed into one small room, all the African American male faculty comfortably on a park bench; and the African American male faculty in leadership positions in a phone booth.

The negative experiences of African American male faculty and those in leadership positions described in past research heightens their low representation. When focusing on faculty and leadership roles, such as administration, it can be noted that the African American males who are in leadership positions at PWIs have expressed negative experiences, which affects the desire to remain employed at said institutions (Dockery, 2015; Edwards & Ross, 2017; Murphy, 2017). There has been a lack of advancement opportunities for African American male faculty at PWIs (Dau-Schmidt & Sherman, 2013). The lack of opportunities for promotion causes low morale, which retention rates of African American male faculty reflect. The qualitative study
proposed the exploration of how African American male faculty members use code-switching, changing their language vernacular based on setting, to improve the advancement opportunities and retention rates for this demographic at PWIs of higher education.

The use of assimilation through language, or code-switching, may have an effect on the representation of African American male faculty at PWIs. However, the data on African American male administrators in higher education is minute (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The scarcity of African American male faculty, leaders, and administrators highlights the lack of diversity as an issue for PWIs. The exploration of how African American male faculty use code-switching can add new data on ways to address the lack of African American male leaders at PWIs. The study of code-switching and its effect on advancement can provide information on ways to recruit, promote and retain African American male faculty at PWIs.

A majority of the research is geared towards exploring the experiences of African American males and why there has been a lack of representation in leadership roles (Dockery, 2015; Edwards, & Ross, 2017; Mitchell, 2017; Murphy, 2017; Scott, 2016a). Due to the focus mainly on experiences, there is a gap in the research regarding strategies used to mitigate low representation of African Americans as professors and administrators. Turner and Grauerholz (2017) posited implications for PWIs attempting to address the low representation of African American male faculty if they do not attempt to understand and address the negative experiences of African American students and faculty. PWIs must create a plan to address the research that reported the experiences of marginalization, isolation, and racism by African American faculty and students (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). To address the concerns expressed in previous research, rather than further explore the lack of African American leaders, the researcher
suggests an exploration of how African American male faculty gain access to and keep the higher-level positions at PWIs of higher education using code-switching.

Scott (2016a) stated the strategies to improve upon the path to advancement for African American male faculty at PWIs included creating vast interpersonal networks. The networks mentioned by Scott can create a starting point for relationships and growth in the workplace. Communicating with peers and supervisors can create opportunities to address diversity issues at PWIs. Piller (2016) wrote, “language is an important aspect of our social position and the way we use language—be it in speech, in writing, or in new media—can open or close doors” (p. 4). This study on exploring the perception of the use of code-switching provides data on the use of this language to increase representation for African American administrators. The study also provides information on the perceived advantage of the use of code-switching, a form of assimilation through language choices, by African American male faculty members employed by PWIs.

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

The retention rates of African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education are distinctive in comparison to other ethnic groups. Specifically, in the field of education, African American male faculty suffer from disadvantages that diminish their path to promotions (Dau-Schmidt & Sherman, 2013). The PWIs of higher education within the U.S. have a disproportionate amount of white male educators in comparison to African American males (Supiano, 2015). Although there has been some representation of African American male faculty members at PWIs, there have been minor, if any, change in the status of African American faculty and administrators at PWIs. There has been no more than a small portion of African American males and females in leadership positions at PWIs. Leadership roles, such as executive, senior, and upper administrative positions, at PWIs of higher education and
historically African American colleges and universities held by African American males and females were around 12.9% during 2015 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

The expression by African American males at PWIs of their experiences within the educational system as isolated, alienated, or feeling they must symbolically represent their whole race partially explains their low representation (Yancy, 2017). Most of the previous literature on the career trajectory of African American males focused on the experiences at PWIs and the obstacles to advancement (Dau-Schmidt & Sherman, 2013; Dockery, 2015; Howard, 2014; Murphy, 2017; Scott, 2016a). These obstacles place unnecessary stress on African American males in education. However, the research has failed to offer ways African American males seek out solutions to the barriers. Current research that describes how African American males navigate their careers around negative experiences is lacking (Murphy, 2017).

The ability to communicate with others and build networks in the workplace improves the quality of workplace relationships (Scott, 2016a). Colbert, Bono, and Purvanova (2015) found that the way an individual communicates impacts the access to networks in professional and personal settings. Through the social learning theory lens, the idea that individuals will adjust their behaviors, including language, to increase their chance at building relationships with their peers and supervisors provided a significant element for the support of code-switching as a means to increase promotion and retention rates. The way in which one communicated determined many things, including advancement opportunities in the workplace. Code-switching as a method of communication within the workplace to increase potential promotion opportunities and retention rates appears a viable method. This was a meaningful concept that connects to the life experiences of African American males and their attempt to stand out while still fitting in.
Dockery (2015), Louis et al. (2016), and Scott (2016a) each used their research to describe the African American male faculty experience with peers and supervisors. The inability to connect with their workplace peers left the African American male demographic in a position to describe their work experiences as challenging and often times negative. African American males also describe their experiences as a complication that inhibited their capacity to progress in terms of position within the educational field (Dockery, 2015). To challenge the status quo and lack of access to advancement opportunities, African American male faculty and leaders would need to find a way to assimilate to avoid negative experiences. The negative experiences that the African American males were attempting to overcome included White administrative staff delaying work, doing a poor job on work for faculty members, or purposefully misplacing or losing files in an attempt to discredit the work of their African American co-workers (Scott, 2016a). African American males enlisted strategies to lessen negative experiences, such as networking, and seeking mentors (Louis et al., 2016).

The strategies, such as networking, having mentors, and finding value in one’s position, may assist African American males in reaching high-level leadership positions. However, the researcher would like to explore how African American males use code-switching in addition to other strategies as a means to overcome obstacles. There are several obstacles one must overcome on the path to obtaining a leadership or administrative position. Dockery (2015) suggested the overall culture at PWIs essentially places African American males at a disadvantage. The culture within PWIs restricts the ability of African American males to progress because the structure’s intent was to guarantee the success of the dominant culture. This was in part due to the committee members in charge of tenure and promotion being largely, if not solely, made up of white members. Understanding the use of code-switching will provide ways
for PWIs to better prepare for African American males who wish to advance in their careers in spite of the obstacles they face.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on social learning theory, which forms behaviors based on setting, and how the Markedness model coined by Myers-Scotton (1993) is based on the social learning theory. Though exploring minority group experiences Myers-Scotton (1993) was able to create a model on how such groups navigate their way through institutional culture, which traditionally benefitted White males. The Markedness model described the process speakers of a native language can know and then decide which form of linguistics is the best option in a given setting. The native speaker assigns benefits to changing the vernacular choices and determines if there was a cost associated with conversational encounters (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The model assumes for each conversation there is an expected language choice, the more formal the setting the more the language option should mimic that of America’s dominant race within the professional setting, the White male.

The idea of assimilating language styles and tones to imitate the dominant culture was the reasoning for linking the conceptual framework of the social learning theory to this qualitative research study. Rotter (1954) described the empirical law of effect as the background for social learning theory. The law defined the roles individuals play to seek out positive encouragement from others. Individuals will change or adapt features of themselves based on their environment. This theory supports the idea of researching the use of code-switching to be accepted at PWIs, in an attempt to gain advancement opportunities and increase retention rates. The social learning theory conceptual framework framed the understanding of behaviors with consideration to the
setting. The cultural perspective of decided behaviors, including language affects many aspects of African American’s role at PWIs of higher education.

**Statement of the Problem**

It is not known how African American males perceive recruitment, promotion, and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching is used for job advancement and retention. Past research shows that white males were predominant in positions in higher education for faculty and administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). African American faculty at the PWIs average out to approximately 4% in data gathered (Strauss, 2015). The significant gap in the employment, retention, and promotion of African American male faculty at PWIs was evident in the studies surrounding the experiences of this demographic. Edwards and Ross (2017), as well as Mitchell (2017), explored the experiences of African American male faculty at PWIs. Mitchell discussed his personal feelings as an African American male, as being alone within the workplace and cornered physically and intellectually. Mitchell’s description along with other past research focused on the negative experiences of African American male faculty at PWIs, this study’s focus has been on how African American males perceive advancement opportunities and retention for leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching is used to aide in this process.

The underrepresentation of African American faculty members at PWIs of higher education has been a persistent problem in the U.S.’s higher education system. The number of African American faculty and leaders in higher education was 7.1% (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). African American males make up a small percentage when compared to White males who made up 75.5%. This data was an example of the disparity in representation based on race in higher education. In addition to the low representation in leadership positions at PWIs,
African American males also face certain obstacles within these institutions. These obstacles may include isolation, lack of personal uniqueness, or alienation, which may be barriers to advancement opportunities (Scott, 2016a). Insight about the use of code-switching could be shared with PWIs of higher education to create ways to recruit, promote and retain African American males to address the low rate of advancement opportunities and retention rates.

**Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study has been to explore perceptions by African American males on the recruitment and retention rates for leadership positions at PWIs. Interviewing and completing a focus group study where participants from 4-year, coeducational PWIs could speak on their use of code-switching as a means to aide in their career trajectory accomplished the objective. Understanding the language choices of African American males and the need to assimilate will provide insight on strategies PWIs can use to increase African American male representation and retain diverse faculty and leadership personnel. Acknowledging the insight African American male faculty can provide to PWIs to assist in overcoming the challenges to increase African American male representation at the leadership level and to increase retention rates will provide valuable information to institutions. The study contributes to the research on ways in which PWIs can recruit, retain, and promote African American male faculty and leaders to address the significant gap in representation.

**Research Questions**

In the qualitative research study, a case study design was used to gain an understanding of the use of code-switching and how this affects the role of African American males at PWIs of higher education. The following questions guide the study:
RQ₁. How do African American male faculty perceive code-switching to affect recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education?

RQ₂. How do African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education use code-switching for job advancement?

Significance of the Study

The examination of the past research from Wilder (2015), Dockery (2015), Scott (2016a, 2016b), and Siegel et al. (2015) on the experiences of African American males who persist at PWIs of higher education offered insight into the factors that attribute to obstacles to minority recruitment, and career advancement opportunities. Further exploration of the relationship between promotion, retention, and code-switching can lead to understanding the complex social interaction phenomena of African American males at PWIs. The research on code-switching can also serve the needs of multicultural educational institutions. The faculty and administration have always needed diversity to aide in the success of minority student populations (Possett, 2016; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Exploring how African American males gain access to advancement opportunities through communication, by means of code-switching, will better prepare those who wish to advance their careers for the challenges they may face. In exploring the code-switching practices of African American males at PWIs of higher education, the study provides information to increase an understanding of code-switching and how it leads to advancement and increased retention.
Definition of Terms

This qualitative research with a case study component utilized terms to describe the phenomenon in the study. Understanding the following terms and definitions will assist in offering clarification to the study.

Administration: The administration of a higher education institution can be classified as president, academic dean, vice president, or provost, dean of students, or director of a given program (Wolfe, 2010).

Assimilation: Resemble and integrate the ideas and cultural norms of one society or culture into that of your own culture (Owens, 2017).

Code-switching: The act of assigning meaning based on shifting between different cultures as you move through life’s conversations; choosing your communication style based on the people you are dealing with (Deggans, 2013).

Predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Institutions of higher education that primarily serves a White majority student population (Edwards & Ross, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The current research study included a number of assumptions, which are elaborated below. A discussion of the limitations and delimitations of the study follows the assumptions.

Assumptions. The researcher presented data collected from African American males employed at PWIs that revealed a perceived relationship between code-switching, advancement, and retention rates for African American male faculty members. According to the data, when African American males engage in various strategies of assimilation, they overcome negative experiences and increase opportunities for advancement and retention rates within the work environment. During the collection of data, the researcher assumed that all the participants
provided accurate and honest responses to the interview questions within their ability (Simon & Goes, 2013). The researcher also assumed the use of code-switching has been an understudied phenomenon. Regarding the focus group participants, it was also assumed that since they are of the same ethnic group this will influence how other participants answer each question as to whether code-switching was a positive means to achieve advancement opportunities and retention at PWIs. It was also considered that providing a synopsis of the collected data would provide an understanding of the use of this phenomenon and how it can assist in identifying strategies for PWIs to use to achieve diversity within their institutions.

**Limitations.** In addition to the assumptions made by the researcher, there are also limitations to the study. Qualitative research involves a person handling the data collection process. For this reason, there are limitations to the study. Mistakes, personal biases, along with missed opportunities should all be considered. Aside from missed opportunities, the limitation of African American male faculty members at PWIs, as well as the lack of previous studies on African American males’ use of code-switching as a means to seek out promotions and retention limits the ability to validate the study.

The availability of members of the target population to form the sample for data collection may not be feasible due to low representation. This leads to the inability for generalization, this was not possible due to the design of the case study research (Yin, 2018). The researcher also considered the limitation of the data being gathered from one geographic region. This may present regional biases within the gathered data.

**Delimitations.** To address some of the limitations the researcher worked within measures feasible to accommodate the participants. The researcher worked towards scheduling the interviews and focus group to accommodate the schedules of the participants. The researcher
also traveled to locations as necessary, if the participants are unable to communicate via an online platform. To assist in the process of gaining relevant, truthful information, the identities of the participants were confidential and personal identifiers were removed. This allowed for the participants to share freely to gather detailed information about the use of code-switching while employed at PWIs.

Summary

The researcher believes there to be valuable information to gain through acquiring a better understanding of how African American males navigate in their quest for advancement at PWIs. Race and culture within an institution plays a significant role in the decisions made to seek out advancement opportunities and remain employed at PWIs of higher education (Siegel et al., 2015). The conceptual framework for the study sets the stage to explore the use of code-switching as a means to create advancement opportunities and increase retention rates. The social learning theory addressed the behaviors of individuals in relation to the formality of the setting. Career advancement opportunities and retention are factors effected by certain behaviors in the workplace. Social learning theory can help to understand the role code-switching has in directing workplace hierarchies.

The literature review provided the means to structure the study around the social learning theory conceptual framework. The framework suggested there was a connection between behaviors and settings. The research an exploration of solutions to language behaviors, specifically code-switching, within the workplace as a means to advance and how it affects retention rates. The perception of code-switching by African American males will provide insight for PWIs to improve recruitment, advancement, and retention rates for this demographic.
The knowledge gained from the study may be useful in creating strategies for increased African American male representation at PWIs of higher education.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Conversational assimilation, described as “code-switching” throughout the literature reviewed, was a term originally coined by Vogt (1954), cited by Stell and Yakpo (2015), through his review of *Language in Contact*. The act of code-switching involves the “strategy of identity negotiation deployed by individuals in reaction to both their interlocutors and societal environments they find themselves in” (Stell & Yakpo, 2015, p. 9). The additional description of the two layers of the phenomenon, the use of African American Vernacular English compared to Standard English supported this definition. Smitherman (1977) described African American Vernacular English as the “Euro-American speech with an Afro-American meaning, nuance, tone, and gesture” (p. 32). Burling (1973) described Standard English varying from African American Vernacular English by identifying four categories of differences: word, sound, and contrast variability, and final consonants. Grammatical differences are also noted including loss of suffix, questions, tenses, and multiple negation use (Burling, 1973). Understanding code-switching as an active part of the daily routines of African American’s in the workplace is fairly new research. The research adds new perspectives to the roles, experiences, and perceptions of African American faculty and administration at PWIs. The research combined with the previous literature offers ways PWIs can craft programs that cater to the success and advancement of the African American faculty members.

The study was also important to the field of education because the literature on retention and advancement for African American males in educational leadership positions suggested there was a correlation between positive work experiences by communication with peers and retention. The perceptions by African American males on the recruitment and retention rates for
leadership positions at PWIs and how the use of code-switching in the workplace increased the opportunities for advancement will offer insight to PWIs. This insight helped to address the lack of diversity many institutions face.

The researcher used this study to explore if certain experiences using code-switching can increase retention rates by improving communication. The researcher also aspired for the study to explore if African American male faculty members perceive code-switching as a means to strengthen networks within the workplace, therefore addressing advancement opportunities. The linguistic elements of African American Vernacular English possibly represent important markers of group identity and solidarity (Naremore, 1980; Smitherman, 1977). The need for a higher representation of Africa American males at PWIs, and the potential for increasing retention rates in leadership positions by this subgroup, created opportunities for advancement. Dockery (2015) suggested being involved in networking with others in various settings creates positive experiences in the workplace. The positive relationships created in the workplace could increase the potential for retention, and by association, advancement opportunities.

Communication with workplace peers creates these networks, which are social in nature.

The idea of networking within the workplace provided the space to create personal and meaningful relationships and communicating with peers who are willing to offer feedback and resources otherwise inaccessible. The network created in the workplace was an indispensable resource as it related to developmental challenges and advancement (Scott, 2016a). The study explored how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and the use of code-switching for job advancement and retention. Understanding how the use of code-switching created a path to the advancement of African American males in the workplace, will assist in creating programs that serve this
purpose. analyzing the change of vernacular in the workplace to blend in with the majority culture can accomplish this.

Background to the Problem

Historically, the creation of higher education institutions within the U.S. considered the racial demographics of the nation, with African Americans viewed as inferior to their white counterparts due to the cultural mindset formed as a result of slavery. The effects of slavery on racial status extended from personal views to views of systemic racism within the U.S. school systems as well. This learned hatred for the black race created questioning of the value of one’s self, one’s worth, and one’s purpose by African Americans (Smith, 2016). As a result of this school of thought a large majority of institutions catered solely to the educational needs of their White student population. The creation of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) challenged this norm. To address the lack of institutions, which allowed the enrollment of African American students, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 authorized the establishment of more than 100 higher education institutions for African American students (Minor, 2008).

As enrollment at HBCUs increased, so did issues that centered on educational equality. The Brown vs. Board of Education ruling addressed segregation and unequal resources within the school system. However, it took the nation a significant amount of time to accept this ruling and begin the integration of schools. This ruling, along with the later implementation of the executive order of affirmative action addressed African American enrollment and hiring practices at PWIs. Institutions of higher education began to accept African American students and faculty members. However, through the mid-20th century, African American faculty at PWIs remained virtually nonexistent. Nonetheless, overtime enrollment increased, and racial
divisions lessened over time (Pinto & Douglas, 2017). This was in part due to the assimilation of the minority students regarding their social behaviors.

Alongside the assimilation of social behaviors, there became a greater need for analyzing the stereotypes associated with the racial divisions in higher education. The racial divide extended from student experiences into faculty experiences as well. Social behaviors of faculty members were affected in a similar fashion to those of the student population (Dau-Schmidt & Sherman, 2013). Just as the institution catered to the White student, the hiring practices benefited the White candidate (Mitchell, 2016, 2017). An overwhelmingly high number of White males held positions at the top of the hierarchy, such as president, even as the enrollment and hiring of African American people at PWIs increased over time (Yancy, 2017). Promotion and retention of male educators continue as a focus of the literature on African American males with careers in education. Data shows that African Americans represent 4% of professors and associate professors in higher education compared to 87% for their White counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Similar to the disparity in the number of professors and associate professors, the research on the number of African American higher education presidents and African American’s in other leadership positions show a disproportion as well. The data from past research does not show a positive correlation with the increase in enrollment and hiring of African American people at PWIs (Yancy, 2017). To address the lack of diversity on the campus of a PWI of higher education, the response has been to enroll more students and hire faculty of color. However, little attention has been given to diversifying the leadership (Scott, 2016a). Specifically, little attention has been given to African American male leadership, advancement opportunities, and retention at PWIs (Yancy, 2017). The lack of literature on African American male presence and perception
of advancement opportunities in PWI leadership leaves a void in higher education leadership research.

Dockery (2015) extensively discussed the need for positive workplace experiences created through social networks. This need for positive workplace experiences can optimistically begin to change the low rates of African Americans that make up the full-time faculty at American universities. African Americans comprise 5% of the instructor and lecturer pool, but when compared to their White American peers, who comprise 70%, the disparity in representation was significant (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The underrepresentation and low academic career status of African American faculty members, especially males, was an ongoing concern for institutions of higher education in the U.S.

Code-switching was an intentional act to achieve certain social ends (Stell & Yakpo, 2015). With regard to speech, African American males attempt to balance the need to identify with their own culture with the need to function effectively within the context of the larger dominant culture (Burling, 1973). This was the idea behind code-switching. The information on the use of code-switching was valuable as a means to increase one’s social status. The status of an individual can be formed when initial impressions are produced from superficial indicators, such as language, to infer fundamental dispositional attributes, such as attitudes on a given topic. Others used these cues to determine if someone was likable in terms of whether the individual was someone they would like to get to know, hire, and trust (McKinnan, Smith, & Hamayan, 1983).

Limited research existed on the use of code-switching to address the lack of advancement opportunities within higher education. The literature search on this topic takes into consideration the creation of networks and the cultural barriers in communication that hinders the creation of
advancement opportunities. The study hypothesizes that African American males seek identification with a group for the sole benefit of contributing to their own status advancement and prestige. The lack of current research on the potential correlation of African American male leaders changing their style, tone, and dialect in workplace conversation to help create opportunities that aid in retention and advancement, created a need for research in this area.

The limited research exploring the use of code-switching presents a vast opportunity for further research on the use, benefits, and hindrances of this method to create opportunities for advancement and increase retention rates in the workplace. No studies addressed the use of strategies to advance in a career and create positive work environments that increase retention rates (Graham, 2017). This lack of research included data on code-switching. The most common use of code-switching was as a learned skill used mainly in the classroom setting by bilingual learners (Graham, 2017). Code-switching was not often listed to conform to a cultural style that was geared to benefit non-minority groups based on language use, although it was commonly defined in this manner by African Americans who use it to be accepted in their daily work environments.

Students that support the idea of changing linguistic styles to better complement a situation, such as a classroom environment have been well researched. Few current studies were located that explored how African American males, a predominant group that uses code-switching in the workplace, perceived the use of code-switching as a means to advance in the field of education. Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol, and Brown (2015) explored the factors that lead to success for African American in leadership roles in higher education, the authors concluded that effective communication skills, self-assurance, and understanding politics of higher education were the main factors that lead to success. The limited literature on communication skills, also
defined as code-switching, was a strategy for career advancement to shape the basis for the study.

**Conceptual Framework**

Asante (1991) discussed the problems associated with the education of African Americans in the U.S. Educational institutions focused their material to the understanding of the White majority student population. Asante posited that African Americans have been educated in a manner that distanced them from their own culture. Asante further discussed how the educational system attempts to assimilate the behaviors of African American’s to the European culture. The ideas of Asante, along with those of Myers-Scotton (1993) on language playing a role in chosen behaviors and Rotter (1954) on social learning theory, created the cornerstone for the conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework was based on (a) Markedness model and (b) the social learning theory.

**Markedness model.** Makus (1990) posited that language and some forms of media have a meaningful position in molding attitudes and opinions about society. These beliefs and opinions typically favor the majority of society and, therefore, were perceived as the norm. In Makus’ writing she explains the issues in code-switching in the context of problematizing democratic pluralism through Hall’s ideology theory:

By stigmatizing those outside, the democratic pluralism the dominant group of society incites conformity to the group’s norms including linguistic norms as well as other behaviors. There was not a natural unanimity that exists, but meanings are socially constructed. The strain between those within the dominant group and those of the minority group “invites the question of who has the power to define whom, and in what interests the definitions are offered. (p. 497)
The Markedness Model coined by Myers-Scotton (1993) assumed that speakers of a native language know the expected “marked” and unexpected “unmarked” linguistic option for a given situation. This group also understands the social benefits and cost of using the commonly accepted language within a given setting.

The theory assumed in each conversational encounter among community members, there was an expected language choice for each participant. The language choice indexed the appropriate verbiage for the specific social context. As part of the socialization expectations, speakers learn the social meanings associated with the choice of each language in every social context with every combination of possible conversational partners. These associations are learned through what Myers-Scotton labels the Markedness metric, the ability to assess all code choices as more or less expected or unexpected for the exchange type in which they occur, based on innate cognitive faculties in all humans. This metric was part of a person’s communicative competence. A speaker may decide to use an expected code for a variety of social reasons, such as showing deference, solidarity, or equality.

Other authors, such as Shohat and Stam (1994), discussed a similar ideology or theory. Their dialogue examined the idea of ostracized groups of people who are in many ways powerless to sustain control over their own cultural images and language. The Markedness Model theory related to the study in that code-switching was a means of acceptance by the minority group into the dominant group. Through recognition of the given setting, the language choices vary. The Markedness model was an overview of how this same theory was used in a more concise manner by African American males as it related to how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention.
**Social learning theory.** The research of Bandura (1977) and Rotter (1954) supported the way individuals change their behaviors to fit the social setting. The research of Bandura (1977), Rotter (1954), and Vogt (1954), supports the Markedness Model, in that the behaviors of individuals, including their language choices, are motivating factors to seek out positive experiences and interpersonal interactions. Bandura posited that individuals learn from observing, imitating, and modeling one another. Based on the outcome of the behaviors observed from others, these same behaviors may be used on later occasions. The coded information that an individual has observed was used later and served as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977).

The social learning theory was based on modeling behaviors that benefit a person in a given situation. Motivation to imitate another’s behaviors was a key condition for the implementation of the social learning theory. Bandura (1977) described imagined incentives as a motivator to model another’s actions. The study explored how code-switching was the modeling action to gain advancement, which can be considered the promised incentive. Bandura considered personality as an interaction between one’s environment, psychological processes, such as the ability to entertain language differences, and one’s behaviors. Bandura’s description of the social learning theory in practice was similar to the reasons the researcher would like to explore code-switching. The idea that African American males may select their use of language based on their environment such as working at a PWI aligns with the social learning theory conceptual framework. The ideas of the social learning theory guided the current research.

In addition to the idea of Bandura (1977), Rotter (1954) also posited that the empirical law of effect was the motivating factor for certain behaviors. The law of effect states that individuals are inspired to find positive encouragement. The law’s main idea was that the interactions of the individual based on the environment represented personality. It was
impossible to speak of personality and decisions made by individuals without considering the environment or setting (Rotter, 1954). Social learning theory states that to understand behavior, the individual, and the history of the learning and experiences, along with the environment, the stimuli the person was aware of and responding to must always be considered (Rotter, 1954).

The social learning theory guides the behaviors outlined in the Markedness model. The individual will choose a specific set of guidelines based on the environment and the benefits awarded based on the chosen behaviors. African American males learn this skill, along with the skill of code-switching, informally as a youth; they are taught in order to be successful as a minority in educational leadership, or any other field dominated by White males, perfecting the art of code-switching indirectly became part of their career journey. Smith (2016) described this informal lesson from his parents and teachers by describing the constant reminder of knowing to consider the setting for when to use or not use Ebonics, learning to be twice as good in an effort to be considered successful.

Based on the literature of Dockery (2015), Scott (2016a), and Louis et al. (2016), the study of how the use of code-switching benefits African American in career advancement opportunities and retention rates at PWIs of higher education, highlights an abundance of societal and educational biases. Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, and Frederico (1999) theorized social hierarchy was not based primarily on a person’s talents; instead, status was applied based on the group one was associated with. The study on code-switching explores how language benefits a person’s position at PWIs. The emphasis on the ongoing conflicts in the worldviews of language and linguistic norms are explored.

The reviewed studies highlight the biases and conflicting views on language use as the foundation for using the social learning theory conceptual framework and use of the social
learning theory to explore these occurrences. Mehta (2013) discussed the descriptive theory research process to describe and classify characteristics and specific dimensions of groups of individuals and events by finding commonalities through observation. Social learning theory was a useful tool to examine the use of code-switching by African American males and what common language behaviors are exhibited during the path of career advancements and retention efforts. This theory has been used as a framework for investigating, exploring, and documenting many characteristics of a specific group of individuals.

The social learning theory created the conceptual framework for exploring the implications of using, or failing to use, code-switching by African American males in leadership positions at PWIs of higher education. The observations, interviews, and completion of a questionnaire by African American males will assist in addressing whether the existence of barriers to success based on language exists. The aim of the research was to explore how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how they used code-switching for job advancement and retention. The desired outcome was to assist PWIs in ways to address the disparity of African American males as faculty members who are considered for high leveled leadership positions.

Review of the Literature

Research on the topic of code-switching has identified several factors both inside and outside the educational field that influence success. Accordingly, the review of the literature focused on researching the implications of code-switching in the classroom and workplace setting. Research theorists, such as Mitterer, Kim, and Cho (2013), acknowledged the complexity of race and language and its role in student success. It was more common for educators and employers to be aware of linguistic variances based on culture, but this knowledge did not affect
the expectation of Standard American English use in most public formal settings (Algarian-Ruiz, 2014). Although the accepted norm for language in most formal settings was identified as Standard English (Piller, 2016), African American Vernacular English was still intermixed into conversations and presentations.

The use of the accepted version of the Standard English language was informally written into social inclusion norms. This expectation forms the behavior of individuals in public settings. The idea of linguistic norms constructs the common practice of code-switching by African American males within the workplace. The use of code-switching ideally created a sense of relatable social cues to their White counterparts, specifically their supervisors. Cultural norms must be abandoned in an attempt to become relatable in the workplace and be considered capable of leadership positions. The careers of African American leaders are developed within the culture of the PWI (Dockery, 2015). As a minority group, understanding cultural influences has been important to the path for career advancement.

The reviewed literature provided the background knowledge of how language holds an important place on the social inclusion agenda. The ideologies that linguistic diversity has little relevance in formal settings created the need for individuals to utilize code-switching (Wingfield, 2015). The lack of linguistic diversity hinders the comfort level of minorities, where the language pattern most frequently used outside of work was not the same as the majority of the workplace peers (Wingfield, 2015). This can be highly noticeable in the workplace, and visually noticeable in the lack of minority leaders (Louis et al., 2016; Scott, 2016a; Yancy, 2017). The literature shared a common school of thought based on the need to increase minorities in roles of leadership (Dockery, 2015; Moschella, 2013). However, there was still research to be conducted
to explore the individuals who have earned leadership positions and their personal linguistic journey to their leadership position.

Researchers of code-switching use a set of theories that emphasize the current views of code-switching and the benefits and hindrances of its use. Mitterer et al. (2013) and Myers-Scotton (1993), among other authors, highlighted the following views on the benefits of code-switching:

1. Use of code-switching created opportunities to expand the types of relationships one can form including personal and professional based on the formality of the setting.

2. Linguistic norms are typically monolingual and monocultural. This deems a majority of individuals incapable of effective communication.

3. Code-switching can bridge the cultural divide based on language.

4. Code-switching expands the world view of those who utilize the skill – as the code switchers spent a significant portion of time changing between linguistic styles (Molinsky, Davenport, Iyer, & Davidson, 2012, para. 2).

The concerns with the reviewed literature by Wingfield (2015), Stell and Yakpo (2015), Piller (2016), and Graham (2017), among others, include the lack of exploration of the benefits and hindrances of code-switching. While the literature by Barnes (2014) and Piller (2016) presented the act of code-switching as a beneficial skill, they failed to acknowledge the lack of diversity and social inclusion within the workplace by attempting to mimic the dominant culture. Tupas (2015) described this lack of inclusion as a reason for language barriers implemented in a top-down manner by non-linguistically diverse societies. The complexity of the path to success due to language barriers can be overcome by code-switching as necessary in social and professional networks.
Historical perspective of roles for African Americans in education. African Americans began to be allowed to seek out education in American society after the Civil War. This timeframe, after the war, identified when slavery was abolished in the U.S. Du Bois was one of the noticeable figures who developed during this time (West, 2001). Du Bois along with others stressed the importance of education and took advantage of the educational opportunities available. However, even with access to some educational institutions, many were segregated.

It was a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness an American, a negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1994, p. 2)

The ideas of Du Bois expressed the ideology of accepting the racial divide one often faced, while still attempting to find a place within the dominant culture.

During this time of segregation, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 wrote into law that universities that use race as a factor for admission requirements, also create universities for persons of color (Minor, 2008). The schools along with other institutions such as hospitals and public buses functioned under the ideology of “separate but equal” (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). Minor (2008) stated the ruling from the Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 (McBride, 2006), which placed into law that separate practiced used for groups based on race was unequal, and illegal. This ruling did not end the use of the ideology in education, which was more highly concentrated in public higher education (Minor, 2008).

The continued use of separating educational schooling and career opportunities was evident in the positions African American’s held at PWIs. The majority of African American
Educators were employed at Historically African American Colleges and Universities (HBCU), which were established from the Morrill Land Grant. African Americans progressed into PWIs in significant professional roles from recruitment efforts as a direct result of lawsuits and attempts to handle other diversity issues (Minor, 2008). The attempt to gain a higher representation of African American faculty was still a challenge that was addressed now. There continued to be an underrepresentation of African American males at most of the nation’s colleges and universities (Yancy, 2017).

Dockery (2015) emphasized the barriers to career advancement opportunities. The barriers in part are due to evidence that suggested, while African Americans are being hired in the 21st century, they are more likely to have negative workplace experiences. These negative experiences are obstacles to securing leadership positions and retention. The noted experiences from the research on how African American males secure leadership roles have meaningful repercussions to the advancement of African Americans at PWIs. The research explored how and why this subgroup was still a minority when compared to the socially dominant White culture (Dockery, 2015).

**Dominance in society.** The research of literature on social dominance centered on the influence of the dominant group in society (Moss, 2016). The main assumption included the indication that as gender- and age-based hierarchies exist other social hierarchies will also materialize. Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, and Frederico (1999) asserted a commonly accepted idea of group-based social hierarchies that are based on class and ethnicity among other designations (Wolfe, 2010). The idea of social dominance argued that institutions have a dominant group and this group created the highest level of the hierarchy. The workplace hierarchical levels created based on social dominance are typically benefiting to White males in
higher education (Moss, 2016). The research of Scott (2016a), examines the experiences of African American males within the social structure of PWIs of higher education. The previous research explored the experiences and whether they were considered positive or negative based on social hierarchical standards.

**Strategies for positive experiences and advancement.** The literature of Mitterer et al. (2013), Siegel et al. (2015), and Murphy (2017) suggested strategies to lower the negative experiences of African American males employed at PWIs. The common strategies include networking, seeking mentors, as well as developing other interests (Murphy, 2017). Dockery (2015) documented negative experiences, which lead to lower retention rates. The formation of associations and networks can address and increase these lower retention rates (Murphy, 2017). However, the formation of a network of individuals did not guarantee successfully addressing the issues that African American males face in leadership positions at PWIs.

The study of communicative practices of White males with members of a minority/non-dominant group of males in the workplace outlined reasons why engaging in conversations with one another would take place. The reasons a member of a non-dominant group would hold a conversation with a member of the dominant group focused on opportunities to create reciprocating relationships networks (Deggans, 2013). To create a common group in language, the non-dominant group may use code-switching, the act of switching between languages in a conversation. However, due to the shifting of multicultural and multiethnic societies, the use of code-switching has become more complex. Code-switching expanded to assigning meaning based on shifting between different cultures as you move through life’s conversations, choosing your communication style based on the people you’re dealing with (Deggans, 2013). Dockery (2015) outlined strategies commonly employed by African Americans in higher education to
improve their interactions with Whites in similar roles because communication between the two
groups often proved to be problematic.

Code-switching may be used to address the complexities of communication between
different demographics. Barnes (2014) described conversational assimilation, code-switching, as
a means to fit in. Daily situations create occasions where code-switching may be a strategic art
form in which to partake. Barnes described the strategic use when attempting to fit in with
others. Barnes also discussed the idea of using code-switching to suggest competence in a given
role to those not comfortable with other forms of language. These ideas of the benefit of code-
switching and assimilating societal norms provided a means to become an accepted member of
the dominant group, rather than an outsider.

To further understand the dynamics of communication among different cultures and
races, the researcher reviewed additional relevant literature on code-switching. Critically
exploring and analyzing the literature to identify factors that create the need for African
American males to use code-switching as a means for advancement opportunities and to increase
retention rates were the objective of the study. The reviewed literature focused on the
experiences of African American males and other minorities at PWIs. The success of students
who use code-switching was researched; however, the use of code-switching in the workplace
was not well researched. Although there was not excessive literature concerning code-switching
as a means of accessing career advancement opportunities and building workplace relationships,
the researcher sought out literature concerning minorities and their use of different linguistic
styles.

The various language systems used by minorities in the workplace to assimilate to the
language preferences of the majority cultural norms were explored. The researcher first explored
the literature of Coulmas (2005). In his book *Sociolinguistics: The Study of Speakers' Choices* the author referenced the use of African American Vernacular English compared to the use of Standard American English by set groups of people identified by their cultural identity. The idea of code-switching to be accepted by other cultures was explored through the writing of the author. This review of the literature offered a background of the social acceptance, or lack thereof, of various linguistic styles as formal language options.

Through his writings, Coulmas (2005) revealed his belief that it was not uncommon for African Americans to use both versions of the language, and switch to use one more than the other depending on the setting. The use of African American Vernacular English by African Americans involves word variability, sound variability, contrast variability, final consonant as well as the loss of suffixes, multiple negations, questions, and tenses (Coulmas, 2005). The knowledge employed by African Americans, along with other minority groups, on when and where code-switching between African American Vernacular English and Standard English was most beneficial can be traced to historical uses of switching between languages as the setting a person was socializing or working within becomes more formal (Barnes, 2014). The need to belong to the dominant group and balance identity in the form of language and dialect created an undue responsibility for considering minorities the same as their White counterparts.

The literature focused on the analysis of who, why, and where code-switching was documented and how its use benefited the person(s) implementing its use. Myers-Scotton (1993) also outlined the benefit of code-switching. The author developed the Markedness Model in which she posited that the decision of what form of the American language one decides to use was a rational decision. The model explored this decision and suggested that when an individual partakes in code-switching it was to relate to others involved in the conversation as well as the
setting of the conversation. Barnes (2014) described the use of code-switching as a deliberate balancing act, one used to avoid being profiled and burdened with negative perceptions.

In addition to the research on the benefits of code-switching, a questionnaire of the literature was also conducted to include an examination of the perception of African American Vernacular English in educational settings and workplace environments. By adapting the way language was used based on the participants and the setting of the conversation, there was a possibility of gaining access to social networks dominated by other cultures (Graham, 2017). This review on perception included historical perceptions of African American students and how the use of African American Vernacular English, instead of the more socially accepted formal Standard American English, had far-reaching repercussions to advancement opportunities.

Rickford et al. (2015) posited how the use of African American Vernacular English by students molded the educator’s perspective of the students. The often-negative perception of the student by the educator due to the lack of linguistic background knowledge created an under-representation of African American students in honors classes, as well as lower test grades. This early labeling of students as under-performing, noted by the lack of representation in advanced classes and over-representation in special education and remedial classes, has far-reaching repercussions.

The review provided a model that indirectly suggested that minorities need to implement code-switching to be successful. Pinto and Douglas (2017) suggested that minority students will benefit from learning to use code-switching to use language more effectively. This section included a thorough examination of the literature, to find a correlation between educational views of African American Vernacular English in the school setting and views or acceptance of African American Vernacular English in the workplace. Additionally, Piller (2016) suggested
that this access to other’s social networks addressed the exclusion of groups that typically would not have access to members at the top of a social hierarchy within the workplace. African American administrators at PWIs face isolation (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Mitterer et al. (2013) suggested that further studies to explore how code-switching eases the disparities among the cultural groups can bridge the gap to success for African American males in higher education. This literature was then used to synthesize and identify the barriers to the success of African American males at PWIs of higher education.

Dockery (2015) suggested that there are ways to help improve the experiences of African American male leaders at PWIs of higher education and thus lead to advancement opportunities. The research on African American males at PWIs of higher education documented the obstacles to learning a leadership position (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Dockery stated that the strategies commonly used by African Americans to improve their interactions with Whites include creating relationships that transcend the workplace. These relationships have to be maintained in a manner that was common to the cultural norms of the non-minority in the group. Research on what strategies African American leaders, who have a positive outlook on their career path, employ and how they interact with others was not provided in much of the reviewed literature.

Elliott (2013) suggested that African American faculty self-segregate themselves and that the experience of isolation and marginalization was due to the fact that African American faculty were often the only people of color in their respective departments. Hence, their voices are rarely heard (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017); the researcher seeks to explore if the use of code-switching addressed this isolation. Some studies, such as Elliott (2013) and Moschella (2013), have been conducted and offer evidence for the need to further research the topic of how African Americans code-switch in the work setting to help foster a more positive work environment. The
use of code-switching results in the ability of African Americans to gain access to social networks out of their cultural norm and potentially adds to their perceived success in higher education. The research can extend to study how this access to social networks can lead to success and leadership positions within PWIs of higher education. The literature presents data that code-switching was used within the educational field. However, most literature focused on the use of code-switching to help students access the material typically written in Standard English.

Studies, including Mitterer et al. (2013), have been conducted that determined minorities in the workplace, specifically with Latin and African American males, used code-switching. Data supporting if the use of code-switching lead to advancement opportunities were lacking. Although there was not extensive research on the topic of code-switching and its uses in higher levels of a career, it might be beneficial to examine its use and explore how it affects the retention of African American males in administrative positions. The literature supports the importance of teaching code-switching to African American students; however, it fails to support the effects of identifying its use and its benefits outside the classroom setting.

**Review of Methodological Literature and Issues**

Algarian-Ruiz (2014) acknowledged the use of code-switching in higher education, mainly for foreign language speaking students. Early analysts, such as Vogt (1954), described the act of code-switching and its benefits as a means of communication by bilingual individuals. This narrow definition eventually expanded to include the act of switching between various vernaculars by minority individuals in various settings (Barnes, 2014). It was understood that Standard English was the accepted form of communication in education, and for minority
students to be successful they must code-switch (Barnes, 2014). Nevertheless, the use of conversational assimilation solely for the purpose of career advancement has not been explored.

There was limited research exploring the use of code-switching as a tool for career advancement by African American males in higher education at PWIs. Most studies address only the use of code-switching by bilingual students (Savala, 2014). These same studies refrain from addressing the social aspect of code-switching as a networking tool in the higher education workplace. Limited studies analyzed the use of code-switching or any other communication focused method to increase access to career opportunities for African American males in higher education. There remains a lack of studies that acknowledge the widespread acceptance of Standard English that can help individuals overcompensate for other trials they may face as an African American male growing up in the U.S. (Barnes, 2014).

The studies on the use of code-switching, mainly addressed the need of code-switching by bilingual students, past studies did not address the use of changing between Standard English and African American Vernacular English (Algarian-Ruiz, 2014). The problem that the studies addressed included the benefit of the ability to code-switch by students. This benefit was described as the ability to change culturally accepted vernacular to assimilate to the Americanized standard of communication. This Americanized standard of communication applied to the way faculty presented information, wrote test questions, and expected communication between peers to be upheld. Mainly, the benefit of assimilation of vernacular to fit into the standard Americanized English showcased the problems with the available studies. The use of code-switching was not simply a means used to communicate within one culture, its use included a way to relate everyday experiences back to a specific culture through the use of specific language vernacular (Piller, 2016). The use of code-switching was also an unspoken
requirement as a skill that African American’s must become familiar with to ease the discomfort of non-minority counterparts within the workforce.

**Synthesis of Research Findings**

The fundamental issues relating to the advancement of African American males in education deal with the assimilation to other cultural norms, in lieu of personalized cultural norms. Pinto and Douglas (2017) described the African American culture as one that has been lost and attached to European culture when it was beneficial for advancement opportunities. The research findings stated that to achieve the protection of cultural traditions, African American males must learn from the experiences of others and how they have been successful. However, in the midst of learning from these experiences, one must also refrain from assimilating to the culture or denouncing the cultural norms used outside of the more formal setting. The protection of language norms was one area identified where cultural norms are often sacrificed in order to receive the opportunity for success.

The research findings identified three areas of exploration that determined in part how to best understand what leads to success in leadership positions for African American males. The following three areas were identified: (a) historical perspective on the language used to teach African American males, (b) strategies for advancement opportunities to leadership positions by African American males, and (c) social learning theory, changing behavioral patterns based on one’s setting. Historically, minorities have been underrepresented in higher education. This included the enrollment numbers as well as the faculty and staff within higher education institutions. In 2016, African Americans made up only 3% of full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The literature suggested there are strategies that can be utilized by African American males to lower the negative effects
experienced by leaders employed at PWIs. Louis et al. (2016) suggested networking and having a mentor among other strategies can help lessen the negative experiences. The influence of maneuvering through the beliefs of social authority and the perceived role of race and cultural norms in the educational field was one of the significant areas that developed from the researched literature.

The conceptual framework for the study was based on the social learning theory and the Markedness model. The theory states that to understand behavior, one must consider the history of the individual along with the environment (Rotter, 1954). The social learning theory was the outline for the Markedness model. Within the model, an individual will choose language norms based on the given setting. This behavior can lead to opportunities within the dominant culture, otherwise inaccessible. mastering the process of inclusion with the dominant group mitigated this marginalization. The process of inclusion was done through networking in many instances, and this process can begin by commonalities in language that creates opportunities for communication.

**Critique of Previous Research**

Dockery (2015) and Mitchell (2016) provided insight into the concept of the experiences of African American males in leadership at PWIs. The research supports the idea of strategies implemented by African American males to increase the potential to advance in their career positions. African American males often deal with barriers to success and workplace isolation. African American males can use networking and mentorships, among other strategies to diminish isolation and overcoming stereotypes placed on this subgroup by the dominant group within the workplace (Dockery, 2015). The current research consisted of several limitations with the focus of the literature being on experiences and barriers to advancement.
The narrow scope of the uses of code-switching was in part due to the interpretation of the results of data from previous studies. Researchers, such as Savala (2014), associate code-switching as a skill employed by non-African American minorities as a means to assimilate to American culture within an academic setting. However, some critics, such as Garner and Rubin (1986), believe that the necessity and burden to code-switch by only African American candidates reflect a continuation of racist tendencies. Generalization of the uses of code-switching created limitations in the breadth of the presented research material. Other limitations include the small sample sizes of participants in many of the studies. Typically, between eight and 15 participants were questioned on their experiences at PWIs. The small sample sizes reflect the number of available participants that fit within the study’s parameters of African American males in leadership positions at public institutions.

**Summary**

The findings from this review reveal a lack of significant literature on the use of code-switching as a means of career advancement. The results of the previous studies on code-switching as a strategy for advancement in higher education institutions by African American males are inconclusive and incomplete. To date, significant work was lacking that considered how the strategy of code-switching can lead to advancement opportunities for African American males and higher retention rates for this demographic at PWIs. The Markedness model and social learning theory conceptual frameworks that are most evident in the research, seems most appropriate to discuss. The framework provided the primary direction for the research. The adoption of the social learning theory works to describe and classify features and specific extents of groups of individuals and events by finding commonalities through observation. The
conceptual framework of the researched studies breaks down and analyzed the correlation of speech and dialectal styles to the success of African American leaders in higher education.

Based on this review of the literature, there was sufficient reason for investing the use of code-switching at PWIs. The reviewed literature develops a unique conceptual framework using social learning theory, questionnaires, and observation, to understand what can assist in the retention of African American males in leadership positions. This information in the reviewed literature provides sufficient reason for thinking that an investigation examining the impact of code-switching used by African American males in PWIs of higher education may yield important findings. I can, therefore, claim that the literature review has provided strong support for pursuing a research project to answer the following multi-part research question: What was the nature of code-switching uses by African American males in leadership positions at PWIs of higher education, how does code-switching influence access to professional and social networks, which can lead to advancement opportunities, and what are the effects of code-switching on retention?
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology that was used to collect, explore, and analyze data. The data collected and analyzed was used to answer the research questions on how code-switching is perceived to affect the advancement and retention of African American male leaders and faculty at PWIs of higher education. This chapter will discuss the rationale for the qualitative method case study to explore the phenomenon of code-switching used by African American male leaders and faculty. According to Yin (2018), the use of case study design was useful and presented a two-fold, more in-depth definition of case studies, the first part of which looks at the scope. Yin (2018) also indicated that “a case study was an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 16). This design encompassed the strategy to explore the phenomenon of code-switching in the workplace, the type of participants to include, the data collection process, the data analysis and the researcher’s role during the study.

Statement of the Problem

There was little known regarding how African American males perceive advancement opportunities and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how they used code-switching for job advancement and retention. The experiences of African American males at PWIs produced obstacles that limited the ability to advance in the educational hierarchy (Sawyer & Palmer, 2014). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; 2015) presented data that shows a low representation of African American males in administrative and other leadership positions. The NCES reported low percentages of African
American male leaders, and the literature indicated the obstacles to advancement as reasons for low retention rates. However, there has been little research conducted on how this same demographic overcame the obstacles preventing advancement and lowering retention rates.

The underrepresentation between African American and White males in faculty and leadership positions at PWIs can be noted in many areas of the higher education field (Mitchell, 2016). African American male administrators in the higher education setting remain underrepresented demographically (Mitchell, 2017). A report by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics (2017), stated African American male representation in faculty and leadership positions were close to 7.1%. This data paled in comparison to White males with a job title of executive, administrative, college faculty, or in managerial positions with a representation of 75.5%. This data, for both demographics, highlights a significant gap in the representation of PWIs minority males, specifically African American males, in faculty and leadership positions in the higher education industry.

African American males continue to vie for administrative positions at PWIs of higher education, having to consider certain obstacles associated with obtaining these positions. These obstacles included isolation, alienation, or lack of personal uniqueness (Edwards & Ross, 2017). The barriers for African American males at PWIs to advance in faculty and leadership positions contributed to the low retention rates for this demographic. The low representation of African American males in faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education stems from a chain reaction that the literature suggested has a beginning cause of negative experiences encountered while employed at said institutions (Naylor et al., 2015). Several researchers, including Sawyer and Palmer (2014), as well as Wingfield (2015), suggested negative experiences breed hurdles that constrain the ability to escalate in job title through the scholastic
hierarchy. While the literature indicated there are barriers to advancement for African American males in faculty and leadership positions within the higher education field, it was not known how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided the study:

RQ1. How do African American male faculty perceive code-switching to affect recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education?

RQ2. How do African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education use code-switching for job advancement and retention?

Devault (2017) described qualitative research as a method that promoted assembling rich data in the process of studying a social phenomenon. The researcher intended to use the qualitative research case study method to look at the phenomena in-depth and focus on details of the experiences of all parties involved. The researcher anticipated for the research process to yield valuable information through the collection of data from interviews; the case study method will also provide details to identify the phenomenon fully and justify the current practices, as well as provide a means to evaluate the use of the phenomena in the detailed setting.

**Research Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to explore how African American male faculty perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how they used code-switching for job advancement and to increase retention. In attempting to
answer the research question, the researcher anticipated the ability to postulate valuable insight that will inform programs towards improving diversity and retention among faculty at PWIs. To accomplish this task, the qualitative research methodology was employed. Qualitative research provides a rich description of personal action, a complex environment, and the context and the integrity of its thinking (Stake, 2010). Qualitative research has its structure and design based on using different methods to explore the worldviews of others. The use of research questions to guide the inquiry process allows for the researcher to understand phenomena through the lens of individuals or groups. Creswell (2007) described the qualitative methodology as understanding the meaning of a group or an individual ascribed to a social or human problem. The qualitative approach is a means to understand the process individuals use to apply meaning to events that occur.

Devault (2017) observed qualitative research was ideal when the researcher sought to explore a phenomenon, or define the problem, or develop an approach to a problem. Qualitative research allows delving deeper into a problem of interest and exploring the nuances related to the problem. The focus of the research was to explore the use of code-switching by African American males at PWIs of higher education. The literature review revealed that the majority of research methods that best assisted in understanding phenomena with diversity in higher education were qualitative research methods.

Research Design

The current study will assist in understanding African American male faculty and leaders at PWIs of higher education perceived factors associated with the opportunities for advancements and the use of code-switching. To study this phenomenon the case study design was used. The methodology of qualitative research has been modeled on a rich description of
personal action while taking into consideration the environment of the event (Stake, 2010). The methods for gathering data can include examining a situation, enquiring, and experiencing data through a participant in the research process (Baxter & Jack, 2008). One method, among several, for acquiring data under the qualitative research model required the investigator to explore situations over a period of time that provides in-depth data from observations, interviews, documents, reports, and so on. (Creswell, 2013). This method was labeled as the case study approach.

Within this approach, the focus of the study was to answer how and why questions (Yin, 2018). The current study included understanding the reasoning, situations, and benefits to African American male faculty utilizing code-switching in the workplace while attempting to gain or to maintain a position in leadership. Research questions focusing on explaining how and why this skill was used would benefit from the case study method of qualitative research. The best use of the case study approach was in four distinctive cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). When the focus was to answer how and why questions, when you cannot manipulate the behaviors of those involved when the researcher’s desire was to explore a situation with contextual conditions because it was relevant to the event in question, as well as when the boundaries are not clear between the setting and the event, these are all great situations to use the case study approach (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

To provide insight into the phenomenon of code-switching, the researcher intends to employ an intrinsic case study design. Stake (1995) described this intrinsic design as a way to gain a deeper understanding of the case. To answer the research question on the factors that are associated with retention, the researcher used data from transcribed notes and interviews as well as documenting and analyzing major concepts that arise through the case study. The researcher
intends to use case study participants to describe the experiences associated with the phenomenon, describe the meaning they ascribe to the phenomenon, and the researcher focused on the analysis of the experience and meaning of the participants.

**Population and Sample Selections**

The population for this study included African American male faculty at private and public PWIs of higher education. Ten African American male faculty members chosen from seven public and/or private PWI of higher education was the sample for the case study. The participants were selected by focusing on the demographics of the students and faculty of the institutions, the locations of the institutions, and the race and gender of the participants. Creswell (2007) stated this sampling technique was typically used with the case study methodology. This sampling procedure can also be described as homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling involved the selection of individuals who possess similar characteristics (Creswell, 2002).

The study focused on African American male participants who serve as members of an institution’s faculty or leadership team. This particular participant was ideal in order to “inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). To assist in the identification of potential participants, the researcher partook in a conversation via email with Directors of Multicultural Affairs from 27 state institutions of higher education. These conversations were used to inquire about suitable participants for case study research. The researcher secured participants for the study who were identified as faculty at state institutions within the southern region of the nation. This communication confidently lead to a list of potential participants for the case study research. The participants selected were male employees at PWIs of higher education who identify as African American, with a career title as a professor, dean, or comparable, and be willing to openly discuss personal experiences dealing
with the perceived need to code-switch to increase the advancement opportunities within their career.

The sample identified was a group where the individuals were willing to speak openly regarding personal experiences. The sample size was also an important aspect of qualitative research (Creswell, 2002). Availability and access to participants were considered when finalizing the sample size (Creswell, 2002). The sample size for the interviews of this study was 10 participants. This sample size will allow for exploration of the phenomenon, although it did not allow for generalizations of the data once analyzed. When selecting the participants in the study, the researcher placed emphasis on members of the sample to have experience with interactions with a White superior, who had a direct relationship in the decision making for the placement and/or advancement of that study participant. Each study participant was a member of the organization’s teaching staff or operational leadership structure. The participants were individuals who were considered a minority within their department. Each member of the study was informed of the intention of the study. Once participants are selected and agree to the study, the researcher set up times to conduct an interview with each participant.

**Sources of Data**

The study collected data through interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. The responses from African American male faculty members who were asked to volunteer to participate in a case study made up the sample used to collect data. The case study participants were employed at public and private universities in the areas surrounding Charlotte, North Carolina. The researcher acquired, through written permission, 10 participants from PWIs in close proximity to Charlotte, North Carolina. The participants were faculty at the institutions of higher education, with positions titles of faculty, department chair, or dean. These positions
allowed the participants to engage in the interview with the researchers so that they were able to speak to the factors that has affected their advancement and decisions to remain employed at their respective institutions.

Open-ended interview questions were used by the researcher and were the primary method of data collection. Interviews were conducted near the respective campus for each participant or scheduled online, whichever provided the most convenience to the participant. Fifteen interview questions were used during the interview process of participants, these questions were aligned to the purpose of the research. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interview participants, and after approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the research in the suggested manner. The researcher allocated 45 minutes for each interview session. During this allocated time the researcher focused the interview on collecting data of personal descriptions from each participant on the perceived use of the phenomenon.

In addition to the interview participants, the researcher compiled a group of six members of leadership from private and public institutions in North Carolina. The members of this group gathered at their respective institutions and partook in an online discussion regarding their perceptions of advancements of minority groups, predominantly focusing on African American male faculty in higher education. The focus group was a diverse group who could speak to the climate of the university and personal opinions on who has the majority access to promotion and advancement, why, and how these opportunities are gained.

The researcher also used a demographic questionnaire prior to the interview and focus group process to gather demographic data on the participants, such as race, title, and years of experience. This data ensured the participants had information to offer regarding the experience
and perception of code-switching by African American males. The questionnaire was completed through an online tool, such as Qualtrics link sent through email. The participants received an email with a link to a questionnaire that gathered demographic data.

Data Collection Methods

The purpose of the study was to explore how African American male faculty perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention. To begin the process for the collection of data the researcher contacted the Directors of Multicultural Affairs from 27 private and public institutions in the southern region of the U.S. The researcher used email to contact the directors and/or their assistants to request contact information for potential participants, considered appropriate based on criteria outlined by the researcher within the email. The goal of the researcher was to secure at least eight directors who have the means and who was willing to provide contact information for potential participants. The researcher used the responses that were gathered within 3–5 days. The emails received by the researcher from the directors contained information, mainly email addresses, names, and titles, of individuals in the target population who fit the requirements for the study. The researcher used the list of potential participants to further recruit participants.

The individuals who fit the requirements within the target population received an initial email that outlined the study and the role of the participant. The email addresses received from the directors were used to communicate the purpose of the potential study. This was accomplished by sending an email to potential participants with the purpose of the study as well as an initial request to complete an online demographic questionnaire. The interested participants received follow-up contact 3 days from the initial email. The follow-up included a reminder for
completion of the questionnaire as well as offered additional information regarding the research study upon request. The questionnaire ensured the participants were minority male employees of a state institution of higher education, who had experience with interacting with the majority demographic, with emphasis on verbal interactions that lead to advancement opportunities. The researcher allocated a wait time of 7 days for the initial questionnaires to be completed and submitted. This process identified the sample group for the research. The identified sample group was contacted via email or phone if there was an identified preference to set up an appointment to complete the confidential, one-to-one, open-ended interview questions.

Open-ended questions were utilized during the interview process with the faculty and individuals in leadership positions, such as a dean or department chair, to gather information on the experiences of the participants. The interviews were conducted in a space conveniently located near the participant’s institution. The researcher used nearby coffee shops off-campus to conduct the interview, or an online meeting space, as necessary. The interview process was conducted in a location free from distractions in a comfortable setting. The researcher safeguarded the confidentiality of the participants and the institutions by using pseudonyms. The researcher’s goal was to have a sample of 10 full-time African American male faculty members in a professor or leadership role to participate in the interview phase of the study. During the process, the data collected during the course of the study was used to identify the factors that surround how African American male faculty perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention. The interview questions guided the data collection. The questions were open-ended to allow the participants to discuss their experiences with the phenomenon in question.
The interview responses were analyzed for common themes and topics of focus from each participating member. The themes highlighted guided the researcher during the focus group sessions that followed the individual interviews. The focus group was comprised of a diverse group of 6 participants, who are in leadership positions within the higher education system in North Carolina. The researchers use of the focus group attempted to gather insight from African American male faculty in leadership positions, to gather the data from each member’s perspective of retention and advancement opportunities based on vernacular usage. The members of the focus group were guided through conversation regarding the interactions of faculty members based on language barriers and perceived competence for advancement opportunities.

Semistructured interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups with the participants were the forms of data collection used to address the research questions. The use of multiple data collection methods: interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires will support data triangulation, and this assisted the researcher in the comparison of data.

**Interviews.** Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016) identified interviews as a method frequently used in all forms of qualitative research. Taylor et al. also stated person-to-person encounters elicit meaningful information that was helpful in studying a phenomenon. This method for collecting data was beneficial to the study because it allowed the participants to describe their experiences around code-switching usage for advancement opportunities. A semistructured interview was utilized. This semistructured method allowed the participants to elaborate on their responses if necessary. The questions used will focus on the participants perceived experiences with changing the type of English they speak, such as Standard English or African American Vernacular English, depending on the setting and opportunity presented from attempting to assimilate to the dominant culture.
The questions were developed using information from the literature and structured according to the interview protocol guidelines (see Appendix A). The interview questions, outline in the data that was lacking from previously researched topics will help form the questions for how code-switching was used within higher education. The questions will focus on experiences and how the participants feel these experiences affected advancement opportunities within the higher education workplace. To obtain participants in the research study, the researcher emailed the participants and include information on the purpose of the study and how their input can add valuable insight into addressing the theme of underrepresentation of African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education. Questions structured to reveal the participants’ experiences and obstacles encountered will take place in a private setting, such as a library meeting room, or office space that was free from distractions. The researcher and the participant were the only parties present during the interview. The interviews were scheduled to last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. To ensure accurate analysis of data shared and proper transcribing of the data collected during the interview process the interviews were recorded. Also, to ensure the accuracy of the data the participants will receive a transcript of the interview to check for accuracy.

The researcher was sure to consider the limitations of the interview process as well. Respondents might not be able to answer interview questions the way they would like and say exactly what they think; they may not have an opinion on the subject matter, or they may not be able to state their opinion in a clear and concise manner (Pacho, 2015). To be proactive in the approach the researcher interviewed using high-level questioning skills and work to actively interpret the responses of the participants.
**Questionnaires.** Questionnaires are used to gather data from participants through the use of open and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was used to collect supplementary data such as demographics. The questionnaire gathered basic profile data on the participants, such as age, job title, years employed with the current employer, and educational background as well as basic information on potential participants’ familiarity with the code-switching phenomenon (see Appendix B). This data was used to summarize the participants’ backgrounds. The questionnaire was emailed to participants prior to the scheduling of an interview. The researcher anticipated the timeframe for completion of the questionnaire to take no more than 3 days. After the allotted time has elapsed, if the researcher has not received the questionnaire electronically, the researcher reached back out to the participant through email to urge for completion as the data would be beneficial to the study. The participants were contacted three times for the completion of the questionnaire during a period of no more than 5 days. If the participant does not respond in the allocated time frame the researcher considered a new participant due to the timing of the research and the relevancy of the information.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups can reveal detailed information about a phenomenon by not assuming how people may feel. A focus group may be used when the research was seeking to know and understand more about the experiences of a particular group when using a specific method to approach an event, or when the research was seeking to find out how a policy was received by staff in order to create a structured plan for implementation (Pacho, 2015). The research, along with a majority of the published articles describing focus-group research used it for the purpose of understanding more about an experience. This research method allows the research to gather detailed information regarding the participants’ feelings. Assuming another’s feelings regarding a situation was sometimes the case with a simple questionnaire because
people are not always sure about their feelings towards a topic. However, by allowing a small focus group to discuss and elaborate on a specific phenomenon, deep insight can be gained. A focus group can be the platform needed to fully understand one’s feelings and thoughts on a topic through the process of listening to other opinions on the same topic in a safe setting prior to formulated one’s own thoughts.

In an attempt to create an ideal focus group, the researcher gathered a homogeneous group where members are comfortable with one another however none of them know each other. The focus group criteria included gender identification as male, the position of professor, dean, department chair, or the like, as well as daily interactions with superiors of a dominant race (see Appendix C). The researcher worked to create a welcoming and safe online small focus group, where participants are at ease with sharing personal thoughts on the phenomenon of code-switching. The researcher accomplished this by first defining and recruiting participants based on role/job title and nomination/suggestion from members of the same group. Once the researcher has secured a significant number of viable recruits, the focus was placed on confirming participation.

To confirm participation the researcher emailed and called all parties to provide details of the location and time for the focus group. To ensure five to 10 participants show up to take an active role in the focus group the researcher invited 20% over the desired amount, to account for individuals who will potentially fail to show up for the focus group. The five to 10 participants were led through open discussion by the researcher. The goal was to observe and facilitate a rich discussion where members do not feel uncomfortable sharing on the topic and not left out due to the size of the focus group. The researcher allocated 45 to 90 minutes for the focus group session, which will take place in a convenient location for all participants and offer privacy
during the focus group session. The researcher used eight predetermined clear and concise guiding questions but allow the discussion to naturally progress as the conversation develops. Documentation of the gathered data was collected through a voice recording device. This allowed the researcher to review the common results of the guided discussion.

**Identification of Attributes**

The data gathered through the qualitative research process was collected from 16 African American males using questionnaires and interviews. The participants were employed at private and public PWIs of higher education for 4 or more years in the southern region of the U.S. These African American males held a career title of professor, dean, or other administrative titles. These participants were instrumental in the process of collecting data to explore the phenomenon of code-switching. Certain attributes of qualitative research include setting, multiple methods, reasoning, and other characteristics that affect the research results.

The site where the researcher collects data can assist in gathering up-close information. This can include nonverbal data that can be collected from a participant when completing a face-to-face interview. For the study, the natural setting used to gather data was a neutral location where participants did not have to be concerned with being interrupted during the interview. The description of the perception of code-switching and how it affects advancement was detailed based on the interaction of the participants with the researcher and the comfort levels established without the pressure of being overheard or reprimanded for personal views.

An additional attribute included the researcher as a key instrument. The main instrument for collecting data was the researcher’s interviewing of participants. Using open-ended questions assist in the data collection process. Another attribute to the qualitative research process was the use of multiple methods for data collection. To study the phenomenon of code-switching the
researcher used questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, and focus group interview sessions. The data collected using multiple methods was organized by building patterns and identifying themes after analysis of the data using complex reasoning.

To ensure a guided focus on understanding the data, the researcher analyzed each participant’s meaning of the phenomenon. The perspectives from the participants on the topic can further suggest ways to develop the results of the study. This focus can safeguard the attribute of the study that presents the holistic account of the phenomenon. The goal of the researcher was to develop and present a complex overview of the study. By reporting multiple perspectives and concluding the overall results the researcher can best present the data regarding code-switching by African American males.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher was seeking to explore how African American male faculty perceive recruitment and retention for faculty in leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention. To collect the necessary data the researcher employed interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. The data collected through these methods were analyzed using an interpretive orientation. Interpretive orientation involves the researcher attempting to understand the code-switching phenomena through the meaning individuals assign to it (Creswell, 2013). The tactics the researcher decided to employ in analyzing the collected data forces one to move beyond initial impressions of the research (Stake, 1995). This improves the likelihood of accurate and reliable findings regarding the phenomenon.

Through the research process, the researcher gathered raw data through interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. The data was coded based on common themes and patterns.
The common threads of data that were identified were further reviewed and analyzed by the researcher. This process required the researcher to assign words or phrases to shared ideas expressed by the participants. Coding in qualitative inquiry typically takes the form of a word or short phrase that attempts to capture or offer suggestive attributes to language-based data (Saldaña, 2016). This data, language-based or visual in nature, can be comprised of information gathered from interview transcripts, observation field notes, documents, photographs, videos, or email correspondence and so on. The data gathered offers a starting point for the researcher to begin to capture the data’s essence. To begin the analysis process for the data collected relating to the study the researcher coded the data collected from each method separately.

**Analyze interview data.** Interviews offer a popular way to gather qualitative research data (Taylor et al., 2016). To code and analyze the data collected from the interview of the 10 faculty members at various state institutions of higher education, the researcher explored the responses to the semistructured interview questions. The researcher noted that to explore the phenomenon of code-switching, analyzing the interview data will require more than using the literal words gathered from the interview sessions. The researcher worked to assign concrete meaning to the respondent’s answers while noting the assumptions and biases. This was accomplished by using the strategies described by Saldaña (2016). The researcher became familiar with the verbal data that was gathered, and then work to create meaning using analytical categories.

To analyze the data, the researcher recorded the interview sessions and have the data transcribed. The researcher began by reviewing the recording taken during the interview. The researcher also listened to the recorded interviews, as well as reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. By reviewing the data in this manner, the researcher began to note
categories and note common themes in the data. Understanding the common themes, the researcher then began to interpret the themes and find meaning surrounding the explored phenomenon. Neal, Neal, and VanDyke (2014) posited that the emerged themes and categories are grounded in the data, meaning the common themes reflect the data. The researcher was cautious to not impose personal will or preconceived ideas about the data and allow the data alone to lead to the conclusions.

During the analysis process, the researcher also worked to overcome the challenge of moving from large amounts of data, from the interview transcripts, notes, and recording to the meaning of the data. The researcher worked to reduce the amount of raw data to leave what was important in finding meaning in the data. After assigning meaning to the data, the researcher worked to validate the interview data. During the interview process, the researcher worked to ask some of the same style questions. This allowed the respondent to answer the questions in the same manner, which will triangulate the data. If the participant answers the question in a similar way, then the researcher was able to argue consistency in the outcome. This form of validation can also be used with multiple respondents, if a similarity was found in the answers to the interview questions, the researcher can use this to strengthen the validity of the interpretation.

**Analyze questionnaire data.** To analyze the data collected from the questionnaire, the researcher worked to summarize the data by using an online platform. The electronic collection of data will assist in the reduction of wait time for the results of the questionnaire. This allowed the researcher to track the submitted answers by creating a spreadsheet. Once the evaluator created the spreadsheet, summarizing the collected data can be completed. The electronic process allowed the researcher to follow up with respondents based on their recorded responses, in a time-effective manner.
To manage the data collection process the researcher used Qualtrics to collect the online data. This collected data was exported using an advanced spreadsheet. This allowed the variables to be associated with words. The researcher entertained the idea of using SPSS syntax as well to clean the data into numeric variables and labels. The use of SPSS formatting grouped the responses into meaningful groups that the researcher can use for the selection process of interview and focus group participants.

**Analyze focus group data.** To code and analyze the data collected from the focus group, the researcher began with a great deal of care to remain objective. Since the purpose of the focus group was to gather data that can provide an in-depth exploration of the act of code-switching, or vernacular assimilation, a topic that the literature has little current information about, the analysis process was rigorous and descriptive. This rigorous and descriptive analysis can be accomplished through a simple descriptive narrative (Yin, 2018). To begin the process of creating a narrative of the focus group, following the interview of the focus group, data was transcribed for the entire interview, so the information can be analyzed.

The researcher employed a transcription service for a timely turnaround of the data collected. The analysis of the nuances that occur during the group interview is important. For this reason, the researcher suggested a web-based meeting room or conference call line and video recording option during the interview of the group to capture the discussion later using detailed notes to annotate observational data as a supplement to the later transcribed data. The researcher also utilized voice recordings during the focus group. The data collected in this method will aid in the analysis process, prior to receiving the completed transcript. This combination of data, which included the voice recording, the detailed observational data, and the transcription, will
offer the ability to facilitate further analysis of the data beyond the time in the interview setting and offer a permanent written record of the group discussion.

The researcher was cautious during the analysis of the data as to not assume the thoughts of the participants. It was natural to have incomplete sentences as well as poor grammar in some instances, but these nuances lead to a true representation of the group discussion. To change these items throughout the entire transcript would be counterproductive to understanding the perceptions of the study’s participants. To aide in the elaborate analyses of the data, the researcher used a qualitative analytic approach for understanding the data from the focus group. The various methods for collection of data, which include voice recordings, transcribed data, and detailed observational notes will provide the researcher with the opportunity to methodologically triangulate the data obtained from the focus group.

The recordings, transcriptions, and coded themes gathered from the interview processes were an effective combination for research to explore the issues relating to the oppression of groups (Creswell, 2007). Similar to the triangulation of data collected in the case study conducted by Hoeritz (2013) that focused on the stereotypes and consequences for women leaders in higher education, the three-step process for triangulation was used in the study. To aggregate the data in order to support the inferences one can draw from the interviews, different sources were implemented to provide an analysis of the data. Step one in the triangulation process was to ensure the audiotaping of the interviews. This eliminated the distractions that could occur while attempting to note-take while conducting the interview. Since audio taping will eliminate the need for notetaking, the researcher did not miss the opportunity to ask probing/clarification questions if necessary. Step two in the process will include the transcription of the collected data. The transcribed interview was returned to the participants for their review
and approval if requested. This gave the participants the chance to make sure the data correctly represented what they stated. Lastly, in step three of the process, the researcher collaborated with an external auditor. The auditor worked to validate the identified common themes outlined by the researcher. This triangulation process will check the integrity of the inferences drawn and strengthen the research findings and consequently the conclusion.

**Conclusion of data analysis process.** To conclude the analysis of the data obtained through the interviews, questionnaires, and focus group the researcher approached the analysis of the data through epistemological orientation, using interpretive research. Through interpretive research, there was a focus on the intricacy of sense-making by individuals as the situation materialized, as there were not predefined dependent and independent variables (Ponelis, 2015). The interpretive approach will allow the researcher to explore African American male’s perception of language assimilation as a means to advance in their career at PWIs of higher education. Through analysis of the common words and content identified by a thorough review of the interview and focus group recordings, observational notes, and transcripts, the researcher identified patterns, and attempt to interpret the meaning of the collected data. The goal was to find common links between the research objective and the outcomes, through comparison to the original research questions.

To assist in the process of labeling common words/content the researcher reviewed the data and label words and phrases with symbols or words that identify common content. This then allowed for the sorting of the data through the use of coding and electronic analysis programs. The themes the researcher sought to identify can be presented in many forms including similarities in responses, predictable vocabulary used by respondents, causation if one event appears to cause another, as well as frequency, correspondence, and sequence (Neal et al., 2014).
The identification of the themes was accomplished through analysis of the collected data using coding and on-line analysis programs. Coding was completed by approaching the exploratory problem of understanding a phenomenon without specific formulas the researcher must follow (Saldaña, 2016). The coding of the data from the interview, questionnaires, and focus groups was only the initial step towards a rigorous and suggestive analysis. Coding was more than labeling the data, it was linking the data to an idea.

Documentation of the common themes in list form and categorizing supplementary data that supports the theme will follow the identification process. Grouping data into themes will help answer research questions by having themes that may naturally emerge from the data as the study was conducted (Neal et al., 2014). Once the themes from the data are identified, the researcher worked to analyze the meaning of the themes and connect the themes to the research questions. After the data was compiled and analyzed for common patterns and themes as well as being represented in a visual manner that adds to the understanding of the outcomes of the data, the researcher began to identify the conclusion of the findings. The conclusions were stated from what common factors were noted during the analysis process. The researcher worked to conclude how African American male faculty perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention.

**Limitation of the Research Design**

Limitations to using qualitative case study research include participants for the study, researcher bias, as well as generalization. These areas should be identified in detail by the researcher so that necessary steps can be taken within reason to account for these limitations during the research process. A limitation of the study was the limited number of available
participants. Factors that limit participation from faculty may include a lack of available participants within the specified leadership roles at PWIs. Other factors may include scheduling conflicts due to workloads and restrictions from college and university policies regarding interviews.

The study will focus on participation from African American males, the data collected and analyzed will, therefore, lack representation of other minorities who must utilize code-switching within similar work environments. The findings of the study also only represent African American male faculty at PWIs, this did not include data from other types of higher education institutions. In addition to the participatory limitations, there was also significant limitations as it relates to current literature. The literature available was outdated and limited. To justify much of the methodology the outdated literature was necessary to build a foundation for supplementary research.

Within the chosen methodology, the use of qualitative research has its own limitations. The first being that the researcher was directly related to the collection of data, being the primary collection instrument. This direct relationship causes a potential to have biases toward the process for data collection and reporting (Taylor et al., 2016). The researcher was tasked with the analysis of each case study and must be aware of pre-existing biases as it relates to the study. Furthermore, utilizing a case study limits the sample size based on specific criteria. The study sought participants that are African American male faculty employed in leadership positions at higher education institutions that cater to a predominantly White demographic. This sample group was lowered in size by the willingness of those who fit the criteria to participate in the study.
The topic addressed an issue that was site-specific to how African American male faculty advance in a workplace that was typically occupied by White males. The research can offer insight on how to acknowledge the gap in this area by offering details on a topic that has not been well documented. Understanding how code-switching was used as a method to gain access to advancement opportunities, can assist higher education institutions with increasing diversity among faculty, with a specific interest in leadership positions.

**Validation**

To ensure ethical practices during and after the conclusion of the research process, the researcher used triangulation through the use of multiple data sources. This was accomplished through the use of multiple data sources in the same study. Participants were provided with the opportunity to review and validate their responses in the interview process. Participants were able to clarify their answers as necessary through a follow-up email. The member checking process included the researcher emailing transcripts to each participant as a means for them to review data collected during their interview process. They were then given the opportunity to email with any errors they found in what was stated or their intent during the conversation. This member checking period was also used for participants to add more information if they wanted to or to edit what they said. The member checking process along with data collected through observation was used as evidence to increase the trustworthiness of the data.

**Credibility.** According to Yin (2003) the use of multiple data sources and the convergence of that data, strengthens the credibility of the data collected in a study. Yin also believed that triangulation functions as a beneficial tool for developing an understanding of the phenomena from a case study that allows for rich descriptive interpretation. The process of triangulation is useful to cross check data and remove any personal biases on the part of the
researcher. To assist in this process the researcher used a step three of the process to review and validate the credibility of the findings of the study. The researcher collaborated with an external auditor who worked to validate the identified common themes outlined by the researcher. The third party reviewed the collected data and the researchers stated findings to ensure they were validated by the data collected through the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group. This triangulation process checked the integrity of the inferences drawn and strengthen the research findings and consequently the conclusion.

**Dependability.** Maintaining a chain of evidence increases the dependability of information collected in a case study (Yin, 2018). Being able to use the data collected and the conclusions made from this data to answer the posed research questions heightens the quality of the case study. The researcher ensured documentation and storing of all documented findings. The process and data were recorded as evidence to ensure that no data was lost or left out. This process increases the dependability of the conclusions and finds of the study.

**Expected Findings**

The study was timely in the fact that the U.S. is still lacking a respectable representation of African American males in the educational field. The expectations from this study has been to offer insight into why a gap exist in representation and how language plays a role in the gap. The finding could offer a way to combat this underrepresentation of African American faculty members and leaders at PWIs. The increase of this demographic could occure by finding ways those employed use language to circumvent negative experiences and increase advancement and retention.
Ethical Issues

The researcher noted that the process of conducting a case study included the understanding that some ethical issues may arise. The researcher was aware of the ethical principles associated with qualitative research. Therefore, following the guidelines set out by CU-IRB was an important aspect during the course of the case study. Each participant was sent a copy of the IRB approval letter from Concordia University, prior to interviews being conducted. The researcher accepted responsibility to inform each participant about their rights and their confidentiality. They also signed an informed consent prior to the interview process. The consent disclosed the terms to which participants agreed to provide personal experiences associated with the phenomenon. The researcher also included information about the purpose of the study and that participant was voluntary and would be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Once approval was received the researcher initiated further contact for interviews. During this time participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The research will provide insight into the use of language for employment benefits but there is no personal or monetary gain that would benefit the researcher.

Conflict of interest assessment. The researcher did not have any conflict of interests that obstructed the research or any that would have affected the collection of data. The race of the researcher, as African American, created the relationship of collecting data for the desire for the inquiry, however the study focused on males in the higher education field. The researcher is a female and works in K–12 educational classrooms.

Researcher’s position. As an African American female and as a member of the educational community, the researcher was a stakeholder in the outcomes of the research. The experiences of African American male faculty are in many ways similar to those of African
American females. To reduce biases to the research topic, the researcher separated personal feelings on the topic as it related to the research. This was accomplished through structured dialogue guided by interview questions, led by the responses of the participants. The goal was to explore the phenomenon through the experiences of members within the higher education setting. The researcher’s experiences are limited to the middle school setting, so to gain an understanding of the higher education setting the researcher needed the data collected from the participants.

**Ethical issues in the study.** One of the main concerns while conducting the study and presenting the results was to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Viewpoints shared may jeopardize participant’s career trajectory. To address this ethics issue the researcher ensured confidentiality, by removing participants names from all research documents and research correspondence. Numerical codes were used on correspondence and any coded documents. Educational institution names were also redacted from any data collected. The data collected will be properly stored for a period of no more than three years. After the required timeframe the data will be destroyed.

**Summary**

In conclusion, the barriers to advancement create low morale and internal feelings of inferior status in African American male faculty in comparison to White male faculty employed in similar positions (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2017). This inferior status also affected the retention rates of African American males at PWIs of higher education (Scott, 2016a, 2016b). This variance in status, whether internally believed or actualized, was not well documented. This was due to most research and studies focusing on African American students. There was little to no current research on the use of code-switching by African American male faculty and
administration. Although there have been studies investigating the disproportionate status of African Americans in higher education, the research and the analysis of this data usually investigates the experiences, refraining from exploring the strategies to minimize the obstacles (Murphy, 2017).

The skills of code-switching can be researched to ascertain if it assists in creating a sense of belonging to address some of the aforementioned obstacles to advancement. Data was collected and analyzed through interviews with 10 African American male participants. Triangulation was used to establish the trustworthiness of the data and analysis. Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple sources of data. The study explores the use of code-switching.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The study was designed to explore how African American male faculty members use code-switching. The research focused on the phenomenon of how this demographic changed their language vernacular based on setting to improve the advancement opportunities and retention rates at PWIs of higher education. The problem was studied from the experiences of 16 African American males employed at predominantly White institutions of higher education with varying years of experiences and job titles. The sources of data in this study included questionnaires, interviews, and focus group sessions. The location of the participants ranged mainly from the southern region of the U.S., including Virginia and North and South Carolina. The differences between the populations of the institutions offered varying experiences for the participants to elaborate on during their interview or focus group session.

All participants for this study are African American male leaders, with positions of professor, faculty chair, dean, or administrator of a PWIs of higher education. PWIs are defined as 4-year, coeducational institutions with a student population that was at least 50% White (Lomotey, 2010). Each participant was contacted through email to access his willingness to be interviewed for the study (see Appendix D). At the conclusion of the recruitment process 16 of the 40 who were contacted agreed to be interviewed, which was 40% of the targeted group. Of the 16 who participated, eight were interviewed over the telephone, two were interviewed in person, and the focus group session six participants logged onto a web-based meeting room with the option to call into a conference call line if necessary. For the focus group session, all participants logged onto the online meeting space for the convenience of scheduling. The
participants’ names, as well as the names of their respective institutions, have been substituted with numerical pseudonyms in an attempt to maintain the participant’s confidentiality.

In this study, the researcher sought out 10 participants for one-to-one interviews. Although the researcher had obstacles in the process of securing participants due to scheduling and criteria for qualification, 10 participants were secured for the interview process who held job titles of administrator or professor at a PWI of higher education. In addition to the interview participants, of the desired 10 participants for the focus group session, 6 participants within the same professional demographic were selected. Due to scheduling conflicts, initially, only four participants were secured to participate in the study from a convenient area in North Carolina. The goal of securing 10 as the final participant number for the one-to-one interview sessions was maintained by broadening the southern region to include South Carolina and Virginia state institutions.

This study used a qualitative case study design to answer the research questions: How do African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education use code-switching for job advancement? As well as how do African American male faculty perceive code-switching to affect recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education? The research questions were used to explore the perceived benefits of code-switching by African American males. The data gathered would be used to identify common themes that emerge from the interviews to address the research questions.

To address the findings from the research questions, data were analyzed, and an interpretive orientation analysis was used to discuss the emergent and overlapping themes revolving around the interviews. Throughout the initial stages of the research process, categories were identified by focusing on the variables frequently mentioned by participants. The researcher
then continued the analysis process by becoming familiar with the verbal data and then working to create meaning using analytical categories to ideas that were developed within the literature. As the analysis progressed, emerging concepts were identified.

**Description of the Sample**

The participants involved in this case study included professors, department leads, and administrators employed at PWIs of higher education for a minimum of 4 years. To ensure data would be collected that could address the research questions, the researcher screened participants for individuals who could be assumed to have direct involvement with White co-workers in hiring positions. The interaction of potential participants with White counterparts/co-workers was essential in the selection process of participants for the study. The homogeneous sampling approach used was selected to ensure participants could offer insight through personal experiences associated with being an African American male who must communicate with White counterparts in the education field.

The participants were selected based on criteria linked to the phenomenon being studied, such as race, gender, occupation position, years of experience, and institution where each participant works. A factor within this process included the demographics of the students and faculty of the institutions. The researcher sought out colleges and universities serving a majority White student body, with 7% or less African American faculty employed. The location of the institution was also considered. An institution located within the southern region of the U.S. were selected for this study. Initially, the researcher sought to select participants solely from North Carolina PWIs of higher education. Due to the low commitment of participants from this state, the researcher broadened the scope of the geographic area to include the additional southern states of South Carolina and Virginia. Participants who identified as male and who
selected the race of Black/African American within the questionnaire portion were specifically chosen for this study. Employment at a predominantly white institution was guaranteed, due to the recruitment of participants being focused on those institutions with prejudice. Lastly, participants who maintained a role at a PWI of higher education for a minimum of 4 years were assigned priority to be included in the study with consideration also given according to their willingness to participate.

For the researcher to select potential candidates, individuals who were able to define code-switching as a strategy of changing your own language style, vocabulary and tone in a given setting were top choices as a participant in the study. The criteria for familiarity with code-switching included the use, knowledge, and experience of the phenomenon solely by African American males. To locate and gather a list of potential participants emails were sent to multicultural Affairs administrators in an attempt to gather names and contact information for participants (see Appendix A). Once African American faculty participants were identified and suggested for participation, a letter of invitation was sent via email. Within the email, the researcher informed potential participants of the purpose of the study and included guidelines on how confidentiality would be maintained throughout the research and publication of findings (see Appendix D). The invitation email also provided guidelines on how to fill out and return the informed consent form, as well as a link to complete the online questionnaire if interested in participation (see Appendix D). The consent form, once signed and returned, expressed confirmation of researcher and participant confidentiality.

Sixteen participants were chosen for the study. Ten of the participants were chosen to participate in the Phase I Qualtrics Questionnaire and the Phase II interview stage. The remaining six participants participated in the focus group interview session. Within the outlined
process for this study, the participants all expressed their perspectives on the phenomenon of code-switching based on their varying years of experience in the educational field.

Once a candidate for the study accepted the invitation to participate, the researcher prompted for the completion of Phase I, the online questionnaire, which was administered through Qualtrics (see Appendix D). Participants would include their personal understanding of code-switching during the questionnaire. The participants were labeled based on their personal knowledge, use, and experience with code-switching. These criteria were critical to the study, as participants needed familiarity with associating a need for changing their own vernacular style and tone in conversations within a professional setting. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions created by the researcher that included eight multiple-choice, three Likert-scale questions, and four brief open-ended response questions. Included in the questionnaire were 5 questions that disclosed the participant’s demographic data (see Table 1).

Once the questionnaire was completed, an interview was scheduled based on the participant’s availability. The interview was used to collect data and answer the research questions that guide the study. The phone interviews were preceded by an email to confirm the date and time, and participants were provided with a copy of the interview questions, if requested, that were used to guide the semistructured interview (see Appendix E). The participants were offered a face-to-face, web video calls, or phone interview to best meet individual scheduling needs. All but two participants who were interviewed as a part of Phase II requested phone interviews, as it would best meet their scheduling needs.
Table 1

Demographic Data for the Individual Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Data</th>
<th>$N = 16$</th>
<th>Percentage Breakdown. (rounded to the nearest whole percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content lead/faculty chair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Teaching/Leadership Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–3 Years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–10 Years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Plus Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Familiarity with Code-Switching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with term</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Application</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized Authority</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal use of code-switching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Application</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized Authority</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phone interviews were scheduled during times convenient to the participants. During the 45- to 60-minute phone interviews, the data collected was recorded using the phone application Call Recorder. During the face-to-face interviews, the data was collected using the
Call Recorder feature, to substitute a traditional recording device. The researcher scheduled interviews over a three-month timeframe. This timeframe was adjusted from the anticipated 6 weeks due to scheduling conflicts with participants. Transcripts were completed within 3 days of the interviews using the online transcription service, Rev.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

In order to analyze the collected data that was gathered during each interaction with the participants of the study, the researcher asked questions while seeking individual experiences to further understand the phenomenon of code-switching. The case study methodology, which included questionnaires and interviews, provides data for the researcher to analyze through coding to gain a better understanding of the providing perspectives on the phenomenon. A visual representation of the analysis process and actions taken associated with each step of the process can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection. (Questionnaires, Interviews, Focus Groups)</td>
<td>Took notes, read and reflected on collected data. Recorded responses through Qualtrics or Call Recorder services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed 10 participants and used semistructured interviews.</td>
<td>Listened to recorded data, took notes, reflected on themes that emerged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribed data.</td>
<td>Read and reflected on document data. Denoted themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected themes to present as data.</td>
<td>Interpreted and analyzed data found using SPSS and hand-coding. Constructed text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed 6 participants using guided focus group questions</td>
<td>Listened to recorded data, took notes, and reflected on themes that emerged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribed data.</td>
<td>Read and reflected on document data. Denoted themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected themes to present as data.</td>
<td>Interpreted and analyzed data for common themes that coincided with questionnaire and interview data. Constructed text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data gathered in Phase I using Qualtrics software to answer the research questions were coded using Qualtrics SPSS syntax export features. The use of SPSS formatting grouped the responses into meaningful clusters that the researcher used to identify common themes and key points within the recorded responses.

The identification of the themes was accomplished through the sorting of the multiple-choice and short-answer questionnaire data using numeric variables and labels. Sorting of the data using numerical identifiers was accomplished using the parameters of the Qualtrics program. If participants selected an answer to a multiple-choice question assigned a numerical value, the SPSS formatting grouped like data together. This grouping feature provided through SPSS formatting allowed the researcher to quickly identify common responses to the questionnaire. Significant data collected using this feature included demographic data of the participants such as years of experience, level of familiarity with code-switching, and rating of the perceived need of the phenomenon. Labels were given to the collected data through the hand-coding of data.

The researcher read through the open-ended questionnaire responses and identified terms that were used repeatedly and by multiple respondents. Based on the occurrences of certain terms the researcher organized the ideas into groups. A color-coded flagging system was used to mark common words from the printed version of the Qualtrics responses as well as the interview responses. This allowed the researcher to quickly place common words and themes together from the participants. The researcher was able to assign value to the organized data according to responses that occurred at a higher frequency rate than others within the question set. The coding of data to seek out and assign value to keywords that appeared in multiple responses presented important factors of this study.
The goal of the study was to explicitly question, and interview African American male faculty members employed at PWIs of higher education for at least a 4-year period. The questionnaire allowed the researcher to gather data using a homogeneous sample. This process allowed for similarities in the background and experiences of the participants, which may be linked to the responses and interview discussions. The similarities of the participants included reasoning for working at PWIs of higher education, age range, job titles, family structure, and childhood upbringing. Drawing out underlying themes from each respondents’ answers to the questionnaire allowed the researcher to foster conclusions around similarities regarding demographic information and preliminary understandings of the code-switching phenomenon.

Analysis of the questionnaire and interview data revealed factors that influenced reasons why the participants joined the faculty and remained employed at their current institutions, in spite of the obstacles described by each participant. The ability to blend in and relate to peers was mentioned by Participant 5, a 52-year-old administrator at a southern university. He said “language plays a key role in employment. The use of correct English [Standard English] was just the way to properly communication. This doesn’t mean assimilate. It simply means relating to each other through conversation.” The researcher’s goal was to understand if workplace relationships were created and strengthened through the use of code-switching. Analysis of the data assisted in labeling the identified common perceptions of code-switching and workplace success for African American males in higher education. The first round of coding included recognizing themes within the data collected from the Phase I questionnaire results. The coded responses provided preliminary themes around the ideas of participants noting the use of code-switching as a workplace strategy for advancement, along with the relationship communication has with retention rates.
Following Phase I, research continued with the semistructured interview process, Phase II. The purpose of the interviews was to answer the research questions by focusing on the similarities and distinctions of thought for the participant’s perception of code-switching for advancement and retention. To determine the themes gathered through the interview data, the researcher used Saldaña’s (2016) coding techniques. The coding techniques included assigning meaning in the form of a word or short phrase that attempts to capture or offer suggestive attributes to language-based data. The data were analyzed with a focus placed on more than literal words gathered from the interview sessions. The researcher worked to assign meaning to interview questions while bearing in mind and observing the assumptions and biases of the participants.

The coding process for the interview data began with recorded interview sessions being transcribed by Rev, an online transcription service. The researcher read through the transcripts while listening to the recorded interview sessions and documented themes that developed within the collected data. To support the analysis process, the researcher worked to validate responses by asking the same style question on more than one occasion during the interview. Similar responses to these coordinated questions allowed the researcher to validate the respondents’ answers. Similar responses provided the researcher with the means to argue consistency in the perceptions of the participants. The similarity in responses also strengthened the validity of the interpretation by the researcher. Certainty in the interpretation of the data permitted confidence when assigning themes to the collected data. Common themes from the literature, such as how African American males try to circumvent negative experiences and creating networks within the workplace; as well as ideas commonly mentioned by participants, such as fitting in with
workplace peers through the use of language norms, were noted and interpreted to find meaning surrounding the explored phenomenon.

The data collected and analyzed from the focus group interviews extended the understanding of the themes noted from Phase I and II. The purpose of the focus group session was to gather additional data that could provide an in-depth exploration of code-switching.

The focus group session also provided a way to gain insight into the background and upbringing of the participants. The session also assisted in identifying how the teaching from parents, teachers, and other influential adults affected each individual’s perception of code-switching. Ten guiding interview topics were used to guide the open conversation of the focus group (see Table 3).

Table 3.

*Focus Group Interview/Conversation Guiding Topics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Guiding Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to employment at PWIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of African American male faculty by other faculty members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of opportunities for advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with code-switching (personally, professionally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching as a learned strategy during early education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching as a learned strategy for networking and advancement opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of retention rates of African American male faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros and cons of being an African American male faculty member/leader at a PWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros and cons of using code-switching in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for using code-switching in the workplace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the collected data was accomplished through recording and transcription of the focus group session. The researcher noted nuances that occurred while conducting the focus group interview, such as tone shifts, word choice, and interactions of the homogeneous focus group participants. Notes taken from the focus group process indicated instances where several
of the participants partook in code-switching (speaking with more slang and verbiage associated with black culture) once they felt comfort in knowing all the other participants and the researcher was also African American. The professional tone that began the focus group interview became more relaxed as time and topics progressed. Topics were discussed that were typically associated with Black culture, such as views about the education system failing the Black male demographic, parenting in the Black community, how clothing is viewed in different settings, and the use of slang terms specific to Black culture. These discussions and behaviors during the focus group session allowed the researcher to categorize certain ideas from the case study. The significant themes that emerged around the ideas of code-switching involved creating a version of oneself that is authentic to the work environment but often unauthentic to black culture. The voice recordings, transcripts, and web-based meeting room and conference call recording were used to methodologically triangulate the focus group data to further identify meaningful themes surrounding the code-switching phenomenon.

**Questionnaire coding and analysis.** The insight gained from the data was interpreted through the practice of assigning meaning to common themes identified through the analysis process. Methodological triangulation, using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and documents (Denzin, 2006), ensured the ability to analyze multiple responses on the perception of the phenomenon. From Phase I, the questionnaire, the researcher identified two important key points concerning the 10 participant’s perceptions of code-switching and the role of African American men in leadership positions at PWIs of higher education. The first key point identified was how the perception of code-switching related to the opportunities for advancement on varying scales. Participants emphasized that language and communication were key aspects of obtaining higher positions
within the educational field. Participant 1 said “my current title was a direct reflection of my ability to talk to others. I can articulate my viewpoints and relate to others on their level. This skill appeals to hiring managers.”

African American males who wanted access to leadership roles acknowledge their perception of how access to advancement opportunities lay in part with their personal language choices. Using code-switching as a primary strategy, along with other supplemental strategies, provided a higher chance to be chosen to interview for a leadership role. The use of code-switching also shifted the relationship of participants to align with those of the hiring group, typically a panel of White males and females within the institution of higher education. Participant 10 summed up this key point by stating:

During my career in education, the biggest challenge relating to communication I’ve observed has been that white administrators and peers in academia were very language focused. They desire a tone in dictation, word choice, and volume that was devoid of an unsophisticated rural/urban feel. They were on the lookout for this level of language which if displayed lowers their estimation of African Americans’ capabilities and professionalism. If it [an unpolished language style] isn’t found, the African American person was found to be well-spoken and intelligent.

The idea that one must change their natural language flow, tone, and word choice to be considered qualified for a leadership position was identified as the first key point. This significant point stresses the impact of code-switching as a means for advancement within higher education at PWIs for African American males. The second key point identified through the coding process of data from Phase I was that perception that one should remain and showcase their authentic selves, but also noting the underlying interactions that show diversity was not
fully accepted by all parties in academia. The themes were identified based on the responses to the open-ended questionnaire section, and the questions can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Perceptions of Code-Switching by African American Males at PWIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What major challenges have you observed relating to communicating with co-workers and supervisors of a different race? Please identify the race of the other party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, what can the hiring members responsible for promotion/advancement do to improve the advancement opportunities for African American males?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can African American males do, as it relates to communication, to improve their chance for advancement opportunities while employed at predominantly white institutions of higher education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to recommend changing the way one communicates to assist in advancement opportunity considerations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coding for Phase I open-ended questions revealed that participants agreed that the use of code-switching provided a means for advancement opportunities. This common idea was noted through SPSS formatting. The coding also indicated that the participants did not agree on the long-term benefit of utilizing code-switching for advancement. The disagreement on this matter was due to the potential deceptive nature it recreated around being one’s authentic self. The coding of the questionnaire revealed that the participants perceived the use of code-switching as a necessity to gain access to advancement opportunities.

Interviews and focus group coding and analysis. The use of SPSS formatting within the Qualtrics program created clusters of data based on the responses gathered during Phase I Questionnaires. Data that was compiled from multiple-choice questions were grouped to show the frequency of common answers by participants. This process of grouping similar responses allowed the researcher to quickly identify demographic data that represented the participants. In addition to the SPSS formatting of data, the researcher also labeled key points identified during
Phase I and Phase II of the case study. The researcher printed responses from the questionnaires and used the transcribed data from the interviews to color-code keywords and common phrase responses. Priority was given to data that showed relationships to the perception of advancement and retention as it relates to code-switching.

The coding process revealed participants associated their use of code-switching to early childhood experiences with the phenomenon. This was coded in the data as early exposure. If participants referenced school experiences, parent encounters, or other experiences from their youth, it was coded and grouped with early exposure to code-switching. The coding process also uncovered the use of code-switching as a tool for increased networking opportunities. Participant’s responses were coded for words and phrases that referenced being considered for job opportunities based on who they were in professional circles with. If the idea of being invited to a gala was predicated on who was in their social circle it was coded under the networking theme. Specific coding was also given to experiences that included changing cultural norms to be more accepted by the majority population within the professional setting. Data that discussed changing wardrobe, hair, or any reference to appearance was coded for significance to the theme of code-switching reaching past just language.

The coding from Phase II and III revealed a variety of themes that influenced why participants used code-switching for advancement and retention purposes. There were three themes identified through the data analysis process:

- background and early exposure to the idea of code-switching
- creating a level of comfortability with the hiring population including overall access to networking opportunities
- using code-switching strategies beyond language alone
The participant’s interview responses addressed their personal experiences regarding a learned process for code-switching techniques used in various settings, which included in the classroom, with peers in social settings, in church, as well as with supervisors in the workplace. The researcher identified the participants by a specific number to associated thoughts and responses with a participant for future reference to the coded data.

The data from the 30 question Phase II interviews and topic-lead Phase III focus group sessions were recorded using Call Recorder, an application downloaded to the researcher’s cellular phone interface. The researcher used the recordings to request transcribed data from Rev, the online transcription service provider. The excessive amount of background noise during the focus group session created the need for the researcher to also transcribe the focus group sessions by hand in Microsoft Word using the call recording. Once the transcripts of the interviews were available, the recordings were played back in conjunction with reading the transcripts for accuracy. Transcripts were revised by hand as necessary to correct minor oversights. Once completed, the researcher began the initial coding of the sessions by hand to become familiar with the relevant ideas identified through the transcripts. Wording and phrases were highlighted, as the researcher found meaning within the data. These highlighted portions of the interviews identified the emerging three themes from the sessions.

Theme 1: Participant’s background and early exposure to the idea of code-switching increases use and positive perception of its effect on recruitment, promotion, and retention.

Theme 2: Participant’s perception of the need to use code-switching to obtain access to networking opportunities and the perception of the need to create a level of comfortability with the hiring population.
Theme 3: Using language as well as wardrobe, hair, demeanor, etc. all as a form of code-switching strategies that has additional benefits to recruitment and retention at PWIs.

**Summary of Findings**

The evidence found through the collected data supported the fact that interview participants shared common perceptions on the use of code-switching throughout their professional career journey. The uniqueness and similarities of the participants’ career paths and life journeys, all found commonalities in the early education surrounding language. If the participant’s parents, educators, or mentors expressed language assimilation as an important skill during early childhood, it was accepted that code-switching was a skill to assist in being considered competent for advancement opportunities by the participant. The interview and focus group sessions allowed the researcher to fill gaps in the existing literature about how language plays a role in the process for African American men to attain leadership roles in higher education institutions. The study also allowed the researcher to identify themes relating to the perception of how code-switching affects retention rates, specifically for African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education.

**Code-switching and advancement opportunities.** During the Phase II and III interview process, the researcher asked participants to discuss their perception of code-switching as a means to secure job advancement opportunities. Participant 8 stated: an individual’s ability was based on their first point of contact with the hiring manager. This point of contact was usually language. Other participants agreed that code-switching plays a role in the interviewing process as well as daily interactions with peers and supervisors. Participant 2 offered the following sentiments regarding code-switching and advancement during his interview process. He said
connections and relationships were made with family, friends, workplace peers, supervisors, and even strangers by accepting language as the initial connection point. The language was learned through a cultural paradigm and was expressed through this same lens. The approach each person, especially African American males, decides to use affects the way to relate to other people. Taking precautions to know the hinderances of language and protect the misunderstanding of personal stances due to language barriers was important. Participant 2 also said,

I understand that my white workplace counterparts may not understand the cultural differences in language choices, so to be understood I choose to code-switch. Making sure others were not uncomfortable was a key to making positive relationship. This translates into other opportunities, such as being requested at university speaking engagements. Once your supervisor acknowledges your ability to relate to large groups of the majority population through language, other leadership opportunities were likely to be offered. So, it seems as though the language decisions I make were important to my opportunities for advancement.

One participant, a 62-year-old director of the education college, suggested ways in which code-switching could be used to increase the representation of African American male faculty on predominantly White campuses to close the gap in representation among White and African American faculty members. Interview Participant 1 responded, “one-on-one conversations with your peers can help develop and strengthen the foundation of an environment where code-switching becomes less intrusive, [however] don’t expect it [code-switching] to produce quick results to how peers and supervisors view you.” Participant 8 had similar sentiments, stating that
while working with what I perceive to be White men and women: voice tone and body language among seems to be an important factor while communicating. Making this demographic feel comfortable often works to your benefit. A lot of challenges were centered around comfort of this group, and if you were able to make this subgroup feel comfortable around you through communication, this seems to be a way to increase having opportunities presented.

Most participants echoed this sentiment, the interview responses emphasized the awareness of connections through language allowing for quicker access to advancement opportunities.

In acknowledgment of the varying participants’ perceptions of code-switching the researcher also noted participants who did not believe code-switching to provide a benefit to African American males. Participant 6 provided the viewpoint that African American males do a better job of recognizing how code-switching was, at times, deceptive. It can create a facade that hides the true feelings of African American people. This type of masking sometimes perpetuates issues by allowing Whites supervisors to not deal with hard truths. Truths that involve, understanding cultural differences, including language, that play a role in the acceptance of diversity, not just on the surface of race alone, but also in the nuances associated with different races. However, more oft than naught, the participants felt that code-switching increased the chances of advancement opportunities by creating opportunities to create workplace communities with peers and supervisors.

The data and themes that emerged indicated a clear connection between the perceptions of code-switching and advancement opportunities by the participants of the study. The general thought that language assimilation creates access to career advancement opportunities, was oftentimes learned during early childhood from parents, educators, and mentors. This learned
skilled continued into adulthood and molded the perception of the need to use code-switching in daily communication with White counterparts. The study also identified the views from participants on the retention of African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. The general idea was that there was a need to refocus this as a priority. Participant 12 added, “African American male faculty were becoming a dying breed in higher education.”

**Retention rates of African American male faculty members.** During Phase II and III, participants were asked about their perspective on the retention rates of African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. The responses generally focused on how there was still a significant gap in the representation of African American males at PWIs of higher education. Participant 12 stated, “The gap among African American and White males as leaders at PWIs was an ongoing issue that institutions have not found an impactful way of addressing.” The researcher’s review of this comment along with others identified weaknesses within the process PWIs use to circumvent low retention of African American males (see Table 5).

The data also presented a strong case for a need to address the process being implemented to increased retention rates and how the concept was being attended within an institution’s strategic plan. A consensus showed that participants saw a need for a renewed focus on the issue of increased retention rates of African American males, but little was being actively done to address this issue.
Table 5

*Perception of African American male retention rates at PWIs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s comments *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12: Retention was low because there was not an option for a better work/life balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 15: Positive press with an increased focus on research could lead to an increased salary, which would attract and keep African American males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11: Money does not mean an increase in job satisfaction, so there needs to be some focus placed on job retention that does not center around money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6: Revealed his opinion, that there was a perceived lack of institutional commitment, both budgetary and in research experiences, for the development of the talent of the current African American male faculty member. This lack of development and focus on the African American male subgroup subsequently leads to decreased job satisfaction and lower retention rates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Comments are shown with grammar corrections to provide ease of understanding as needed.

During the focus group session, the researcher asked participants how PWIs of higher education should seek to address the low retention rates of African American male faculty members. The participants concurred in their opinions that recruitment and retention of African American males were high priorities. However, it was argued throughout the focus group session how PWIs of higher educations should work to actively address this topic. Participant 16 offered the suggestions of mentoring, institutional support both financially and as it relates to research, along with individual commitment and social support to the career goals of each individual playing a key role in the retention rates of African American males. Participant 6 revealed his opinion, that there was a perceived lack of institutional commitment, both budgetary and in research experiences, for the development of the talent of the current African American male faculty member.

While this study was
not designed to gauge job satisfaction, the participants expressed a concern in this area that may shed light on the issue of job retention rates.

Overall, the participants’ statements provided insight into their perspective on retention rates of African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. The consensus from the participants regarding the issue identified by the researcher centered around retention rates for individuals was thought to be higher if the institution was one of prestige or the first choice for employment. Also, participants expressed their willingness to remain employed at an institution and endure certain factors of job dissatisfaction if there was a strong desire to improve the lives of other African American community members in general. These personal views in some ways led to increased retention rates, however general job interactions with peers had little effect on potential retention rates.

The data collected in Phase II and III suggested there was a perceived connection by members of the African American staff that one’s personal impact on the institution’s community, including relationships with peers, supervisors, and students alike determined one’s willingness to stay employed at an institution in spite of other less than favorable interactions. Little to no perceived connection was expressed by the participants relating to language and retention. However, the researcher made a connection between language usage and creating relationships. If language was the bridge to connections, and connections were the bridge to increased retention rates, there was a likelihood of higher retention rates as a direct impact of communication. However, this connection was not explored by interview questions or focus group session topics.

Ultimately, the collected data determined that African American educators in leadership positions at PWIs of higher education viewed code-switching mainly in a positive light. The
phenomenon of code-switching could be used to increase access to advancement opportunities. It also identified the participants’ views on retention rates, mainly in a negative light. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) surveyed individuals, and Turner and Myers (2000) found that although close to 80% of institutions rate the retention of minorities as a high or very high priority, “only 5% report that their institution have special offices or programs designated for minority faculty professional development” (p. 122). Similar to the MHEC study, most responses from the study concentrated on how retention needed to be a focus, however even if the need was well known the action to address the issue has fallen by the wayside.

**Presentation of Results**

The researcher’s goal in this case study research design was to utilize qualitative data to identify themes surrounding the perception of how code-switching affects advancement and retention rates. Throughout the research process, different factors presented by the participant’s played a role in how language was used. The presentation of the discussions and analysis portrays how the research questions were answered by the data collected. The analysis presented the emerged themes:

- background and early exposure to code-switching
- participant’s perception of the need to use code-switching to obtain access to networking opportunities and the need to create a level of comfortability with the hiring population
- other code-switching strategies such as using language as well as wardrobe, hair, demeanor, etc. all as a form of code-switching strategies.
These factors included the opinions and teachings of parents, influential educators, coaches, and mentors. Most participants felt that code-switching offered an advantage and, in many cases, was necessary in the process of securing advancement opportunities.

**Answer to Research Questions from Findings**

Each emerged theme proved to be relevant to one or both of the research questions.

RQ1: How do African American male faculty perceive code-switching to affect recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education?

RQ2: How do African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education use code-switching for job advancement?

Theme 2 mostly addressed the research questions. The idea that language is the bridge that grants access to individuals who have different conversation standards, is the starting point of the theme. Addressing these differences through code-switching was perceived by the participants to create networking opportunities. These networking opportunities are the starting points to how code-switching can address retention and advancement. If you can gain access to the hiring members at a PWI of higher education and have meaningful professional and social communication, it is perceived that this creates advancement opportunities more so than not having this relationship created. Theme 2 addressed the research questions on retention and advancement. Theme 1 gives substance to where the perception of the phenomenon originates, while theme 3 highlights the far-reaching arm of the phenomenon and how one area of change can affect others. The coding of the collected data and the themes that developed from this process was a representation of the participant’s overall perception of the phenomenon. The following sections were dedicated to each of the three themes that were expressed by the
majority of the participants. The participant’s perceptions of the use of code-switching and its links to advancement opportunities and retention rates were addressed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

**Background and early exposure to code-switching.** Participant’s understanding of code-switching and their personal use was identified during Phase II and III. The identification of early exposure and background knowledge to code-switching was initially found during the coding process of Phase II and III data, the interview sessions. During the focus group session, Participant 16 commented:

The way I view code-switching was really set in stone by my parents. If I used slang at church or around their work friends, I could see a disfavor for my word choices. Often times I would be corrected to use a “more acceptable” word or sentence. Their constant correction of my verbiage in these setting transferred subconsciously that the natural way I spoke was only tolerable in informal settings. It appeared that formal settings or conversations with individuals who were not a part of the family’s informal circle required a different style of communication. It wasn’t that I needed to change everything, but it was clear that some word choices were more or less appropriate dependent upon who I was speaking to and where the conversation took place.

Participant 13 reiterated the reaction concerning early exposure by noting:

The role of language in different settings was defined by how you witness your parents interact with others, especially those of a different race. Recalling how they spoke on a conference call or with work peers outside the office, the verbiage and tone was always altered. The tone my dad used was higher pitched to avoid, in my opinion, coming off as aggressive. The speech and flow of the conversation was slow and intentional. It did not
register to me at the time what was occurring, but I relate those experiences now. How I behave now in conversations with my White counterparts was extremely similar to how my dad behaved during that time.

When probing for additional information surrounding the perception of how early exposure to code-switching affects the user, participant 14 added the following sentiment:

I was taught early that if you go into any type of business setting you have to accept White standards of success: the look, the speech, the culture. Not necessarily because other standards were beneath this customary way, but because White individuals were the ones in positions of power. To gain access to these positions you must meet them where they were, make them comfortable in knowing they were providing someone equally or more qualified than they were into the fold. The criteria for behavior was laid out, examples given of what ways an African American male should behave as a way to access success and significant financial gain as well. Our parents helped us make the decision, or in some instances made the decision for us, of whether or not we would follow the examples.

I recall during my college career an African American male professor who was relaxed and laid back in conversation with his students. I sought him out as a mentor due to his confidence in his African American image within a class where he and I were the minority. I imagine this was a “like me” comfort.

Participant 15 added to the conversation by stating:

It was made clear by my parents that White people made the rules for success. So, to be successful we [African American people and other minorities] must play their game. The power structure was the same as it has been for centuries. African American people were
confined to Whites’ definition of a successful leader, so we must change to those standards to be accepted.

In the middle of a personal conflict with the thoughts shared concerning the need for code-switching participant 11 noted:

The reasoning for code-switching was always made clear early in education by my teachers, it was the measure used for grading purposes. The closer I was able to speak and write to the standard [Standard English rules] the better grade I would receive. As I progressed through school into my career, it was evident that what teachers taught me early on was the expected daily norm. The more I interacted with professional peers, the more it was expected of me, in my opinion, to sound like them. I found myself switching between cultures and my comfort level. I quickly concluded that this act was steeping in bias, colorism, and classism. Code-switching, although often promoted as a means to progress in one’s career creates a messy path, leading to the detriment of advancement and genuine interactions with others.

To conclude this portion of the focus group session, participant 14 interjected with an understanding of the latter point, but also added statements to support the use of codeswitching stating:

I remember being reprimanded regarding the way I spoke with peers by educators. I also recall vividly watching the way my mother spoke with co-workers. The language she used was always different than the “natural” flow I would hear at home. However, it was difficult for me to associate positive or negative feelings with this act. Was I supposed to feel ashamed of the way my family and friends spoke on a regular basis? I do not believe I ever reached this point; I simply recall compartmentalizing the various type of
languages I used. It was possible I learned this from my mother and father, because I also recollect them discussing how white people responded better or differently when they slightly changed the manner in which they spoke. Although early on, speaking with slang and dropped syllables was associated with negative consequences in the school setting, the negatives associated with not code-switching in other settings never caught on for me. I simply learned there was a time and place for everything. Now, in my career, I find that code-switch so often that there were times I am unaware that I am doing so. I think it was important to note that I do not agree that this was a form of being ingenuine, I simply relate it to being professional.

The participants each revealed during the interviews and focus group sessions that early exposure to the use of code-switching, presented a lesson on how and when to use this skill. Table 6 outlines the reasons code-switching may be used (Azlan, Mastura, & Narasuman, 2013). The individual’s early points of contact, including coaches, pastors, teachers, and grandparents, who present the need for code-switching made it a point to express which setting it was most appropriate to change the vernacular choices. What was taught to participants mimicked the idea of the conceptual framework for this study. The Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993), which used the idea of social learning theory, explored the experiences of minorities. The use of code-switching and the beliefs assigned to why one should change his/her vernacular has a cost associated with it. How the participants described this cost varied. The beliefs of the participants included the idea that code-switching adds value, was the professional way to conduct oneself in the workplace environment, and that it provides access to advancement opportunities. However, it was important to include the idea that it was received as deceptive.
Table 6

*Reasons to Code-Switch*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to Code-Switch</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The mood of the speaker</td>
<td>Present emotional connection to topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of register</td>
<td>Relate to audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic significance</td>
<td>Represent a cultural group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual experience</td>
<td>Show personal connection to topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To address a different audience</td>
<td>Make language style seem significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show identity with a group</td>
<td>Perception to be a part of the same group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build or strengthen interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Build personal and professional network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To emphasize a point</td>
<td>Certain part of message has more prominence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What the participants experienced closely relates to the Markedness model in that each setting the participants navigated had an expected and potentially more accepted language choice for that setting. The accepted language choice, Standard English, was often related to how White males speak. This means that African American males will use code-switching to fit-in and make their White counterparts more comfortable. This act, which was received positively in most cases, may lead to advancement opportunities over time. This strategy for interacting with others, mainly White individuals who may not be familiar with the nuances of cultural differences, made a case for the use of code-switching as age and career titles increased.

**Access to networking opportunities.** When asked how participants use code-switching to access advancement opportunities, the participants indicated that code-switching was just another strategy to relate to those in hiring positions. The goal during interviews or interactions with supervisors was to make connections. These connections come by minimizing differences. Language appears to be a large barrier in appearing to be competent, depending on the level of African American Vernacular English that an individual may engage in. To combat this negative association with the use of African American Vernacular English, participants stated they were
more inclined to code-switch to present the commonly accepted language standard. To speak to this thought Participant 4 commented that,

I was taught from my father that assimilation was the way to be considered acceptable. When I got older, I understood that to mean that language was meaningful to how we present ourselves, so you want others to acknowledge your skill level. Skill was presented through conversation and action, but before you get to someone seeing your ability through action, they have to believe what you were capable of through your conversation skill levels. This oftentimes needs to be catered to the situation you were in.

During the focus group interview session, Participant 15 stated,

The need to connect with hiring managers was a skill everyone desires. It was in many ways what sets one applicant apart from the next. There was a strong assumption in the African American community that those who didn’t code-switch were incompetent. This idea was common among our own community as well. We all understand that we may do it [code-switch] in various situation to make others more comfortable. However, when you think about the language in isolation from other ways we change in the workplace, there was another level of awareness about cultural differences that occurs. We, African American people, don’t feel our language was not proper. But since its taught that it was not acceptable in high school or other school setting, we begin to associate our style of language with a language style that was not acceptable outside of social settings.

Participant 16 simply followed with:

African American language was not taught in schools because it was not the standard level of communication one should possess. During public speaking engagements or other job-related activities, one should be prepared to speak with proper English [the
researcher associates this comment with what was label Standard English]. Our language was cultural, to relate to those in hiring positions, we often change several levels of our cultural selves. Was this right or wrong? I’m not sure how to debate that, but it has been a common practice for so long that it was just known as something that was done.

From the conversation surrounding how code-switching was used when interacting with others, the researcher surmised that this phenomenon becomes a matter of attempting to minimize cultural differences. Participant’s overall perception of the code-switching strategy was that it becomes useful when attempting to make others more comfortable. Participant 5’s overview of the use of code-switching included his ideas which were shared below:

The use of certain vernacular styles helped with access to hiring and advancement opportunities. While African American males continue to use Standard English as a method to communicate effectively, it should not be viewed as a form of assimilation. The ability to communicate with others was important because it teaches peers and supervisors that you were able to relate to the appropriate clientele and produce results for the company. The barriers put in place by language norms were overcome through code-switching. When barriers were broken down through commonalities, the hiring managers were more able to accept words and credentials speaking for themselves.

Participants stated the use of code-switching occurred in various settings. It was mentioned by Participant 3 that language does not seem to be as important in sports or some other fields. However, it was most important in education, business, or even religion.

These industries make connections through language. Religion provides an example of code-switching in various capacities. Participant 14 stated that based on the congregation and cultural differences, a leader may choose to exaggerate the language choices to make
connections with the predominate race within the church. The researcher made a connection from this use of code-switching with the use to make connections with the individuals who provide access to advancement opportunities. Based on cultural differences the use of code-switching seems to become more of a skill needed. African Americans in education seem to be aware of the need and make adjustments based on this awareness.

**Other code-switching strategies.** In addition to using code-switching, participants also mentioned they often felt pressure to change other qualities of themselves to be measured as a qualified candidate for advancement opportunities, using standards set by the majority population. Wardrobe and hair grooming were mentioned by some of the participants as additional ways they adjusted to fit the norm standards of their predominantly White workplace. The way individuals dress in the workplace influenced the way they were perceived, evaluated and communicated within the workplace (Furnham, Chan, & Wilson, 2014). The sentiments of these authors resounded in the opinions of the participants of the study, in that African American males were constantly changing the way they must express themselves out of necessity. How they choose to present themselves often depends on culture, language norms, and the people they were around.

Participant 1 communicated that hairstyle options were ways African American people were informally evaluated in addition to language at PWIs of higher education. European standards of beauty were often discussed in terms of African American women and hairstyling. However, Participant 1 believes European hairstyle norms also applies to African American men in the educational setting. Braided hairstyles, such as cornrows or locs, were not seen as professional hairstyles. To be considered capable and qualified African American males change their hair to fit the norm standards. The association between perceived professionalism and
grooming was mainly rated using norms set by the majority population. Because of these standards, grooming as code-switching was an unidentified method by which African American males were judged for recruitment, advancement, and retention purposes.

The additional adjustments, also labeled as code-switching, made by African American males were brought up by Participant 7 and Participant 13. They discussed the idea of code-switching through means of adjusting wardrobe and personal grooming to fit the majority population during their respective interview sessions. Participant 13 mentioned code-switching use by speakers of Standard English and African American Vernacular English as another tool, linguistic in nature, for ways to increase the likelihood of career success.

Fought (2003) postulated that several studies show code-switching was done most often by highly fluent speakers and was a means of using a variety of linguistic tools at their disposal. Participant 7 described an additional tool used by African American males, to include the way they dressed in the workplace. For instance, he states his wardrobe choices with friends was vastly different than the wardrobe he wears while at work. When challenged by the researcher to decipher this behavior in contrast to the norm for all races, Participant 7 offered clarification that included his familiarity with wardrobe selection. He described his experience with wardrobe while employed at a historically African American university as drastically different than the perceived expectations at the PWI he where he was currently employed. Overly ethnic accessories were not indicative of the current workplace, so he opted to remove these items to relate to peers and not isolate himself.

Using wardrobe as a means of code-switching was observed by African American males either dressing more formally or the opposite dressing more casually, dependent upon the style of the wardrobe of his peers at PWIs of higher education. The analysis of the other methods of
code-switching, such as wardrobe choices, presented from the data expanded the researcher’s views and understanding of the code-switching phenomenon. The analysis of this type of code-switching shows the study of attire has a rich history in academic communities. Appearance influenced interpersonal relationships and job-related successes (Gjerdingen & Simpson, 1989).

The work-related wardrobe was made up by the selection of jackets, shirts, and trousers. Workplace dress code differs based on the standards of the organization. The variance in wardrobe standards makes conforming to the dress code policy norms in higher education a challenge. In order to positively relate to peers, African American male faculty members employed at PWIs of higher education, use the wardrobe to increase social likeability. Participant 9 expressed this sentiment briefly by discussing his experience with dressing formally while his counterparts dressed casually. These wardrobe selections were made because he felt negatively critiqued when he dressed in khakis and a polo shirt, similar to his peers. In order to be viewed in a professional, competent, and confident manner some African American males at PWIs use wardrobe code-switching.

Chapter 4 Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study by examining and analyzing the perceptions of code-switching. The researcher collected data from a sample of 16 African American male faculty members employed at PWIs of higher education, mainly in the southern region of the U.S. The data for the study were collected in three phases, which included a questionnaire, semistructured one-to-one interviews, and a focus group session. The chapter gives a summary of the researcher’s findings as they relate to the research question. Three distinct themes emerged as significant contributors to the perception of the phenomenon: (a) background and early exposure to code-switching, (b) access to networking opportunities and connections with the
hiring community, and (c) other code-switching strategies. Each theme attempts to answer the research questions.

New insight into the phenomenon was compiled from the data recording process, transcripts, and coding was used to categorize responses into themes that addressed the research questions. The results of the analyzed data showed retention rates of African American males were perceived in a negative light. Participants suggested institutions offer incentives to improve retention rates to counteract the undesirable work conditions as it relates to work/life balance, isolation and other factors experienced by African American male faculty employed at PWIs of higher education.

The study’s results also revealed that participants agreed to the benefit of code-switching in personal and professional settings as needed. Participants agreed there to be a barrier to advancement opportunities and code-switching to be one strategy to combat the obstacle. The results of the study further indicated that although code-switching was an acceptable tool for access to advancement opportunities, the skill should be used appropriately, with caution placed on creating a false image around one’s self.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

Research indicates that there was a lack of diversity among faculty and administration in higher education (Wilder, 2015). The gap in the representation of African American college presidents to Whites in the same role varied greatly. In 2016, African Americans held 8% of the available presidential positions, which was a blatant difference to the 83% of Whites in the same role (American Council on Education, 2017). The significant gap in employment, retention, and promotion of African American male faculty at institutions, primarily PWIs, was evident in the studies surrounding this demographic. These statistics provided a glimpse of the disparity in representation based on race in higher education. The disproportion of African American male faculty, represented at only 4% at PWIs (Strauss, 2015), supported the focus of current literature on the promotion and retention of African American male educators. The underrepresentation and low hierarchical status of African American faculty members, especially males, was an ongoing concern for institutions of higher education in the U.S. (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017).

Turner and Grauerholz (2017) identified this disparity through the data from the U.S. Department of Education in 2016, which stated among the full-time faculty at degree-granting universities just 3% were men color.

Seeking an understanding of how to address the underrepresentation of African American male faculty at PWI of higher education, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore ways the African American male population was using code-switching to close the gap. The 16 males who participated in this study are examples of African American males who have obtained leadership roles at predominantly white institutions. As professors, deans, and administrators, they are responsible for academic leadership and institutional branding. While these
responsibilities are not unusual, this group of men has the added responsibility to represent
themselves and their respective institutions in a positive light, which often means being more
aware of surroundings and altering the way they present themselves in the workplace
environment, including how they speak. The case study interviews provided insight into each
participant’s awareness of this need as well as their personal thoughts and feelings towards what
it means to be an African American male in a leadership position at a PWI of higher education.
A thorough analysis of the interviews from the participants provided a greater understanding of
what it takes for African American males to be successful at PWIs of higher education.

The qualitative study determined that many of the participants who felt the need to code-
switch were often under the impression that advancement opportunities are related to the way
they converse with peers and superiors in the professional setting. The number of African
Americans hired into positions of leadership at PWIs of higher education compared to White
individuals also being hired into the same type of position shows a significant gap that exists in
this field. The limitation concerning the lack of available participants for this study speaks to the
issue of the deficiency of African American males in leadership roles at PWIs.

The data collected through this research concerning the code-switching phenomenon
highlighted the concerns around recruitment, promotion, and retention of African American
males at PWIs. A significant amount of this study’s participants described themselves to be the
sole African American faculty member within their department or in some instances at their
institution the only person of color in a position of leadership. The number of African American
faculty and leaders in higher education was 7.1% (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). African
American males make up a small percentage of the faculty pool when compared to White males
who made up 75.5%. The African American employees who enter into faculty roles and
leadership positions find that they must also overcome obstacles associated with being a minority faculty member within a PWI (Dockery, 2015; Howard, 2014; Murphy, 2017; Scott, 2016a).

The obstacles, along with the perceived need to change their language choice, grooming style, clothing, and other behaviors are all factors that add to the low number of African American faculty members in higher education. Most African American male faculty participants in this study agreed that one way to improve the low representation of African American males in higher education were addressed through language and communication styles. Although there have been attempts to address the low representation of African Americans in higher education through strategic plans focused on diversity, there has been very little research done to identify the perception of the strategies by African Americans potentially affected by the plan.

**Summary of the Study**

This qualitative case study research was conducted by interviewing 16 African American male faculty members. Their perspective on how code-switching affects retention and advancement opportunities at PWIs of higher education was the focus and purpose of this study. To accomplish this purpose, the researcher identified participants to be interviewed who fit the criteria for the study. The researcher sought out and used participants who were employed at PWIs of higher education for a minimum of 4 years, had a job title of professor, dean, department chair, or an administrator. Open-ended interview questions were asked to this selected group to gain insight into the phenomenon of code-switching. The researcher also asked participants for additional information to provide background information regarding a topic to better assist in the analysis process. Triangulation of the interviews, questionnaires, focus group interviews, provided a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon. The researcher collected
and examined the responses of the participants, then coded the data as appropriate. Each phase of the research process contributed to the development of the identified categories and themes.

Research from the study provided first-hand accounts of the experiences and personal viewpoints on code-switching by African American males employed at PWIs of higher education. These personal experiences surrounding the ideas about the use of code-switching provided insight into the process of what diversifying a predominantly white campus was like through the lens of African American males being hired and promoted. According to the data collected during the interviews for this study, African American male leaders at PWIs of higher education reported they are most likely in positions where they perceive language to be a determining factor on how far up the career ladder they are able to climb. These men also tend to relate their decision to engage in code-switching as a learned strategy taught at an early age by parents, coaches, religious leaders, and educators. The phenomenon of code-switching by African American males at PWIs of higher education was impacted by personal experiences prior to the participant’s current role.

Participants in this study felt their educational experiences and previously formed opinions of how African American Vernacular English was perceived compared to Standard English determined the extent for the use of code-switching in their current role. Participant 10 recalled his introduction to the use of Standard English in his earlier years, by being taught an African American man cannot use African American Vernacular English without being perceived as volatile. This early lesson on language taught him to use a more demure tone when speaking, showing that not only word selection but intonation was also a code-switching strategy. According to the data gathered within the parameters of this study, the perceived advantages for utilizing code-switching for promotion opportunities outweigh the negative
thoughts surrounding the phenomenon. These findings are validated by the research literature on code-switching and the role it plays in advancement and retention rates for African American males at PWIs of higher education. The previous literature and the results of the case study on the phenomenon of code-switching provides a potential guideline for recruiting, promoting, and retaining this elusive demographic.

Participant 12 posited that the use of code-switching continues to be a concern for African American faculty in higher education due to the strategy not being recognized or fully addressing the overwhelmingly low representation of African American male leaders. For those in this demographic who have secured jobs and remained employed in their position, positive experiences with peers and supervisors vary. This was in stark contrast to the experiences described by the participants of this study, which included isolation and bearing the sole responsibility and pressure to represent the African American demographic during high-level discussions. Throughout the journey to their current roles, the men in this study expressed how they excelled in prior positions in the field of academia. They attribute their success to their educational background, previous positions, communication skills, and networking capabilities. The men have all achieved career and academic success holding either a master’s or doctoral degree. Their academic success highlights each participant’s ability and understanding of the requirements of success for an African American male.

The data collected on the perception of code-switching from the participants was analyzed and summarized to provide valuable insight into the perspective and perceptions of the need for code-switching as a means of recruitment, advancement, and retention at PWIs. The data also created the opportunity to investigate the background of the participants concerning the accepted need for code-switching for advancement opportunities. The perception of the need for
code-switching and how this affects retention rates was also considered. The study’s findings were directly associated with the social learning theory conceptual framework described by Rotter (1954) and Bandura (1977).

Both the perceptions of the participants regarding code-switching and the ideas of social learning theory pinpoint how individuals choose to adapt personal characteristics to have positive experiences with others. The study explored language as a personal characteristic that was adapted, labeled code-switching, to gain positive outlooks from peers and supervisors. This breaks down and analyzes the relationship of speech and dialectal styles to the success of African American leaders in higher education.

The information shared by the participants in this study revealed perceptions surrounding code-switching. Through the organization, processing, coding and analysis process of the collected data, three significant themes emerged. The common themes were background and early exposure, comfortability and overall access to networking opportunities, and lastly code-switching strategies beyond language alone.

This chapter briefly identifies the themes and its significance to the narrow body of literature that currently exists on the code-switching phenomenon as a means for advancement and retention for African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. A discussion of the relevance of the study and how the results affect the current practices in PWIs of higher education were presented in this chapter. In addition, this chapter will also provide a summary of the researcher’s recommendation for recruitment, advancement opportunities, and retention of the African American male demographic.
Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The low representation of African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education was an ongoing concern (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Graham (2017) disclosed the need to address the use of code-switching by not only bilingual students but also explore code-switching by African Americans to relate to peers in majority White environments. The underrepresentation of African American males was explored through more research conducted on the hiring practices at PWIs of higher education for African American males. Leadership positions were held at PWIs by an overwhelmingly high number of White males. This lack of diversity in representation of leadership continued even as the enrollment and hiring of African American people at PWIs increased over time (Yancy, 2017). The literature described the way in which the promotion and retention of male educators was an area of concern and needs to increase as a focus within the literature on African American males with careers in education.

The researcher used the gap from the literature to determine the focus area of the study. To provide insight into the issue of code-switching to secure advancement opportunities, the researcher determined the need to interview and analyze the data collected from African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. The data collected from the study shows there was no homogeneous viewpoint on the use and the advantages granted from the use of code-switching. The experiences, advancement opportunities, and retention rates for each participant varied and did not mirror any other participant’s experiences directly. Although there were few similarities in the in-depth overview of the participant’s experiences, it was important to note there are some areas where the participants share similarities. The themes that emerged from the study through the interview process overlap.
**Early exposure to code-switching.** The coding process for the data gathered from the questionnaires, interviews, and the focus group highlighted the idea that early exposure regarding the use of code-switching taught participants a lesson on how and when to use code-switching in a way that would be referenced in adulthood. The coding of the collected data was also interpreted to express that an individual’s early contact with coaches, pastors, teachers, and grandparents affected the way code-switching was viewed. This shift of language styles from African American Vernacular English to Standard English taught directly and indirectly to participants in early childhood, mimics the idea of the conceptual framework of the social learning theory. The early ideas of code-switching support the theory that changing certain aspects of personal characteristics dependent upon social setting was used to an individual’s benefit.

The qualitative research case study used three phases to gather data on the perceptions of code-switching by African American male faculty members at PWIs. The participants generally expressed views that code-switching created minor benefits in employment such as access to advancement opportunities. Code-switching was perceived as a strategy to by assuming language being consciously used to bridge gaps between hiring managers and African American candidates by commonalities found through changes in vernacular. These similarities then allowed for African American candidates to be heard as valuable members of the faculty.

Early conversations and language use experienced by the participants create a subliminal reference point for the accepted language choice, Standard English. A common sentiment that was agreed upon by most participants was that code-switching may somehow lead to advancement opportunities in a career field that was dominated by the majority race of the U.S. Participant 3 stated This strategy for interacting with others, mainly white individuals who may
not be familiar with the nuances of cultural differences, made a case for the use of code-switching as age and career titles increased.

**Comfortability of majority population.** The idea that code-switching was used to obtain a position or career advancement opportunities was a focus of the study. The researcher sought to understand how code-switching was perceived by the African American male demographic as a useful strategy within the workplace. The research suggested the act of changing how one speaks was indeed perceived as a worthwhile and effective strategy. Dockery (2015) and Yancy (2017) focused on the idea that African Americans were mainly focused on overcoming obstacles in their current position. The hindrances identified in previous literature, such as little to no opportunities for promotion and the low morale of the African American male faculty, rarely sought to explore language barriers related to cultural differences.

The use of African American Vernacular English, which was and still is viewed by the dominant culture as an inferior language (Yinger, 1994) could be removed as a barrier if code-switching was applied. The use of Standard English would, according to the perception of the participants in the study, place the majority population in various workplaces, including within the higher education field, at ease. This can be attributed to the idea that if a person speaking uses a common style of language, this was positively viewed within the group setting, and therefore the person was viewed as possessing positive attributes (Doss & Gross, 1994). This perception based on how individuals use language for communication purposes would potentially increase the comfortability level of the white population and allow the African American faculty member to appear as part of the group and therefore qualified for other opportunities. DeBose (1992), Elliott (2013), and others indicated that social variables play a part in communication, and comfort levels with individuals within a group setting. One’s familiarity
with members of the group and the speaker during a conversation, as well as the setting of the
conversation, seem to be key factors in the decision to participate in code-switching or not.

**Access to networking opportunities and connections with the hiring community.**

When asked how participants use code-switching to access advancement opportunities, the
participants indicated that code-switching was just another strategy to relate to those in hiring
positions. The goal during interviews or interactions with supervisors was to make connections.
These connections come by minimizing differences. Language appears to be a large barrier in
appearing to be competent, depending on the level of African American Vernacular English that
an individual may engage in. To combat this negative association with the use of African
American Vernacular English, participants stated they were more inclined to code-switch to
present the commonly accepted language standard. To speak to this thought Participant 4
commented,

> I was taught from my father that assimilation was the way to be considered acceptable.
> When I got older, I understood that to mean that language was meaningful to how we
> present ourselves, so you want others to acknowledge your skill level. Skill was
> presented through conversation and action, but before you can get to someone seeing
> your ability through action they have to believe what you are capable of. This was
> accomplished through your conversation skill level. This oftentimes needs to be catered
to the situation you are in.

During the focus group interview session, participant 15 stated, the need to connect with
hiring managers was a skill everyone desires. It was in many ways what sets one applicant apart
from the next. There was a strong assumption in the African American community, as well as in
the workplace, that those who do not code-switch are incompetent. This idea of needing to code-switch was common in African American communities as well. Participant 15 said:

we all understand that we may do it [code-switch] in various situation to make others more comfortable. However, when you think about the language in isolation from other ways we change in the workplace, there was another level of awareness about cultural differences that occurs. We, African American people, don’t feel our language was not proper. But since it’s taught that it was not acceptable in high school or other school setting, we begin to associate it [African American Vernacular English] with a language style that was not acceptable outside of social settings.

Participant 16 simply followed with:

African American language was not taught in schools because it was not the standard level of communication one should possess. During public speaking engagements or other job-related activities, one should be prepared to speak with proper English [the research associates this comment with what was label Standard English]. Our language was cultural, to relate to those in hiring positions, we often change several levels of our cultural selves. Was this right or wrong? I’m not sure how to debate that, but it has been a common practice for so long that it was just known as something that was done.

From the focus group interview conversation, which at one point focused on how code-switching was used when interacting with others, the researcher surmised that this phenomenon becomes a matter of attempting to minimize cultural differences. Participant’s overall perception of the code-switching strategy was that it becomes useful when attempting to make others more comfortable. Participants stated the use of code-switching occurs in multiple settings. Participant
3 mentioned that language does not seem to be as important in sports or some other fields. However, it was most important in education, business, or even religion.

Business, education, religion, and other career fields build social and professional relationships through language. Religion, in particular, was discussed by Participant 14 as an example of code-switching. Participant 14 stated that through his experiences of attending various churches based on the congregation and cultural differences, he could hear the church leader exaggerate the language choice to make connections with the predominate race within the church. This sentiment drove home the theme of using language to network. Participant 3 said he believed language was important in many fields, including religion and education. The researcher summarized this idea, along with others, to further conclude the participants’ perception that code-switching in religious settings was similar to the use of code-switching to create common ground in the workplace. Based on cultural differences the use of code-switching seems to become more of a skill. African Americans in education seem to be aware of the need and adjust based on this awareness.

**Various types of code-switching.** During the study, many views were exposed by the participants as it relates to code-switching. Some participants felt that code-switching created a disingenuousness and a false representation of the African American male in the educational field. Participants struggled to convey in some instances why it was necessary to partake in code-switching. These feelings existed in some, while others acknowledge personal feelings that the corporate world, including careers in higher education, did not seek African American males, especially for positions in leadership. To be accepted into these positions or be considered qualified, they accepted and internalized that the natural prose of their everyday language was
not a benefit to them. This viewpoint was prevalent most often when the participants described the process by which they were interviewed by white males in higher education.

The participants of the current study identified other methods outside of the commonly defined use of language as a means of code-switching. Participants in the study stated that wardrobe and hair grooming was also ways in which they feel they must code-switch. The perception that their typical wardrobe selection was viewed in a negative manner added to previous findings that African American males have mostly negative experiences in the educational workplace. Once the theme emerged from the research, the idea that code-switching happens over several platforms of cultural norms including fashion was considered and discussed.

Participant 8 stated that he makes it a point to ensure when he dresses for work, he never takes the casual approach. He has not explicitly been addressed regarding his wardrobe but felt it important to dress in similar clothing to the majority. Participant 8 mentioned this was done to ensure he was not perceived by others to be aggressive, or not worthy of his title as department head as he assumes they associate casual wardrobe on African American males to be off-putting. He associates his effort with his wardrobe selection to distinguish him from the stereotypical views of the African American male. When probed for clarification, Participant 8 stated he associated his wardrobe selections, as an outward expression of his willingness to suppress his personal fashion choices for the benefit of those around him. He associated his wardrobe as one of the reasons he was able to progress in his career. He noted while other African American males were promoted by his institution, only those that took a subtle wardrobe approach, khakis and blazers or basic suits, have been seen in leadership positions. He expressed that he feels equally qualified as other African American males, but his willingness to alter minor details of
his wardrobe along with other small changes placed him among his white peers more often.

Requests for him to speak on behalf of his department and other small leadership responsibilities are given to him. Participant 8 connects this with being well-groomed, well-spoken, and well-dressed.

Limitations

The limitations to the qualitative research included a person handling the data collection process. Mistakes, personal biases, along with missed opportunities are a few of the limitations that were encountered. The limitation of African American male faculty members at PWIs, as well as the lack of previous studies on African American males’ use of code-switching as a means to seek out promotions and retention limits the ability to validate the study.

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

Throughout the research process, the researcher discussed the literature and studies that focused on and promoted the recruitment, advancement, and retention of African American male faculty members. The findings focused on the responses from the participants and the literature. The literature on the use of code-switching by African American males was limited and creates a void in useful data on this topic. Despite this void, the research and results from this study indicate that additional studies can and should be conducted concerning the phenomenon of how code-switching was used by African American males to secure advancement opportunities within the higher education field at PWIs.

This study provided an opportunity for faculty members to express their personal views on the question of how code-switching was used to benefit African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. The study also allowed the participants to elaborate on their encounters with individuals who maintain a vested interest in increasing diversity at PWIs.
of higher education. In addition, to the personal experiences of the participants, the study provided historical data to show the perceived need for code-switching in the workplace. Finally, the study included information on how code-switching was perceived as a strategy for job advancement.

The participants’ perceptions from this study, as well as the reviewed literature, aligned with the premise that code-switching in higher education can be used as a strategy to improve the chance for advancement opportunities. Language patterns are often used as a form of data to evaluate the similarity of an individual with one’s own style (McKirnan et al., 1983). Similarities in language create the platform for the possibility to generate a positive disposition towards an individual. This data can be used to make decisions about an individual as it relates to the workplace. While this case study provided the participants a way to offer their personal insight into how code-switching was used for advancement, the study was limited to only African American males who were employed at a PWI of higher education. Nevertheless, all the institutions where the case study was conducted, were a representative model of many of the PWIs of higher education across the U.S.

Through the discussions held as part of the case study research process, some participants were concerned about workplace ramifications due to personal views on workplace norms that benefit one group more than another. Despite the focus group model, where participants shared experiences with a group instead of just one-to-one with the researcher, the participants were still willing to share personal experiences for the betterment of the research. Although there are many valuable outcomes recorded on different views of code-switching, this study still was limited in several areas. The implications from this study, along with the limitations, are not generalizable to all PWIs of higher education, because it was not possible to know or understand the hiring
practices at all locations. Several findings proved to be informative regarding code-switching, but the sample size of this study was a factor to consider in the lack of being able to generalize the outcomes from this study.

**Practical implications.** The study was able to offer key insight into the perception of code-switching by African American males at PWIs of higher education. Gaining information regarding this topic was accomplished through documentation of the thoughts of 16 African American males in leadership positions, which includes the role of professor, dean, and administrator. The outcome of the research presented some ways in which stakeholders could address the low representation of African American males in higher education, especially at PWIs, when diversity seems to be a key focus for many institutions. The information provided from the study on how the African American faculty member perceived the need to code-switch for advancement and retention potential within their institutions forms the outline for a conversation to occur. The information gathered from the study also provided data that can be used to determine how to implement programs and opportunities for networks to be created where all participating members can present the version they believe to be their genuine selves.

The results of the study resulting in three themes answered the research questions that guided the study. The study also added to the limited body of knowledge that exists to support the concerns around the African American male faculty member’s perception of code-switching at PWIs of higher education. The raised awareness regarding the perceived need to code-switch or partake in other strategies to level the representation of African American males in higher education was also a result of the findings from the study.

A further investigation surrounding the idea of code-switching for recruitment, advancement, and retention was perceived as a needed skill, which was documented by the
results of the study. Close analysis of the data and the dialogue with the participants emphasized the need to explore how to address the strategy of code-switching and whether this approach should be implemented or if it was simply another hindrance and obstacle to the African American male employee. During the course of the research, participants mainly expressed views that suggested code-switching could be viewed as a part of their cultural norms by today’s standard. Other participants expressed disdain for code-switching as another characteristic that is presumed negative about African American males. The previous literature discussed the negative experiences of African American males and the participants of this study provided data on ways the African American male demographic attempts to address those workplace experiences. The study’s findings are vital to the field of higher education as well as future studies, due to the data gathered that can potentially inform the predominantly white institutions on ways to address the low representation of African American males.

**Social implications.** It was apparent from the participants’ views on code-switching that there was a benefit to using the strategy for advancement purposes. Although most participants felt that code-switching was a useful skill, Participant 5 conveyed during his interview that learning this skill at an early age and applying it in social and professional settings can sometimes prevent the participants from presenting a genuine version of oneself. Even though the participants admitted to using code-switching often in the workplace, they still felt as though language was a barrier to authentically connecting with co-workers. Participants, including interviewee numbers 5, 6, and 14, voiced their apprehension to conforming to social norms to be considered qualified, but also acknowledge the necessity of doing so, in spite of personal feelings, in order to advance in their personal careers. Many of the participants in this study voiced desires to advance on merit alone. Participant 1 expressed his thoughts on this matter by
stating it was his aspiration to be considered for positions based on his resume but accepts the 
lasting effects of racism means he must change certain characteristics about himself while in the 
workplace. Along with the desire they acknowledged their personal beliefs of there still being a 
stigma around African American male’s capabilities and having to prove their skills to be 
considered for leadership roles.

**Theoretical implications.** The use of code-switching by African American faculty 
members at PWIs of higher education continues to be a topic of interest for the researcher. The 
participants’ perceptions gathered from the study, as well as in the experiences of this 
demographic reviewed in previous literature, aligns with the idea that code-switching was a 
strategy to be considered for advancement opportunities. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus 
groups used during the study to explore the perceptions of African American males, on code-
switching provided insight into this phenomenon. The theoretical recommendations include:

- the implementation and expansion of additional studies at PWIs of higher education 
on the recruitment and retention strategies for African American male faculty 
members
- the continuation of inquiry into the perception of advancement opportunities for 
African American male faculty members
- refined research questions to further probe into how this phenomenon affects the 
African American male representation in leadership roles at PWIs of higher education
- further study that allows for increased extensive analysis of academic implications for 
human resources development that can benefit the recruitment, advancement, and 
retention process for African American male faculty members
These recommendations align with the social learning theory described by Rotter (1954) and Bandura (1977) that the researcher used as a conceptual framework. Rotter’s model theorized that individuals perform to seek out positive encouragement from others. Individuals, like the participants in this study, will change or adapt parts of themselves, including language, based on their environment. Rotter’s theory basically bordered the idea of code-switching being used as a strategy to improve social standing in the workplace. The evidence found through this study validates the idea of researching the use of code-switching to be accepted at PWIs, in an attempt to gain advancement opportunities and increase retention rates. The findings of this study while referencing the social learning theory conceptual framework concluded there to be a perceived advantage to promotion into leadership roles with the use of code-switching.

**Future implications.** This study was burdened by many limitations. The first being the sample size. The researcher’s intentions were to represent the African American male demographic at PWIs of higher education through homogeneous sampling. This process of selection was to include 10 participants from institutions in North Carolina for the questionnaire and interview sessions, and an additional 10 participants from the same area to participate in the focus group interview session. However, the total number of participants was reduced to 16 participants from the southern region, 10 participating in Phase I and II, the questionnaire and interview process, while the number of participants in Phase III, the focus group, was decreased to 6. The number of participants was small, and potentially limited the scope of the study. However, the quality of the outcome of the research outweighs the number of participants. It was important to note that the purpose was to explore the perceptions of code-switching by African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education, this subgroup was limited in number, which adds to the appropriateness of the qualified number of potential representatives.
In looking at this limitation along with others including; the inability to generalize the results to a wider population, the researcher’s personal biases, the difficulty in replicating the case study, as well as the process being time-consuming, future researchers may determine the study would be best served by using a different research method. It also may be helpful to broaden the scope of the participants to include white and African American males, to gain an understanding of the perceptions of both races.

In addition to the increase in participants by including other races, the study may also benefit from completing a quantitative study. By changing the from qualitative to quantitative the researcher could provide numerical evidence supporting the significance of code-switching. This could be accomplished by recording how an individual’s response to a pre-recorded voice using Standard English and African American Vernacular English and having participants use a Likert scale to rate their perceptions of the individual.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

The participants of the study were all African American males employed at PWIs of higher education, these stakeholders in the education system reflected on their perceptions and effectiveness of code-switching. The participants reflected upon and shared their experiences and perspective on the use of code-switching as a means for advancement in their personal careers. This study had several distinguishable strengths and weaknesses. The first being the limited number of willing participants from PWIs of higher education. This limited number of participants may cause the study’s outcome to not be representative of the perceptions of all African American males employed in leadership roles at PWIs of higher education.

The second weakness, an extension of the first, was the disproportionate number of African American males in leadership roles at PWIs. The study was composed of educators in
high positions to gather how they perceived the use of code-switching to gain access to their position. However, the study was limited in this area, due to the sheer lack of African American males employed at this level. Although these weaknesses were noted during this study, the researcher believes there to be a relevant outcome and understanding of the perceptions of the African American male faculty members who were participants of this study. The researcher also determined that this study would enlarge the limited body of knowledge that exists surrounding this topic. This study will also serve to further inform vested parties at PWIs of higher education, how to meet the needs of the potential African American male faculty member.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The ability to replicate this study may be difficult but achievable. The reproduction of this study would allow future researchers to gain a greater understanding of the use of code-switching by African American male faculty members, the geographic profile used in this study could be expanded to allow for a greater number of participants. There could be a strategic reorganization of the recruitment process. In several instances the recruitment email was sent to assistants; the researcher believes the targeted candidate was not fully made aware of the study or the impact their participants would add to the study.

In addition, future researchers could also attempt to conduct a quantitative study. To do so future researches could measure the perception of code-switching by different subgroups such as African American males and White males at PWIs of higher education. To do so they can consider having participants listen to pre-recorded samples of an African American male using African American Vernacular English and Standard English and rating them using a Likert scale model. The results could indicate how both subgroups perceive code-switching using a numerical value to identify whether the findings are significant or not. It was important to note
that future research should also consider the findings of this study and previous literature that suggests setting to be a key factor in how code-switching was perceived.

**Conclusion**

This chapter offered a summary and discussion of the study’s findings and conclusion regarding the perception of code-switching by African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education. This chapter also presented the theoretical and practical implications based on the outcome of the study, along with recommendations for further research. The findings of this study were aligned to what I, the researcher, have experienced as an African American woman employed in the educational field. I think the results of this study can be applied to other genders, some races, and other fields beyond education as well. This research was a step in the right direction to addressing the low representation of African American males in faculty and leadership roles at PWIs of higher education.

As the participants were interviewed the participants, the impact of this research became clear, in that it could contribute to the way PWIs recruit, promote, and retain African American males. This study has strengthened personal knowledge on the perception of code-switching by those who must utilize this strategy to secure faculty and leadership roles at PWIs. It was the desire of the researcher that the results of the study will aid in the creation of policy and assist administration on the types of resources they need in place to aid African American male faculty members through their employment journey. This journey includes finding a place amongst their peers without feeling isolated and a looming feeling of the need to adjust natural prose to conform to the language styles of the majority to be considered qualified for leadership positions. The research could possibly introduce methods and strategies as a way to contribute to increasing the number of African American male faculty members at PWIs of higher education.
To create these resources to increase the African American male representation at PWIs of higher education, an understanding of the impact of vernacular changes on the perceptions of African American males at PWIs of higher education was needed; this case study was conducted to address this need. Within the parameters of the case study participants completed a questionnaire to gather demographic information; as well as partook in either a one-to-one interview or a focus group interview.

The results from the coding and analysis of the interview and questionnaires led the researcher to conclude that Standard English was preferred over African American Vernacular English in the educational setting, along with other settings identified by the participants. The overall likability of Standard English was the main reason why African American male faculty members used code-switching. Since it was perceived that Standard English was the acceptable language, African American males tend to use this version of speaking to make their work counterparts more comfortable with their ability to perform their jobs with fidelity. Code-switching was an intentional act to achieve certain social ends. The information on the use of code-switching was valuable as a means to increase one’s social status (Stell & Yakpo, 2015).

Data gathered supported the ideas of Stell and Yakpo (2015) and answered the research questions of whether code-switching was perceived as a positive way to increase the African American male faculty members’ opportunity for recruitment, advancement, and retention. This study supports the idea from previous literature that code-switching was used for several reasons, but it was typically related to cultural norms and setting. When used by African American people who work in office settings where more White people are employed, African American employees find themselves code-switching more often than naught. This can be attributed to the fact that although code-switching requires thought and effort on the part of the switcher, it was
usually perceived to be done to their benefit. Standard English was often related to education and prestige, this correlation demands more social responsibility. For the African American male faculty members who code-switch do so instinctively, this was possibly out of fear of miscommunication or partiality.

The idea that African American males are well-appointed with essential skills to be successful was generally understood and unspoken by those in hiring positions in education. However, there are underlying biases that make supporting the success of this subgroup challenging and therefore requiring a collective effort to overcome obstacles to success. The African American male faculty member attempts to address the gap in representation by code-switching as a form of assimilation to be better understood. The majority of participants of this study view code-switching as a valuable skill essential to being successful. The individuals and departments at PWIs of higher education seeking to implement efforts to increase recruitment, advancement opportunities, and retention should seek guidance and various resources to adjust best practices to mimic those that have previously been successful. These efforts could include adjusting policies and incorporating the creation of resources that assist all faculty, not just African American males.

This study has found that code-switching was viewed as a resource by a majority of the participants of this study. It was a part of the African American experience and although it was oftentimes disheartening to not present one’s fully authentic self, it should be embraced as a helpful strategy for success. African American males employed at PWIs of higher education should be able to find comfort that in some situations that can and should talk using their natural prose, and in other situations it was okay to code-switching if they feel they are not being understood. There should not be a feeling of punishment for speaking using Standard English,
African American Vernacular English. As Lewis (2018) stated, code-switching was a useful tool but should never feel like the only option. The way any individual speaks was perfectly valid.
References


Hoeritz, K. J. (2013). *Stereotypes and their consequences for women as leaders in higher education administration* (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University).


doi:10.1080/00437956.1954.11659533


doi:10.1515/mlt-2015-0008


Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Participant Invitation Process:

The process for inviting participants will include sending an email and describing the purpose of the study. A follow-up phone call will be made to potential participants who have not confirmed within 3 days of receiving the email as an additional invitation method.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. ____________. My name was Shatisha Hibbler. I recently spoke with your Director of Multicultural Affairs, Mr(s). ________________ and described my intent to research African American male faculty’s use of code-switching in the higher education workplace. Upon hearing the information, they provided me with your contact information as a suggestion for a potential participant. I would be please if you considered participation in the research as your insight will add valuable insight into the perception of code-switching at predominantly white institution of higher education. To begin the process, I am requesting you confirm your participation in an interview by completing the questionnaire link below. Once this questionnaire was completed I will reach out via telephone and email (provided in the questionnaire) to set up an interview date and time.

Thank you in advance for your time and insight,

Shatisha Hibbler
Doctoral Candidate
Concordia University–Portland
Appendix B: Consent Form

Research Study Title: Code-Switching Among African American Male Faculty Regarding Recruitment, Advancement, and Retention at Predominantly White Institutions

Principal Investigator: Shatisha Hibbler
Research Institution: Concordia University–Portland
Faculty Advisor: Donna Graham

Purpose and what you will be doing:

The purpose of this questionnaire was to explore the perceptions by African American males on the use of code-switching in the workplace as a means to aide in their career trajectory. We expect 10 volunteers. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on January 7, 2019 and end enrollment on January 25, 2019. To be in the study, you will answer an online questionnaire regarding race, employment history, and other demographic information. This will be followed with a scheduled interview session to last 45 to 60 minutes. Some of the participants of the study will also be asked to participate in an online focus group which will be scheduled to last 45 to 60 minutes.

Study participants will receive an email requesting consent to participate in the study. Once consent was received participants will receive an email with a link to an online questionnaire. Once submitted the questionnaire will be analyzed by the researcher. Following the questionnaire, the participant will work with the researcher to schedule an interview time and location, outside of the participants institutions. Suggested meeting locations will include nearby coffee shops. Once the interview was scheduled, the researcher will meet with the participant to conduct the interview, which will last 45 – 60 minutes. Concluding the interview, the researcher will analyze the collected data, and provide the transcript copy to the participant to allow cross checking for accuracy. Doing these things should take less than an hour of your time.

If the participant was a member of the focus group, the process will remain the same, with the exception of the interview being replaced with the focus group interview. This group interview will be hosted online. Participants will receive an email with a link to join the group interview session. Participation in the focus group should take no more than 45-60 minutes of your time.

Risks:

There are no risks to participating in this study, other than those normally associated with the typical workday. Data will be coded to ensure confidentiality to 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 the files system of the researcher. When we or any of our investigators look at the data, none of the data will have your name or identifying information. We will only use a secret code to analyze the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times. The data will be deleted immediately following transcription and member checking. All other study-related material will be kept in a secure location for 3 years and then destroyed upon the conclusion of the study.
Benefits:
Information you provide will help to understand the use of code-switching as a means to overcome the obstacles to advancement and retention for African American males employed at predominantly white institutions of higher education. You could benefit this study by offering personal insight into the use of code-switching and how you perceive using it to address the lack of advancement opportunities and low retention rates for the African American male demographic. This information can assist institutions in recruiting, promoting, and retaining this low represented demographic at predominantly white institutions.

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

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation was greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are 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 was not required and there was no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we 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 principal investigator, Shatisha Hibbler at 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. Ora Lee 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 my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_______________________________                   ___________
Participant Name                   Date
_______________________________
Participant Signature               Date
_______________________________                   ___________
Investigator Name                   Date
_______________________________                   ___________
Investigator Signature               Date

Investigator: Shatisha Hibbler; email: [redacted]  
c/o: Professor Donna Graham  
Concordia University–Portland  
2811 NE Holman Street  
Portland, Oregon 97221
DATE: November 28, 2018

TO: Shatisha Hibbler, Ed.D
FROM: Concordia University–Portland IRB (CU IRB)

PROJECT TITLE: [1356291-1] Response to Review Report
REFERENCE #: EDD-20180924-Graham-Hibbler
SUBMISSION TYPE: Response/Follow-Up

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 28, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE: November 28, 2019
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Response/Follow-Up materials for this project. The Concordia University–Portland IRB (CU IRB) has APPROVED your submission. This approval was based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission. Attached was a stamped copy of the approved consent form. You must use this stamped consent form.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent was a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.
All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of November 28, 2019.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Amon Johnson at (503) 280-8127 or amjohnson@cu-portland.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy was retained within Concordia University–Portland IRB (CU IRB)’s records. November 28, 2018
Appendix D: Questionnaire Protocol (Qualtrics)

Participant Invitation Process

The process for inviting participants will include sending an email and describing the purpose of the study. A follow-up phone call will be made to potential participants who have not confirmed within 3 days of receiving the email as an additional invitation method.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. _______________. My name was Shatisha Hibbler. I recently spoke with your Director of Multicultural Affairs, Mr(s). _________________ and described my intent to research African American male faculty’s use of code-switching in the higher education workplace. Upon hearing the information, they provided me with your contact information as a suggestion for a potential participant. I would be pleased if you considered participation in the research as your insight will add valuable insight into the perception of code-switching at predominantly white institution of higher education. To begin the process, I am requesting you confirm your participation in an interview by completing the questionnaire link below. Once this questionnaire was completed I will reach out via telephone and email (provided in the questionnaire) to set up an interview date and time.

Thank you in advance for your time and insight,

Shatisha Hibbler

Doctoral Candidate

Concordia University–Portland
Questionnaire

The questionnaire will gather data regarding your demographics as well as other topics. The completion of this questionnaire follows the guidelines included in the consent form that has been email to you. You can view the contents of this consent form here.

Click the button below to consent to take this questionnaire.

1. I agree to the terms outlined in the consent form.
   
   Yes    No

2. Please describe yourself selecting one of the following for each category.

   Age: 30 – 39, 40 – 49, 50 – 59, 60 or older

3. Race:

   White, African American or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Other race (please specify)

4. Gender:

   Male, Female, Other (Specify)

5. Education: Highest level of school you have completed/highest degree received

   Associate degree, Bachelor degree, Master’s degree, Doctorate degree

6. Employment role:

   associate professor, professor, dean, content leader/faculty chair, administrator

7. Years in current role: 4 – 6, 7 – 9, 10 or more

8. Rate your familiarity with the term and use of code-switching on a scale of 1 – 5.

   (1 being not familiar and 5 being the most familiar) 1 2 3 4 5
9. For participation in the study please identify the best day of the week and time to schedule an interview:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

10. Overall, on a scale of 1 – 5 how satisfied are you with your opportunity for career advancement within your current employer? (1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being extremely satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5

11. Rate your workplace communication with co-workers of a different race on a scale of 1 – 5. (1 being non-existent and 5 being normal rate as it related to your given field) 1 2 3 4 5

12. What major challenges have you observed relating to communicating with co-workers and supervisors of a different race? Please identify the race of the other party.

13. What does the hiring members responsible for promotion/advancement need to do to improve the advancement opportunities for African American males?

14. What can African American males do to improve their chance for advancement opportunities while employed at predominantly white institutions of higher education?

15. At what level does the way African American male faculty members communicate in the workplace play a role in their opportunities for advancement on a scale of 1 – 5? (1 being it does not play a role and 5 being a major role) 1 2 3 4 5

16. How likely are you to recommend changing the way one communicates to assist in advancement opportunity considerations?
Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Participant Invitation Process

The process for inviting participants will include sending an email and describing the purpose of the study. A follow-up phone call will be made to potential participants who have not confirmed within 3 days of receiving the email as an additional invitation method.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. ______________. My name was Shatisha Hibbler. I recently spoke with your Director of Multicultural Affairs, Mr(s). _______________ and described my intent to research African American male faculty’s use of code-switching in the higher education workplace. Upon hearing the information, they provided me with your contact information as a suggestion for a potential participant. I would be pleased if you considered participation in the research as your insight will add valuable insight into the perception of code-switching at predominantly white institution of higher education. To begin the process, I am requesting you confirm your participation in an interview by completing the questionnaire link below. Once this questionnaire was completed I will reach out via telephone and email (provided in the questionnaire) to set up an interview date and time.

Thank you in advance for your time and insight,

Shatisha Hibbler

Doctoral Candidate

Concordia University–Portland
Once participation was confirmed by completion of the online questionnaire, an interview location and time will be communicated using email and telephone calls.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. ___________________. This was Shatisha Hibbler, Doctoral Candidate at Concordia University. Thank you for confirming your willingness to participate in the interview portion of the research process. Understanding how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at predominantly white institutions of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention was the focus of the study. The interview to gain your perspective on this phenomenon will last approximately 45 minutes. During the interview I will ask you about your perception of code-switching. There are no desirable or undesirable answers, all input will add to the understanding of code-switching in the field of education. I have set aside __________(day of the week) ______ at ____________ to meet with you at ______________ (location) based on your availability provided in the questionnaire. If there are any conflicts with the proposed date, time or location please reach out to me at either [redacted] to reschedule. I will email you the day prior to confirm this appointment as well as call the day of the interview to ensure no challenges to the meeting time.

I look forward to meeting with you,

Shatisha Hibbler
Doctoral Candidate
Concordia University–Portland
Interview Setup and Location

**Location.** Interviews will be conducted at various locations. Coffee shops located reasonable distances from the confirmed participants place of employment will be suggested as meeting locations. If participants are unable to meet physically due to time constraints, a web-based video conferencing program will be used to conduct a meeting, such as WebEx or Google Meetup. This method will only be offered and used if the participant was not able to physically meet at the suggested coffee shop location.

**Materials.** Interview protocol, hard copy of interview questions for the researcher and participant, digital tape recorders, cellular device to be used a video camera, paper, and pen.

**Interviewer(s).** Shatisha Hibbler – Researcher. S. Hibbler will present all material and ask all interview questions, sole individual to interact with participants during all opportunities of communication.

Interview Overview

**Instructions.** Good morning (afternoon). Thank you for coming, it was very nice to be able to meet with you today. Again, my name was Shatisha Hibbler, a doctoral candidate at Concordia University–Portland. We are meeting to complete an interview as part of the requirement of my doctoral dissertation. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes, in which I will ask you about your perception of code-switching as an African American male faculty/administrator at a predominantly white institution of higher education. Understanding how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at predominantly white institutions of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention was the purpose of the study. The data researched on African American males in your position has been noted. It was interesting to think about how
few individuals are able to be in your position to add value to the field of education and offer your experiences and perspective on the phenomenon of code-switching at PWIs. The data obtained from this research will offer insight into how PWIs can recruit, retain, and promote African American male faculty while avoiding common obstacles this demographic face in the higher education workplace.

**Tape Recorder/Video Instructions.** If it was okay with you, I will be recording our conversation. The purpose of this was so I can have all the details of our interview while maintaining the ability to have an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all the comments without any reference to you personally. You will be assigned a pseudonym for the purpose of the finalized product and the maintaining of all notes from the interview process. Once the notes from all interviews and other data has been compiled, analyzed, and placed in a user-friendly format I will share the results with you through your email.

**Consent Form Instructions.** Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read and sign this form if you agree with the contents within. (Participant will be handed consent form). (After form was returned with signature, tape recorder will be turned on).

**Process for the interview.** May also provide them a written list of the questions (in case of hearing or other potential issues):

Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

**Consent Form/Ethical Considerations**

The consent form will outline the ways the collected data will be stored and shared during and after the research process. The participants will sign the form either prior to the
interview process at the meeting location, or it will be shared through email and signed and returned prior to the interview.

**Confidentiality.** To assist in the process of gaining relevant, truthful information the identities of the participants will be confidential and personal identifiers will be removed.

If at any time during the interview process you, the participant, feels uncomfortable you are able to stop without any consequences. Please contact the researcher at [redacted] and request your data to be removed from the study.

For the purpose of the study, the following interview questions will be used with each participant.
### Interview questions organized by alignment to research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List each of the Research Questions separately since you will be developing two or more interview questions for each research question.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theoretical Foundation Model or Theory or Concept:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Describe it, identifying the sub-dimensions or components of the model or theory</td>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop primary interview questions for each RQ, using the Theoretical Model or Theory to guide their development</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Probing Questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify general or specific probing questions, you can use to gain additional information or to keep the conversation going.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1: How do African American male faculty perceive code-switching to affect recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at PWIs of higher education?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social learning theory- modeling behaviors that benefit a given situation</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>IQ2: In what ways have you experienced, directly or indirectly, the recruitment of minorities, with focus on AA males, for positions of leadership at PWIs?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you describe the experience you just mentioned where you . . . ?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Markedness model – opinions that typically favor the majority of society and perceived as the norm</th>
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<tr>
<th>IQ3: In what way would you describe the incompatibility between the characteristics of language by AA male faculty and those of individuals in leadership roles? (i.e. stereotypes associated with each role).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You just said . . . I would appreciate it if you could expand on that point.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social learning theory- modeling behaviors and language choices to seek out positive experiences</th>
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<tr>
<th>IQ4: Do you believe the perceived stereotypes for each role results in a less than favorable assessment of your personal potential as a leader?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you find that members of the majority also face less than favorable assessments of their potential based on race?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markedness model – opinions that typically favor the majority of society and perceived as the norm</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ5: How has your potential for, or access to, leadership roles been impeded or restricted based on your race, gender, and language?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>IQ6: Once a role has been secured, do you find that AA males remain employed at</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ2. How do African American male faculty at PWIs of higher education use code-switching for job advancement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social learning theory – motivation to imitate another’s behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social learning theory – motivation to imitate another’s behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ12: Can you describe the obstacles you face in your attempt to gain access to leadership roles and how you perceive code-switching to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical law of effect – inspired to find positive encouragement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empirical law of effect – inspired to find positive encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General:</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Question:</td>
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</table>
Summary

Thank you for your participation. The data will be compiled and transcribed and shared via email for your review. The final copy of the dissertation will be mailed to you for your personal records.

Thank you again for your participation. The potential value your input can offer to the higher education field regarding recruitment, retention rates, and the use of code-switching would not be possible without your input.

Field-Test

The following table outlines the field-test participants and any revisions that were identified due to each member’s participation.

Field Test Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Interviewed</th>
<th>How are they representative of your final participants</th>
<th>Why you selected them?</th>
<th>Revisions they suggested during and after the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Principal</td>
<td>I will interview school principals, they will represent administration at the higher education level</td>
<td>African American males are more prevalent at this level in the education field</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Manager in Retail Field</td>
<td>I will field-test with district managers, African American males who communicate with subordinates as well as supervisors.</td>
<td>African American males in this field will have encounters with White males in superior positions, and potentially have experiences with code-switching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Focus Group Protocol

Participant Invitation Process

The process for inviting participants to be members of the focus group will include sending an email and describing the purpose of the study. A follow-up phone call will be made to potential participants who have not confirmed within 3 days of receiving the email as an additional invitation method.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. ______________. My name was Shatisha Hibbler. I recently spoke with your Director of Multicultural Affairs, Mr(s). ________________ and described my intent to research African American male faculty’s use of code-switching in the higher education workplace. Upon hearing the information, they provided me with your contact information as a suggestion for a potential participant in an upcoming focus group. I would be pleased if you considered participation in the research as your insight will add valuable insight into the perception of code-switching at predominantly white institution of higher education. To begin the process, I am requesting you confirm your participation in an online focus group interview by completing the questionnaire link below. Once this questionnaire was completed I will reach out via telephone and email (provided in the questionnaire) to confirm the focus group interview date and time.

Thank you in advance for your time and insight,

Shatisha Hibbler

Doctoral Candidate

Concordia University–Portland
Once participation was confirmed by completion of the online questionnaire, a focus group interview web link and time will be communicated using email and telephone calls.

The email content was as follows:

Good morning (afternoon) Mr. _________________. This was Shatisha Hibbler, Doctoral Candidate at Concordia University. Thank you for confirming your willingness to participate in the focus group portion of the research process. Understanding how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at predominantly white institutions of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention was the focus of the study. The focus group interview to gain your perspective along with others on this phenomenon will last approximately 45 minutes. During the focus group I will facilitate a conversation about your perception of code-switching along with others. There are no desirable or undesirable answers, all input will add to the understanding of code-switching in the field of education. I have set aside __________(day of the week) ______ at ___________ to have all members participate in an online community. If there are any conflicts with the proposed date or time please reach out to me at either [redacted]. I will email you the day prior to confirm this appointment as well as call the day of the interview to ensure no challenges to the meeting time.

I look forward to speaking with you,

Shatisha Hibbler

Doctoral Candidate

Concordia University–Portland
Focus Group Setup and Location

**Location.** Focus group participants will receive a link to an online community, such as WebEx or Google Meetup where individuals are able to participate from personally chosen convenient locations.

**Materials.** Focus group protocol, hard copy of focus group discussion topics for the researcher and participant, two digital tape recorder, paper, and pen.

**Interviewer(s).** Shatisha Hibbler – Researcher. S. Hibbler will present all material and lead the focus group discussion, sole researcher to interact with participants during all opportunities of communication.

**Focus Group Overview**

**Introduction and Rules of Focus Group.** Good morning (afternoon). Thank you for your willingness to log into this online community, it was very nice to be able to speak with each of you today. Again, my name was Shatisha Hibbler, a doctoral candidate at Concordia University–Portland. I will be your moderator as you participate in a focus group as part of the requirement of my doctoral dissertation. This focus group will last approximately 45 minutes, in which I will present various topics of discussion regarding all members perception of code-switching as an African American male faculty/administrator at a predominantly white institution of higher education. Understanding how African American males perceive recruitment and retention for faculty and leadership positions at predominantly white institutions of higher education and how code-switching was used for job advancement and retention was the purpose of the study. The data researched on African American males in your position has been noted. It was interesting to think about how few individuals are able to be in your position to add value to the field of education and offer your experiences and perspective on the phenomenon of
code-switching at PWIs. The data obtained from this research will offer insight into how PWIs can recruit, retain, and promote African American male faculty while avoiding common obstacles this demographic face in the higher education workplace.

**Tape Recorder/Video Instructions.** If it was okay with all members of the online community, I will be recording our discussion. The purpose being so I can have all the details of our interview while maintaining the ability to have an attentive conversation with each of you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all the comments without any reference to you personally. You will be assigned a pseudonym or numerical identifier for the purpose of the finalized product and the maintaining of all notes from the focus group process. Once the notes from all interviews and other data has been compiled, analyzed, and placed in a user-friendly format I will share the results with you through your email.

**Consent Form Instructions**

Before we get started, please recall the consent form sent to you and returned to me electronically and the details within. Are there any questions prior to beginning the focus group (Tape recorder will be turned on)?

**Process for the focus group.** May also provide them a written list of the discussion topics (in case of hearing or other potential issues):

Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

**Consent Form/Ethical Considerations**

The consent form will outline the ways the collected data will be stored and shared during and after the research process. The participants will sign the form prior to the focus group and return it electronically.
 Confidentiality. To assist in the process of gaining relevant, truthful information the identities of the participants will be confidential and personal identifiers will be removed.

If at any time during the focus group process you, the participant, feels uncomfortable you are able to stop without any consequences. Please contact the researcher at [redacted] and request your data to be removed from the study.

Okay, let’s get started. I would like to remind you that during the focus group, informality was fine and discussing your opinions with other members of the online community was important. To ensure we are able to respect the time of all members and protect the sensitivity of the recording, please refrain from side conversations. Lastly, please attempt to stay on topic and be willing to give honest open opinions on the topics discussed.

Introductory Exercise:

• Name
• Career Title
• Years employed at current institution

Discussion Topics:

Let’s consider the first topic, your first impressions and as much spontaneity you can deliver would be appreciated.

• Barriers to Employment at PWIs
• Perceptions of African American male faculty by other faculty members
• Perception of opportunities for advancement
• Familiarity with code-switching (personally, professionally)
• Code-switching as a learned strategy during early education
• Code-switching as a learned strategy for networking and advancement opportunities
• Perception of retention rates of African American male faculty
• Pros and cons of being an African American male faculty member/leader at a PWI
• Pros and cons of using code-switching in the workplace
• Incentives for using code-switching in the workplace

Summary

Thank you for your participation. The data will be compiled and transcribed and shared via email for your review. The final copy of the dissertation will be mailed to you for your personal records.

Thank you again for your participation. The potential value your input can offer to the higher education field regarding recruitment, retention rates, and the use of code-switching would not be possible without your input.
Appendix G: Referral Form

Please see the information listed below for the email content that will be used to request potential participant referral information.

[Date]

[Dean/Multicultural Personnel Name]
[Dean/Multicultural Personnel Address]

Dear [Dean/Multicultural Personnel Name],

I am Shatisha Hibbler, a doctoral education degree candidate at Concordia University–Portland, OR. The requirements for completion of my terminal degree include a culminating research project and dissertation. I have selected a case study research process where I currently need contact information for potential participants for my study on code-switching.

The purpose of this questionnaire was to explore the perceptions by African American males on the use of code-switching in the workplace as a means to aide in their career trajectory. Potential participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire, participant in a scheduled interview session that will last 45 – 60 minutes. Some of the participants of the study will also be asked to participate in an online focus group which will be scheduled to last 45 – 60 minutes.

I am requesting contact information for individuals you find may be willing to consider participation for this research case study. I would like to request referral names, email addresses, as well as phone numbers for African American male faculty members for the case study.

I would be very grateful for your assistance in this matter. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address, email, or number listed below.

Sincerely,

Shatisha Hibbler
[redacted]
Appendix H: 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 my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work was any material submitted for evaluation that was falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but was 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 was “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 was understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but was 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 (continued)

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.

Shatisha Hibbler

______________________________
Digital Signature

______________________________
Shatisha Hibbler

______________________________
Name (Typed)

February 20, 2020

______________________________
Date