

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES: DO THEY PERFORM BETTER ON  
STANDARDIZED READING AND MATHEMATICS TESTS IN TITLE I  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OR NON-TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS?

by

Sony Anderson

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education in  
Educational Leadership

Charlotte

2019

Approved by:

---

Dr. Chuang Wang

---

Dr. Lisa Merriweather

---

Dr. Chance Lewis

---

Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whatley

ProQuest Number: 13863410

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 13863410

Published by ProQuest LLC (2019). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

PREVIEW

©2019  
Sony Anderson  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
ABSTRACT

SONY ANDERSON. African-American Males: Do they perform better on standardized reading and mathematics tests in Title I elementary schools or Non-Title I elementary schools. (Under the direction of DR. CHUANG WANG)

African-American males continue to slip through the cracks of the Education System in the United States. McSpadden McNeil et al. (2008) report that district officials continue to focus on school scores as if they are the only way to assess student progress. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a difference between third, fourth, and fifth grade African-American male's academic achievement in both Title I and non-Title I Schools within a large suburban school district in the southeastern United States during the 2016-2017 school year. In an attempt to determine whether Title I elementary schools or non-Title I elementary schools were assisting with closing the achievement gap for African-American males, an ex post facto study design was used to investigate the academic achievement of African-American males during the 2016-2017 school year based on the End-of-Grade Assessments in reading comprehension and mathematics. The results of the multivariate analysis of variance (MONAVA) indicated that there was a significant difference between African-American males who attended Title I elementary schools and those who attended non-Title I elementary schools. The implications for this large urban school district in the southeastern United States should be to collectively plan ways to increase academic achievement for African-American males in both Title I and

non-Title I elementary schools across the district based on No Child Left Behind Legislation by evaluating how money is spent on resources, staff, and professional development.

PREVIEW

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank God for allowing me to experience such a humbling experience. He has kept me safe in His arms during this process and allowed me to grow academically, but most of all spiritually.

*The race is not given to the swift nor the strong, but to the one who endures until the end.* —Ecclesiastes 9:11

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Wang for his continued patience and dedication to completion of this process. His guidance and knowledge of this process made the impossible possible for me. I am eternally grateful to his willingness to help me reach my full potential during this project. I am grateful for my remaining dissertation committee, Dr. Campbell-Whatley, Dr. Lewis, and Dr. Merriweather for their insightful feedback and dedication to my completing this work. I am thankful for Dr. Howell who consistently reminded me of the end goal.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends who have offered endless support and encouraging words. Special thanks to my mother, Marzetter Poe, for all the prayers, patience, inspiration, and trust in knowing I would get it completed. Thank you to my mentors, Sylvia Booker and Janice Lewis, for encouraging me to pursue my doctorate and molding me into the educator and leader that I am today. Special thanks to my doctoral warriors, Rhonda Harris, Debbie Hill, Jaime Howey, Toshia McCarter and Stephanie Williams, for always asking about my journey and encouraging me to complete my dissertation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	1
1.2 Educational Reform	2
1.3 African-American Male Learners	4
1.4 Purpose of Research	7
1.5 Research Questions	8
1.6 Delimitations	8
1.7 Limitations	9
1.8 Assumptions	9
1.9 Definitions	10
Chapter Summary	11
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	13
2.1 Educational Legislature	13
2.1.1 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka	14
2.1.2 No Child Left Behind	14
2.2 African-American Male Learners	16

2.3 Contributions to African-American Male Academic Achievement	20
2.4 Theoretical Framework	27
2.4.1 Critical Race Theory	27
2.4.2 African-American Male Theory	29
2.5 Title I Schools/Low Performing Schools	29
2.6 Standardized Assessments	30
2.7 Special Education	34
2.8 Gifted and Talented	36
2.9 Student Retention	37
Chapter Summary	38
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	41
3.1 Research Design	41
3.1.1 Participants	42
3.1.2 Selection Procedures	44
3.1.3 Study Area	44
3.2 Validity and Reliability of the EOG Tests	45
3.3 Title I Designation	46
3.4 Procedures	48
3.5 Quantitative Data Analysis	48
Chapter Summary	49
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	50

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	64
5.1 Results Summary	64
5.2 Implications of the Study	67
5.3 Recommendations for Further Research	71
5.4 Conclusion	73
REFERENCES	75

PREVIEW

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: EOG Reading Comprehension 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Achievement Level Ranges	46
TABLE 2: EOG Math 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Achievement Level Ranges	46
TABLE 3: EOG Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Reliabilities Form	47
TABLE 4: The Mean and Standard Deviation of EOG Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics	52
TABLE 5: Multivariate Analysis of Variance	53
TABLE 6: Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Reading Comprehension	55
TABLE 7: Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Math	55
TABLE 8: Model Summary for End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension ( <i>N</i> =7, 614)	56
TABLE 9: The Coefficient Table for End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension ( <i>N</i> =7, 614)	57
TABLE 10: Model Summary for End-of-Grade Mathematics Achievement ( <i>N</i> =7, 614)	58
TABLE 11: The Coefficient Table for End-of-Grade Mathematics ( <i>N</i> =7, 614)	59

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: African-American male students who attend Title I and Non-Title Schools	43
FIGURE 2: African-American male students who took the EOG by grade level	43
FIGURE 3: Histogram of Unstandardized Residual	60
FIGURE 4: Normal Q-Q Plot of Unstandardized Residual	61
FIGURE 5: Residual Plot Against Unstandardized Predicted Value	62

PREVIEW

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCR	College and Career Readiness
CEP	Community Eligibility Provision
CMS	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
EC	Exceptional Children
EOG	End-of-Grade Assessment
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Act
FRL	Free and Reduced Lunch
GLP	Grade Level Proficiency
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
TRC	Text Reading and Comprehension

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

African-American students, specifically males, continue to perform at increasingly lower rates than other subgroups of students based on standardized assessments. There appears to be a disconnection between assessments and teaching strategies (Donnor & Shockley, 2010). This continues to affect the achievement gap, making it even more significant. Donnor and Shockley (2010) believe that there is an increasingly large number of African-American males who attend Title I schools. Their livelihood is dependent on the school's ability to break down barriers such as achievement mandates and state testing norms. Title I school designation is determined by the percentage of students who live in poverty that are currently enrolled in a school. Additional funding comes from the federal government based on the Elementary and Secondary Act, which was designed to help increase academic achievement.

African-American students, specifically males, have been misunderstood in the classroom. There have been a large number of students who have been placed in exceptional children's programs, have multiple behavior referrals and continue to drop out of school (Dunbar, 1999). Society has its perception of African-Americans, but is it empathetic to the conditions that many African-American male students endure daily? There are many African-American male students who live in poverty, whose parents are unemployed, who endure poor living conditions, who have been exposed to domestic violence, whose family life is unstable, or they or someone in their family may suffer from a form of mental illness, yet they come to school each day expecting the best from educators. Often the media portrays African-American males as

lethargic, unskilled, and violent. Such a negative outlook on any culture could be deemed unfair and cruel. (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006).

The overall goal of this research was to identify whether African-American males were more successful in Title I schools or non-Title I schools. During this research, End-of-Grade Test scores of African-American males were compared between Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools in order to identify which school setting best met the needs of African-American male students.

## 1.2 Educational Reform

Imagine being beaten, whipped, or losing your life because you were caught reading a book. Africans who were enslaved in the US lost their political freedom, and their social, economic, and educational entitlements. The *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 brought about endless possibilities for African-American schools and its students because it offered equal education. Unfortunately, school board members did not have the interests of African-American students at heart and most European-American parents decided to take their students to more affluent suburban schools along with their financial resources (Morris, 2004).

Morris (2004) declared that African-Americans believed schools were suitable during segregation because they were rooted in the African-American community. They were deemed suitable because African-American educators were employed, and they were responsible for not only teaching the academic curriculum but also ensuring African-American students were adequately exposed to social, cultural, and political experiences that impacted African-Americans. African-American educators were also responsible for ensuring that students knew how to behave in school as well as in

public. It was only after desegregation that the closing of African-American schools harmed the African-American student through the disparate bussing of African-American students to all-white schools and the dismissal and devaluation of African-American educators.

*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* was a Supreme Court case that played a significant role in integrating Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) in 1970. The federal court overturned the Swann court decision in 2002. This impacted the CMS school system; it allowed schools to become re-segregated and left parents with an option to choose another school other than their home school. Many African-American leaders were disappointed in the change because students who lived in more affluent neighborhoods had newer schools, while those who did not were forced to attend older neighborhood schools if they did not get their first choice. This also meant that there would be a significant chance that the affluent neighborhood schools would be overcapacity and there would be lower enrollment at the older neighborhood schools (Morris, 2004).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was created to assist underperforming schools, such as Title I schools, by establishing a criterion for educators and administrators to follow on select subjects like math and reading. Underperforming schools received additional financial support from the district, and the district was responsible for implementing interventions. There was a decrease of time allotted to the arts and sciences because the focus was on math and reading content. States were asked to create their assessments, which created a problem: each state utilized different curriculum. States could also decide how much money they would spend on their

assessments and this created yet another issue as both states and the sizes of individual districts varied because of per-pupil capital along with economic disparities. Erskine (2014) shares that while the initial purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act was to assist low performing students, who scored significantly lower than their peers on standardized assessments, educators had a different point of view. From the beginning, educators were set against one another, when it came to student test scores. Erskine (2014) reveals that teachers often did not collaborate on lesson plans but competed to have the best test scores amongst their peers. Students were looked at as a test score, rather than as individual learners. Unethical practices were being implemented, and educators often cheated in order to get higher test scores on assessments.

Erskine (2014) also suggests that educators began teaching to the test, instead of ensuring that students learned the entire curriculum. Educators began over assessing students. The creativity of teaching concepts was lost. Educators realized that assessments were not intended for minorities in their classes, but rather European-American middle- and upper-class students (Erskine, 2014). Groen (2012) suggests that once state designated assessments were given to assess student's academic success and the data were analyzed, the data was publicly published with the educator's name attached to the student's academic success. Educators were rated low on their evaluations or even lost their jobs based on the proficiency of their students.

### 1.3 African-American Male Learners

Clotfelter (2009) shared that there is still an increasingly large gap in student achievement between African-American males and their peers. It was reported that black students are below the median in both math and reading. Superville (2015)

collected national data on the success of African-American males compared to their peers, and their findings reveal that during the 2012-2013 school year, the national graduation rate for African-American males was 59%, while the graduation rate of European-American males was 80%. The findings also revealed that based on the 2010-2011 school year, the national graduation rate for African-American males was 51%, which showed a slight increase. The findings also revealed that the national graduation rate gap between African-American males and European-American males increased from 19% in 2009-2010 to 21% in 2012-2013. During the 2012-2013 school year in North Carolina, the graduation rate for African-Americans was 61% compared to 77% of European-Americans, which was a 16% gap. During the 2011-2012 school year in a large urban district in the southeastern United States, there was a 21% or more gap in graduation rates between African-American males and European-American male students. In the report in 2015, Superville reported that a large urban district in the southeastern United States had one of the highest African-American male populations during the 2011-2012 school year of more than 30,035 students. The graduation rate for African-American males was 41% while 71% European-American males graduated, revealing a 29% graduation rate gap.

Currently, there is a large number of African-American males being placed in special education classes (Gill, 2014). Finkel (2010) noticed a trend in African-American males who were assigned to special education classes for being behind two to three years in reading who later developed conduct problems because they were misdiagnosed. African-American males, who were earning their Ph.Ds in Education at

the University of Pennsylvania Grad Prep Academy, shared that their former educators attempted to place them in special education classes (Harper & Davis, 2012).

African-American males consistently receive more disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions than their peers (Gill, 2014). Henfield (2012) believes that some African-American male misbehavior may be attributed to boredom in class but believes the solution should be to give students more challenging and rigorous work. Mendez and Knoff (2003) convey the idea that African-American males are suspended more than any other subgroup due to "cultural and social misunderstandings (p. 44)." They also believe that educators should seek professional development on diversity and that often there may be some form of educator bias during these incidents. This could be addressed by creating a prevention plan to address repeat offenders by incorporating a counseling section, strategically involving parents, and including support services. Livingston and Nahimana (2006) shared startling information that one in four African-American males is expelled each school year.

Toldson et al. (2009) warned that nearly 3.2% of African-American male students are retained in 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. This same study found that African-American males are three times more likely to be retained by 11<sup>th</sup> grade than their European-American counterparts. Rodney and Crafter's 1999 study informed researchers that there is a "positive association" between students who were continuously suspended and those being retained (p. 188). Since there is a connection between suspensions and retentions, African-American males who are repeatedly suspended should be offered another option other than out-of-school suspensions, such as in-school suspension or detention. Educators and administrators should also take

into consideration other options instead of retaining students to provide alternative methods of support, such as tutoring or remediation.

African-American males are more likely to drop out of high school than their peers (Gill, 2014). According to Toldson et al. (2009) in 1940, only 6.7% of African-American males had a high school diploma compared to 25% of European-American males. However, the gap doubled in 1950 with more than 50% of European-American males receiving their high school diploma than 18% of African-American males. Bell (2014) provides valuable explanations as to why African-American males drop out of school, which include educator bias, educator's unwillingness to assist in learning new skills, student difficulty with new concepts, dislike of educators, issues at home, peer pressure, lack of focus, prioritizing, and medical attention. He also claims that African-American male students often feel like no one cares about them. African-American males earning their PhDs in Education who participated in a study at the University of Pennsylvania Grad Prep Academy also shared that they received limited communication from their counselors about college and career readiness (Harper & Davis, 2012).

African-American males are typically not included in rigorous courses that involve math and science coursework (Gill, 2014). Educators are not referring African-American males to the Gifted and Talented or Advanced Placement programs (Gill, 2014). Educators must seek giftedness in all socioeconomic groups (Henfield, 2012).

Hargrove and Seay (2011) suggested that educator's prejudices dilute the curriculum for African-American males instead of holding them accountable like their peers. Educators based non-school related concerns as reasons why African-American

males do not test into the Gifted and Talented Program: language experience, home setting, how their cultural group identifies with giftedness, and the use of non-standard English. While there continues to be a focus on African-American males and low student performance, there are African-American males who do qualify for the Talent Development program and Advanced Placement courses. With high scholastics come high demands and stressful environments. With the high demands of rigorous courses and the stress to close the achievement gap, African-American males may feel they are being held to stricter levels of "accountability" as opposed to students from other cultures (Henfield, 2012).

#### 1.4 Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study was to identify whether enrollment at a Title I School or Non-Title I School in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States impacted the academic achievement of African-American males on the End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. The findings from this research will provide information to the large urban school district in the southeastern United States as it relates to the academic achievement of African-American males in both Title I and non-Title I Schools.

#### 1.5 Research Questions

1. Was there a difference in the academic achievement of African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?
2. When controlling for covariates (student absences, retention, and student discipline) were there differences in academic achievement as measured by

End-of-Grade Tests in reading comprehension and mathematics between African-American males who attend Title I elementary schools and non-Title I elementary schools?

#### 1.6 Delimitations

This study did not address the teaching strategies or curriculum which teachers used to instruct students for academic success. It focused on the students' classification, attendance, retention, and discipline. This study focused on African-American males who were in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2016-2017 school year. Academic achievement was based on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test scores in reading comprehension and mathematics. The study focused on African-American male students who were enrolled in schools within a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. African-American male's academic success on additional assessments such as Measures of Academic Process (MAP), Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC), or classroom common assessments were not utilized to triangulate data.

#### 1.7 Limitations

1. African-American male students who participated in the End-of-Grade Tests administered during the 2016-2017 school year may have transferred at any time during any given school year from another school within the same district, a charter or public school, or from out of state.
2. Information on any traumatic situations (divorce, death, etc.) that may have occurred and impacted the student's achievement on the End-of-Grade Test during the 2016-2017 school year were not taken into consideration.

3. Whether students received testing accommodations such as separate setting, read aloud, multiple testing sessions (i.e., 3-minute break every 30 minutes), extended time, or any other testing accommodation were not taken into consideration.
4. The validity of test scores should be questioned with consideration of day and time of test administration, the temperature of the environment, the amount of test preparation, medication, etc.
5. Whether students were in the Exceptional Children's Program or Academically Gifted Program is unknown.

#### 1.8 Assumptions

There are two assumptions for this research study. First, it was assumed that students who attend Title I elementary schools perform lower than Non-Title I elementary school students because of their low socioeconomic status (SES) based on standardized assessments. The second assumption was that all student data collected during any End-of-Grade test during the 2016-2017 school year were reliable and valid and could be used in comparison to other schools within the same district or in the same state.

#### 1.9 Definitions

In this study, for consistency, the following terms and definitions were provided:

1. No Child Left Behind - legislation to guarantee that students in all public schools learn specific goals by highly qualified educators.
2. Achievement Gap - a continuing gap of educational measures between groups of students based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and gender.

3. End-of-Grade test - normed assessment given to elementary students at the end of the school year.
4. Student Achievement - grading process that utilizes standardized measurement, which may include GPA.
5. Title I School - federal funding implemented for elementary and secondary schools in order to give equal access to schools with low socioeconomic students and to hold districts accountable for student's success. Its purpose is to close the achievement gap among all socioeconomic groups by assisting with funding for professional development, learning materials, and parent involvement activities.
6. Socioeconomic Status (SES) - individual economic and social position in relation to others based on income, education, and occupation.
7. Students with Disabilities (SWD) - someone with a physical or mental impairment that may require an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
8. Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) - students who show evidence of high academic achievement through creativity, artistic or leadership skills in a specific academic area.
9. Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - a plan created by a team to help a student who is in the Exceptional Children's Program.
10. Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) - utilized for No Child Left Behind Legislature to determine the academic performance on standardized tests by the U.S. Department of Education.

## Chapter Summary

Rodney et al. (1999) found that African-American males typically score three times lower on standardized assessments than their peers. They also found that African-American males were more likely to be placed in special education programs and retained. Amber Jones (2014) of Emory University revealed that while there may never be a definite answer as to whether African-American males need separate schools to thrive academically, there will always be a need to critically review the effectiveness of academic professionals and their learning institutions. In order to prevent high levels of incarceration of African-American males and higher rates of high school graduation, Mendez and Knoff (2003) suggested assessing student, staff, and school environment characteristics to determine which incentives and consequences would be most effective.

In order to increase the academic achievement and graduation rate of African-American males, Toldson et al. (2009) believe that the educational system needs to be reformed. They shared that the curriculum should be measured in order to identify the connection between it and an African-American male's academic success. They were hopeful that the reform and measurement of the educational system and curriculum would lead African-American males to develop a curiosity for learning and increased academic achievement and graduation rates.